



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **MORGANTOWN POLICE WILL OPEN NEW “JUDY KING SOFT INTERVIEW ROOM” TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

*Police join WVU and RDVIC to honor career of leading advocacy pioneer*

**MORGANTOWN, W.Va., March 27, 2017** – The [Morgantown Police Department](#) (MPD) will open its new “Judy King Soft Interview Room” for survivors of domestic and sexual violence at a ceremony to be held on April 5, 2017. The room’s purpose will be to empower both survivors and police. It will offer a space where those victimized by crimes of social violence can share their stories in compassionate, warm, and comfortable surroundings – in contrast to the harsh, cramped, and bleak environments of traditional interrogation rooms.

The interview room will be named in honor of Judy King, a statewide leader in rape and domestic violence advocacy, who retired in January after 37 years as Executive Director of the [Rape & Domestic Violence Information Center, Inc.](#) (RDVIC). The space is the culmination of collaboration between the MPD; [WVU’s Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Title IX](#); and RDVIC.

“By providing victims of violent crimes a place where they are welcome, comfortable, and secure, those victims will feel more encouraged to recount their experiences, accept our assistance, and contribute to our information gathering,” said Ed Preston, Chief of Morgantown’s Police Department. “As a result, our detectives will be better equipped to conduct investigations that lead to convictions.”

According to [Safe Horizon](#), a victim’s rights organization, one out of four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) reports that one in five women will become a victim of rape.

Upon entering the Judy King Soft Interview Room from the Public Safety Building’s second-floor hallway, survivors will be ushered from the police department into a living room where they will find no two-way mirrors, hard chairs, colorless walls, or harsh lighting. Instead, curtains will adorn large windows, walls will offer soothing colors, and couches and soft chairs will surround a coffee table. Lamps and an area rug will enhance the home-like atmosphere. Audio and video equipment, though present, will be inconspicuous.

Funded without cost to taxpayers, Morgantown’s soft interview room has been built entirely through donations from individual donors and businesses, including major contributions from [Lowe’s](#), [Walmart](#), [Star Furniture](#), the Hamstead Family Trust Rape and Domestic Violence Fund at [Your Community Foundation of North Central West Virginia, Inc. \(YCF\)](#), [MVB Bank](#), and [ProTex, LLC](#).

**About the Morgantown Police Department**

The Morgantown Police Dept. is a full service law enforcement agency with an authorized strength of 74 sworn police officers and 11 civilian support staff. For more information, please visit <http://www.morgantownwv.gov/quick-links/police-department/>.

**About the WVU Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Title IX**

The Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Title IX coordinates the WVU Peer Advocate program. Through this initiative, expertly trained students work to end sexual assault and power-based personal violence on campus through immediate crisis intervention and prevention awareness events. For more information, please visit <http://titleix.wvu.edu/>.

**About the Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center, Inc.**

RDVIC is a non-profit agency serving Monongalia, Preston, and Taylor counties in West Virginia. It provides community-based services to men, women, and children who are currently experiencing or who are survivors of domestic violence, child abuse, incest, sexual assault, elder care abuse, care giver abuse, sexual harassment, or stalking. For more information, please visit <http://www.rdvic.org/>.

**CONTACTS:****Krista Baker**

**Public Communications Manager, City of Morgantown**

304-284-7426

[kbaker@morgantownwv.gov](mailto:kbaker@morgantownwv.gov)

**Mariana Matthews**

**Sr. Title IX Education Specialist / Director, Peer Advocate Program, WVU**

304-293-5520

[mariana.matthews@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:mariana.matthews@mail.wvu.edu)

**Nnenna Minimah**

**Executive Director, RDVIC**

304-292-5100

[nnenna.rdvic@gmail.com](mailto:nnenna.rdvic@gmail.com)