

July 16, 2012

Countdown to Riverside City College's 100th Anniversary

Rupert Costo was a 1928 graduate of Riverside Junior College. On June 27, 2012 Justice John Gabbert (RJC Class of 1929) spoke at RCCD's Preview Opening of "The Center for Social Justice and Civil Liberties". At that time, Justice Gabbert spoke about his former classmate:

"One of my closest friends in Junior College was Rupert Costo, a Cahuilla Indian from the Santa Rosa Reservation near Anza. He was a captain of the 1928 football team and became a great leader in Indian affairs throughout the country and an engineer for the State Highway Division."

Not only was Costo on the Riverside football team (where he was named to the All Conference Team), he was also a member of the basketball, track and baseball teams.

In the photo below of the 1928 RJC Football team (from the "Tequesquite" yearbook), Costo is the fifth from the left on the top row.



In the photo below of the 1928 Letterman's Club (also from the "Tequesquite" yearbook), Costo is the third from the left in the front row.

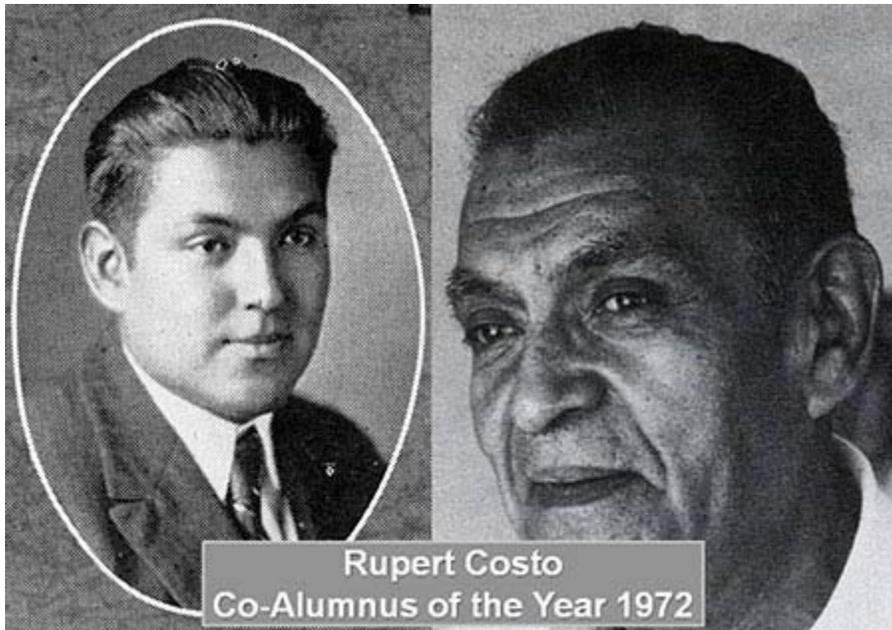


After graduating from RJC, Costo attended Whittier College and the University of Nevada thanks to football scholarships that he was awarded. He later graduated from Haskell Institute in Kansas (now known as Haskell Indian Nations University). He then began farming and helped to establish the Farm Center at Anza. He served on the Riverside County Agricultural Commission and helped found the Anza-Temecula Water Conservation District. Costo also helped bring rural electricity to the mountain area around Lake Hemet while serving as a Cahuilla tribal chairman. It was about that time that he began working with his old friend and classmate Justice John Gabbert to establish a branch of the University Of California in Riverside in the early 1950s. In 1950 Costo and his wife Jeanette, co-founded the “American Indian Historical Society” to promote the culture, education and welfare of Native Americans. The couple also started the publishing house known as the “Indian Historical Press” in 1973. It published some forty-nine books and was the first to be operated by Native Americans. Costo also edited the society’s scholarly magazine, “The Indian Historian” and supervised the publication of a magazine for Native American children called “The Weewish Tree”.

In a further remembrance about Costo, Justice Gabbert added:

“He left a substantial estate to UCR here in Riverside and also endowed the School of the American Indian there as well as an endowed professorship.”

In 1972 Rupert Costo was named RCCD Co-Alumnus of the Year. More about the person that shared the honor with him in next week’s “Countdown”.



It is 3 years and 34 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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