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Clayton State University's Hollowell Publishes "The Forgotten Room"
Legislation Introduced to Protect Children from Misuse of Seclusion

Morrow, Ga., Dec. 8, 2009 -- Dr. Mary Hollowell, an associate professor of Teacher Education at Clayton State University, recently published *The Forgotten Room*, a book covering ethnographic case study of a public alternative school which highlights solitary confinement.

"I've tried to write the kind of education book that I've always liked to read – a chronology of a school year from start to finish that sucks you in, sweeps you along, and spits you out," explains Hollowell. "*The Forgotten Room* is a unique and somber story of students on parole, and it reveals what happens to them and their hardworking teachers when they are put in crumbling school buildings and overcrowded conditions. It's dark and gritty. I saw students threaten and assault teachers. We had lockdowns, SWAT team visits, gang fighting, drug dealing, and students on rampages, but we also had oases of peace in the classrooms of exemplary teachers."

During her study of this school she discovered the "forgotten room" used for solitary confinement. She noted and photographed the graffiti written in blood covering the walls of this room.

"I have been an advocate against 'school seclusion,' as it is called, ever since. Seclusion rooms are allowed in Georgia public schools provided they are big enough for children to lie down, have good visibility, and have locks that spring open in case of an emergency such as a fire. The small, dark solitary confinement cells that I have seen, though, are double-bolted on the outside and do not meet these criteria," Hollowell expresses. "This week I learned that U.S. Reps. George Miller (D-CA) and Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) will introduce new legislation to protect all children in schools from misuse of restraint and seclusion. If my book *The Forgotten Room* can play any part in the process, I will be satisfied."

For her book Hollowell used her own black and white images to accompany the text. Each chapter opens with a provocative photo of the deteriorating facility or neighborhood. Her work is featured as the cover image as well.

The 2009 Laura Ingalls Wilder Award winner from the American Library Association for lifetime contributions to children's literature, Ashley Bryan, wrote the foreword for Hollowell's book.

A unit of the University System of Georgia, Clayton State University is an outstanding comprehensive metropolitan university located 15 miles southeast of downtown Atlanta.

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