

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-DALLAS CONTRIBUTED DATA TO PULITZER-WINNING TEAM

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DALLAS, April 14 -- The University of Texas at Dallas issued the following news release:

UT Dallas' Institute for Urban Policy Research contributed a large amount of vital data to the Dallas Morning News editorial team that won a 2010 Pulitzer Prize on Monday.

The Morning News won the Pulitzer for editorial writing for what the prize committee called its "relentless editorials deploring the stark social and economic disparity between the city's better-off northern half and distressed southern half."

Dr. **Timothy Bray**, director of the institute and clinical assistant professor of criminology, public policy and political economy in the School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences, said his team of students, faculty and field researchers collected significant data from five neighborhoods around Dallas. They did a "windshield survey" of these neighborhoods, driving through the areas and evaluating their general conditions, focusing on details such as the number of vacant or abandoned properties and how many streets lacked lights or sidewalks.

The institute's research also involved compiling a massive database that included information ranging from residents' socioeconomic condition to school performance, public safety and economic activity.

"It was a fantastic opportunity to be able to bring the work we were doing to a team that also wanted to push for positive changes in our community," Bray said. "The Morning News wields a powerful pen in Dallas, and it was good to work with these editorial writers who were so dedicated to telling this important story."

It was the newspaper's ninth Pulitzer Prize, considered the most prestigious recognition in journalism. The writers involved in the project were Tod Robberson, Colleen McCain Nelson and William McKenzie.

In the paper's story about the award, Keven Ann Willey, vice president and editorial page editor, said the editorial team was able to "apply sustained attention to a very complex social issue," which is rare in daily newspaper work. The team also was directed by Sharon Grigsby, deputy editorial page editor.

Robberson said the data collected by UT Dallas and shared with the reporters was crucial to the project. It was part of the information that Dallas leaders now are evaluating as they attempt to tackle some of the disparity issues faced by the city.

"UT Dallas collected data that we never would have been able to compile on our own," Robberson said. "In these difficult economic times, when newspapers are struggling, we need to continue to work with institutions such as universities that can also take an objective stance and contribute in a major way to our efforts."

Bray said working with the newspaper was a great experience. His team is now poised to continue monitoring the Dallas neighborhoods, tracking changes that might result from the research and media attention.

To see the institute's research put to use by the Morning News, visit the paper's North-South Gap project online.

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