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Countdown to Riverside City College’s 100th Anniversary

Among Riverside City College’s roster of former Olympians are two individuals who competed in the Summer Olympic Games but not for the United States. Tony Turner (Professor of Physical Education 1964-94) was a member of Great Britain’s Diving Team at the 1952 Olympics held at Helsinki, Finland. He competed in the Men’s Springboard (where he finished 7th) and the Men’s Platform (where he finished 19th). Of his Olympic experience, Turner had this to say in an April 27, 1988 “Viewpoints” article:

“It was wonderful. There were so many different cultures and excitement in the Olympic Village it was almost overwhelming. Each country’s section of the village included their own kitchen. After the flag-raising ceremony in the morning, the village became a smorgasbord. Perhaps at 18 I was naïve, but the prevailing feeling among the athletes was one of friendly completion. Everyone was ready to help everyone else. We were there to give our best effort and have fun. There was no talk of medal counts and no one paraded their medals around the village. If more young people could experience the cross-cultural sharing of an Olympic Village-type atmosphere, there would be less misunderstanding in the world.”

In 1988, Tony Turner became the fifth RCC instructor to be elevated to the rank of full professor. In 1990 he was named the thirtieth Distinguished Faculty Lecturer.

Julius Kariuki (late 1980s RCC student) was a member of Kenya’s Track and Field team at the 1984 Olympics (held in Los Angeles) and the 1988 Olympics (held in Seoul, South Korea). In the 1984 Olympics, Kariuki competed in the Men’s 3000 meter Steeplechase where he finished in 7th place. After the 1984 Olympics, he attended RCC specifically to be trained by the college’s Track coach Ted Banks (Associate Professor, Physical Education 1988-98). In the 1988 Olympics, he again competed in the Men’s 3000 meter Steeplechase and finished in first place winning the Gold medal. Julius Kariuki had this to say about his Olympic experience in that same 1988 “Viewpoints” article:

“You have to respect your coach and follow his program. You have to want it and make sacrifices. You must train hard, because somewhere in the world there is someone else training hard to beat you. In 1984 I was very excited. In the two preliminary heats, I ran very fast and I had the best times. I was strongly favored in the final, but I had run so hard in the preliminaries I had saved nothing for the final. It was a great honor to run for my country and very exciting to be there with the crowds and the teams. It definitely opened my eyes and made me a better person; I learned that people are the same all over.”
It is 3 years and 31 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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