



Head of the Pat Conroy Literary Center Inspired by Friendship to Search for His Own Defining Time

By Mindy Lucas

On a recent weekday morning, Pat Conroy Literary Center Executive Director Jonathan Haupt found himself trying to access the roof of the building where the center and all of its trappings – from Conroy’s Fripp Island writing desk to the Great Santini’s flight jacket – are housed.

As Haupt and an air conditioner repairman poked around the Port Republic Street property in downtown Beaufort, they realized there was no obvious scuttle hole or hatch. Then it dawned on Haupt. The former bank building, built in the early ‘70s, had been designed to be impenetrable.

“It makes sense,” he said, starting to laugh. “You don’t want someone breaking in from the roof.”

It's a detail that would not have been lost on the center's namesake.

"Pat absolutely would have loved this," Haupt said, of his friend and publishing partner who died in 2016. "He probably would have used it in a book."

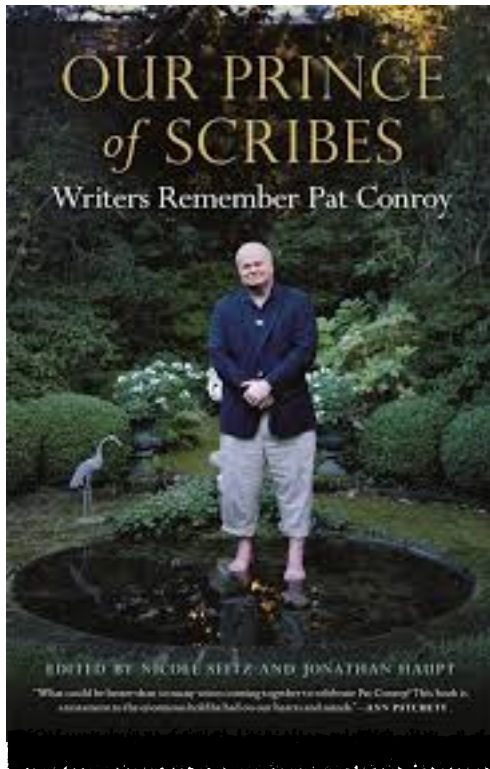
Creating a 'Living Legacy'

To say there is nothing quite like the literary center would not be much of a stretch.

While Haupt and the center's leadership have modeled some of their programs and outreach after those of such storied places as The Wren's Nest in Atlanta, home of 20th Century writer Joel Chandler Harris, or The Loft literary center in Minneapolis, most centers that bear an author's name typically take the form of the house-museum concept.

There's the Margaret Mitchell House in Atlanta, the Thomas Wolfe Memorial in the author's





Pat Conroy's legacy lives on through his writing and the memories of those who knew him. This book is a testament to his life and work, and a reminder of the power of his words. It is a book that will be read and cherished for years to come.

