October 8, 2012

Countdown to Riverside City College's 100th Anniversary

The “Untitled Sculpture” standing next to the Martin Luther King Jr. Teaching and Learning Center has been a part of the Riverside City College landscape since 1977. The sculpture is the work of William Mitchell (Associate Professor of Art 1963-1989). The endowment for the two-ton cement piece came from an RCCD Trustee approved fund that (in those times) allowed faculty members to do projects in their own fields. That fund was also used for the mural that adorns the former Life Science Building (more about that work in a later “Countdown”). Mitchell’s sculpture consists of an arch and upright. It is steel reinforced and is of a light rust color known as “Sombrero Buff”. It rests on two underground blocks and has no visible pedestal. At the time of its construction Bill Mitchell said: “It’s an abstract design I’ve been working on for a long time. It is not a representational, recognizable thing”. Mitchell began the Ceramics and Sculpture program at RCC and designed the layout for the building that currently houses the curriculum (The above information was adapted from a May 27, 1977 “Viewpoints” article authored by staff writer Monica Platt).

The first pair of photos (below left) comes from that same May 1977 “Viewpoints” article and represents the sculpture in an early stage of construction. The photo to the right is from a September 30 1977 “Viewpoints” article and shows the sculpture a few months after its completion.

The black and white photo (below) is from the October 1977 “RCC Reports” District publication and shows the artist posing by his creation. The color photo is a recent view of the sculpture and includes the plaque that is mounted beneath the work and Mitchell’s portrait from the 1987-88 academic year.
It is 3 years and 22 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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