Countdown to Riverside City College’s 100th Anniversary

Dorothy Kincell was a member of Riverside Junior College’s first graduating class in 1918. She received her B.A. degree from Pomona College then went on to Columbia University where she earned her M.A. degree. She then studied languages for a year and a half in Paris, Madrid and Mexico City. Ninety years ago, in 1921, she became the first alumnus of RJC to teach at the college when, at the request of A.G. Paul (RCC Principal-Director-President 1920-1950), she returned to fill in for Spanish instructor Kate O’Neill (Professor of Spanish 1916-1942) who was taking graduate courses. When O’Neil returned, Kincell went over to Riverside Poly High to teach Spanish. Following the death of O’Neil in 1942, Kincell returned to RJC where she taught until 1961. In the 1940s she and her students established the “Casa de Línguas”, a small cottage facing Fairfax Avenue that featured murals painted by the students, six window seats, a piano to accompany the singing of Spanish songs and a small kitchen stove to make tea or coffee.

Kincell is credited with the installation of the RCC language lab, making the college reportedly one of the first in the area to have audio equipment to teach languages. She also helped initiate Spanish lessons into the Riverside City Schools’ sixth grade classes. An avid world traveler, she visited Europe, Asia and Mexico where she would collect the local costumed dolls and add to her collection of over 800. After she retired in 1961 she admitted it was not the easiest task for her since “I have been either a teacher or student ever since I was four years old.” Much of the information above came from a March 11, 1966 article in the “Tiger Times” student newspaper written by Marilyn Shea.

Tom Mazzetti (RCC Class of 1958 and a 2011 inductee into RCC’s Athletic Hall of Fame) recently had this to say about Dorothy Kincell.

“I took a Spanish class from (her) and she was an amazing, nice teacher. She was very calm, soothing and was a great teacher. She attracted, in my opinion, serious students and they listened to her even though she was calm. She never raised her voice. She just had a demeanor that everyone paid attention to”.

Photo #1: Kincell’s junior college graduation photo, is from RJC’s first yearbook the 1918 “Kollej Ko-Ed”.

Photo #2: Kincell in her high school teaching days, is from the 1938 Riverside Poly High yearbook.

Photo #3: Kincell as a junior college instructor, is from RCC’s 1949 “Tequesquite” yearbook.

Photos #4.1 and 4.2: show the RCC Pan American Club from the 1957 yearbook. Advisor Dorothy Kincell is on the extreme left, while Tom Mazzetti is third from the left.

Photo #5: from RCC’s 1954 yearbook, pictures Kincell demonstrating language lab audio equipment to UCR language instructor Dr. Ernest Straubinger.

Photo #6: Kincell with some of her doll collection, is from the March 11, 1966 “Tiger Times” student newspaper.
It is 4 years and 21 weeks until RCC’s 100th Anniversary on March 13, 2016.
The Riverside City College Instructional Media Center is bringing you this five year countdown to RCC’s 100th Anniversary. Our intention is to give everyone a weekly glance at the many people and events that have been a part of the college.

Our thanks go to the RCC Digital Library Archives and the District’s Office of Strategic Communications and Relations for allowing us to use their photo and newspaper collections. Thanks as well to all of the RCC students and Faculty Advisors that were a part of the yearbook and newspaper staffs. Thanks also to Tom Johnson and Gilbert Jimenez who wrote “the book” about RCC’s history. “Riverside City College 1916-1981 - A 65 Year History” is available in the RCC Digital Library.

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