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Warnings: The True Story Of How Science Tamed The Weather



Synopsis

Experience the most devastating storms of the last fifty years through the eyes of the scientific visionaries who took them on and tamed them. For decades, the author, a pioneering meteorologist, has dedicated himself to saving lives by combining science, experience, and instinct. The struggle to understand nature's fury provides fascinating insights into the natural forces that shape our world, and the turbulent politics that influence our scientific establishment. Tracing the Herculean effort to improve weather forecasting and advanced warning systems, the author draws fascinating biographical sketches of the scientists behind the breakthroughs, such as Dr. Theodore Fujita, creator of the Fujita Scale for tornado measurement. With its gripping story-telling approach to major natural disasters, *Warnings* is narrative nonfiction at its heart-pounding best. "I highly recommend this exceptional book." --Roger Pielke, Sr., Pielke Climate Science blog "The weatherman's version of *The Right Stuff*--Mike Smith's *Warnings*. I recommend it highly." --Tom Fuller, *The Examiner* "A fascinating journey inside the world of weather and the mind and heart of the meteorologist. A great read for anyone." --Bob Ryan, chief meteorologist, WRC TV (NBC), Washington DC, former president, American Meteorological Society "This book chronicles the remarkable advances that have occurred in meteorology over the past 50 years--not through dry statistics but through very personal stories. The book discusses the virtual elimination of airline crashes due to wind shear and the thousands of lives saved by hurricane warnings. Its primary focus is on severe storms in the Midwestern U.S., but the issues raised about the evolution of forecasting the weather, and the impact those forecasts have on the people and commerce, are much more universal. The narrative throughout the book is engaging and compelling, and I found it very hard to put down after reading just the first few pages. This book is not just for hard-core weather enthusiasts or those who work in weather-related fields (though they will love it). Anyone who has ever watched a stormy sky on a warm afternoon or felt moved by the images on the news following the Greensburg tornado or Hurricane Katrina (both of which are covered in this book) will get pulled into the narrative of this book." --Keith Seitter, Executive Director, American Meteorological Society Boston

Book Information

Hardcover: 304 pages

Publisher: Greenleaf Book Group Press; 1st edition (May 1, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1608320340

ISBN-13: 978-1608320349

Product Dimensions: 5.7 x 1 x 9.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (58 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #770,784 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #239 in [Books > Science & Math > Earth Sciences > Atmospheric Sciences](#) #477 in [Books > Science & Math > Earth Sciences > Natural Disasters](#) #660 in [Books > Science & Math > Earth Sciences > Rivers](#)

Customer Reviews

When cutting edge technology works and lives are saved it rapidly becomes ho-hum; violent death that did not happen doesn't make the television news or newspaper headlines. How many recall that a three-day storm over the Great Lakes in the 1800s would routinely kill 500 people, a hurricane in Galveston in 1900 killed more than 6,000, or that before 1960 a strong cold front spawning tornadoes could kill or mutilate a few thousand as it raced across the country? We have a short national memory, which is probably why weather scientists have not been heaped with more medals than they could carry for the lives they've saved in the last sixty years. Mike Smith grew up at precisely the right time to become an intimate part of the revolution in weather analysis and forecasting that, outside the public eye, surged through this country. He writes of the efforts of weather scientists who not only did the research that allowed accurate forecasts of severe weather but took the steps to create a warning system that meant scores of Americans didn't die in their beds each year as their houses blew up around them in tornadoes. It is a story of creativity and determination fighting bureaucracy and of humanity at its best as ad hoc teams formed between meteorologists who had learned to forecast severe storms and TV and radio broadcasters who had enough foresight and willingness to come up with new and faster ways to get word to the people that bad things were about to happen in their world and how to protect themselves.

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