September 4, 2012

Countdown to Riverside City College’s 100th Anniversary

The first two wings of the Riverside Junior College Quadrangle were completed in time for the 1924 fall semester. Before they opened, they were described in the spring 1924 “Tequesquite” yearbook in the following manner:

“The two new buildings are of reinforced concrete with an exterior finish of plaster with stone trimmings. The assembly hall 35 by 70 feet in dimension (referring to what is now known as Quad 144) has an 18 foot ceiling, circle windows, cork floor and an interior finish of appropriate design. This building is lighted on the north side by five arches, and the entrance is located on the south, through the cloister”.

“On the first floor of the science hall (referring to the east wing of the Quad) will be the administration office including the college post office; the office of the dean of women; women’s rest rooms, lecture rooms and laboratories in the following subjects: mathematics, physics, geology, mineralogy, physical geography, and co-ordination. Two staircases, one south of the administration offices, the other north of the women’s rest room, provide access to the second floor. The remaining departments of the college will be housed on this floor”.

“The College Board of Education was fortunate in the choice of Mr. G. Stanley Wilson, architect and much of the success of the plan was due to his untiring efforts. The Cresmer Company constructed the building, and are also entitled to credit for the good work which they have done. Mr. Wilson and the Cresmer Company are both located in Riverside.”

Construction of the first two buildings of the Quad began on September 25, 1923 and the two wings were completed and accepted by the Riverside Board of Education on July 17, 1924. Prominent Riverside architect G. Stanley Wilson designed all sections of the RCC Quadrangle built up to 1951. Below you can see two conceptual drawings of the Quad that appeared in the 1923 “Tequesquite” yearbook. The top rendition shows the view looking east. The lower drawing is the view looking south. Although it is hard to make out in the drawing, the motto “EDUCATION SHOULD BE AS BROAD AS MAN” was originally to have appeared above the five large arches. Note the clock tower that was part of the original plans but not built at the time due to budgetary constraints.
The Quadrangle finally received its clock tower during the 2005-07 renovation. The addition of the top sections completed G. Stanley Wilson’s vision of a clock tower for the college. A recent view of the RCC clock tower can be seen in the photo below left. Below right is a photograph of architect G. Stanley Wilson. He was a native of Bournemouth, England and immigrated to Riverside, California with his family in 1895. He would often buy ads in the yearbook updating his future plans for the Quad. As you can see, he had an office on Sixth Street in Riverside and his phone number consisted of only three digits. His motto was “Architecture is art in living plans”. Wilson designed most of Riverside’s schools built in the first half of the twentieth century. He also designed the International Rotunda and the St. Francis Chapel of the Mission Inn.

It is 3 years and 27 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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