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The Divide "Public Airwaves Through Prison Walls" proof document

Sally Brown

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Four Campus Departments Collaborate around Downtown Campus Library exhibit of Photo Series Documenting Appalachian Prison Visits
MORGANTOWN, W.Va.—Raymond Thompson, Multimedia Producer for *WVU Magazine*, exhibits *The Divide*, his independent project documenting a van trip for families from urban Virginia to visit their relatives incarcerated in Appalachia.

The black and white photographs, displayed in the Atrium of the Downtown Campus Library, reveal both the significance and difficulty of these trips that strengthen social ties to family and community.

This exhibit consists of 10 printed photographs, in the Atrium Gallery in the WVU Downtown Campus Library as well as an interactive tablet so visitors may see more photos and learn more about the project. A participatory element allows visitors to react and/or comment about their own distance with their family and impact thereof. The display will run August through December 2017.

“I am delighted that the Law Library is sponsoring this installation to show students how mass incarceration impacts our whole community,” said Valena Beety, Professor of Law and Director of the West Virginia Innocence Project. “Law students in particular can learn about the individuals behind the legal cases, and how empathy can make us stronger lawyers and community members.”

The College of Law Library contributed to funding the installation. Reed College of Media, and the Department of English and Department of Sociology and Anthropology, partnered with the WVU Libraries as well, to bring this project to fruition and host a lecture and reception in the fall.

Thompson is a freelance photographer, currently serving as Multimedia Producer for *WVU Magazine* in Morgantown. He received his Masters degree in journalism from the University of Texas at Austin and Bachelor of Arts in American Studies from the University of Mary Washington. His work has been featured in *WBEZ Chicago Public Radio*, *NBC News*, and *The New York Times*. He has won several awards for his work including the 2012 Alexia Foundation Grant Award of Excellence and the 2011 Carnegie-Knight Fellowship. <http://www.raymondthompsonjr.com/divide/>

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Photos below.