



**For Immediate Release**

## **Book Reveals Stories, Faces Behind Post-Katrina Life in New Orleans' Ninth Ward**

*Roots Run Deep Here: Returning to New Orleans' Ninth Ward After Katrina*  
Photography and text by Ryan Brandenburg (138 pages, ©2009)

In the four years since Hurricane Katrina's devastating floodwaters receded, increasing numbers of residents have returned to New Orleans' most vulnerable and damaged neighborhood, the Ninth Ward. Moved by their resolve and eager to understand their motivations, photojournalist Ryan Brandenburg began documenting the stories of a determined few who, initially displaced to locations around the country, refused to be cast out.

They return for reasons as personal and varied as their lives before the storm: A grandfather, to be near the site of his mother's and granddaughter's drowning deaths; a mother and daughter, to live together again after 18 months apart; a former business owner, to advocate for homeowners' rights.

Many live in trailers and cars, and commute in from nearby states, to be close to their former homes and to rebuild. Slowly, they are seeing small signs of normalcy — a barbershop reopened, the first school operating again — but they still await services as basic as grocery stores and banks.

In a new photo book, *Roots Run Deep Here: Returning to New Orleans' Ninth Ward After Katrina*, Brandenburg collects first-person accounts and striking photos of storm survivors who are rebuilding their lives in the Ninth Ward. These profiles capture the optimism, rage, gratitude, isolation, sorrow and determination of individuals who returned despite having lost material possessions and, in some cases, family and friends, here.

Amid the ward's famous ruins, these residents — so far, fewer than 3,600 of the former 19,000 — are re-establishing the relationships and way of life that called them back. In the new Musicians' Village housing community and throughout the city, music again is a common source of strength and expression.

*Roots Run Deep Here* reveals the local traditions of history, family, community and faith that make the Ninth Ward the only possible home for those who decide to return. It also celebrates the spirit of possibility and hope that these residents and those who are helping them rebuild bring to a recovering New Orleans and to America.

*Ryan Brandenburg is a full-time photographer for Temple University and a photojournalist in Philadelphia. A regular freelance contributor to local and national newspapers, he earned his bachelor's degree in photojournalism from the University of Pittsburgh and his master's degree in documentary photography from Temple.*

**CONTACT:** To learn more about *Roots Run Deep Here*, to obtain a copy of the book or to reach Ryan Brandenburg, visit [rootsrundeephere.com](http://rootsrundeephere.com) or e-mail [ryan@rootsrundeephere.com](mailto:ryan@rootsrundeephere.com).