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For Immediate Release
CONTACT: Shannon Carter, shannon_carter@tamu-commerce.edu

Jasper, Texas: The Healing of a Community in Crisis
A Humanities Texas Exhibition in Celebration of Black History Month



"Huff Creek Road," Photograph by Sarah Wilson. In the Humanities Texas exhibition, "Jasper, Texas: The Healing of a Community in Crisis," developed by Ricardo C. Ainslie with photographs by Sarah Wilson.

[Commerce, Texas]—Beginning February 21, 2011, at the first floor of Gee Library at Texas A&M-Commerce, the Converging Literacies Center (CLiC @ Texas A&M-Commerce) will present **"Jasper, Texas: The Healing of a Community in Crisis,"** an exhibition organized by Dr. Ricardo Ainslie in collaboration with documentary photographer Sarah Wilson, and aided in part by a grant from Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Funding for "Jasper, Texas" was provided in part by a grant from Humanities Texas.

The project presents Jasper's experience as a model for other communities while also facilitating healing in the town itself. Residents of the town praised the project for focusing attention on the strength of their community—a subject often overlooked when the eyes of an international audience were focused on the gruesome crime.

The exhibition offers images of the idyllic Huff Creek Road, its residents, and the church where Byrd's battered body was discovered the next day by a six-year-old Marlon Forward and his stepfather. In directing viewers' attention to Forward and other lives changed by the murder, the photographs suggest the extent to which James Byrd Jr.'s death was a communal tragedy for this small town in the Pine Timber Belt of East Texas. Other photographs layer the account of the murder with a narrative of how Jasper ministers used their relationships with each other and with their congregations to keep the incident from becoming a catalyst for more violence. The Ministerial Alliance, a group comprised of clergy from black and white Catholic and Protestant churches in the area, had been meeting together for years before it was called upon to respond to this tragedy.

The exhibition will be available to the public from (February 21, 2011) to (March 31, 2011).

According to project director Shannon Carter (Associate Professor of English, Texas A&M-Commerce), several additional Humanities Texas exhibitions will be on display in Commerce, including “Behold the People: R. C. Hickman’s Photographs of Black Dallas, 1949–1961” (at Commerce City Hall) and “Literary East Texas: An Exhibition Honoring 25 East Texas Writers” (Hall of Languages, Texas A&M-Commerce). The fourth exhibition, “Images of Valor: U.S. Latinos and Latinas of World War II,” will be on display at the Audie Murphy Cotton Museum in Greenville, Texas. All exhibits will be free and open to the public from 2/21/2011 until 3/31/2011. Carter is Co-Director of CLiC.

For more information about viewing hours visit CLiC online at <http://convergingliteraciescenter.wordpress.com/>

Humanities Texas develops and supports diverse programs across the state, including lectures, oral history projects, teacher institutes, museum exhibitions and documentary films. For more information, please visit Humanities Texas online at <http://www.humanitiestexas.org> or call 512.440.1991.

Contact:

Shannon Carter, Associate Professor of English, Texas A&M-Commerce
Shannon_Carter@tamu-commerce.edu