January 17, 2012

Countdown to Riverside City College's 100th Anniversary

January 22, 2012 will mark the one-year anniversary of the Riverside Aquatics Complex grand opening on the campus of Riverside City College. But before the RAC there was and is, Cutter Park Pool. The Cutter Park Pool story had its beginnings more than seven decades ago.

In the late 1930s a swimming pool, next to Magnolia Avenue, was first proposed. By 1940, school officials were talking about the possible purchase of Cutter Park (in the Arroyo, north of the old Riverside Poly High School campus) as a pool site. Nothing further came of these discussions until the mid-1950s. At a school board meeting on October 1, 1956, student and staff representatives from Riverside Poly High School and RCC were gratified to witness an early step in the acquisition of a swimming pool for both schools. It was generally agreed that it would be built somewhere in the Arroyo with Cutter Park (property of the city of Riverside) being the most likely site. During the meeting, the school board acted upon a resolution which had been under negotiation for months; a three-way arrangement involving the city of Riverside, the Riverside City School district, and the Riverside Junior College District.

The agreement called for a trade: the city would grant Cutter Park to the Junior College district, and in return would receive Evans Park (west of Magnolia Ave.) from the City School District. The city also agreed to improve drainage facilities for the park and to build an underpass through the Magnolia Avenue fill; the underpass would connect Wheelock Field with district property west of Magnolia Avenue. The resolution was passed by the board and soon after accepted and signed by city officials. At a December 3, 1956 board meeting, further plans were discussed and financing for the swimming pool project was also considered although final approval was not given until June of 1957. Herman Ruhnau was the architect chosen for the pool and two other construction projects going on at the same time (the Administration and Cosmetology buildings). In January of 1958, a Loma Linda firm, Ruckle and May, submitted the low bid for the swimming pool project. Cutter Park Pool was partially completed by October 1958, but school officials delayed its utilization until the Administration and Cosmetology buildings were completed and usable, an event which took place in November of 1958.

The article reproduced below is from the October 4, 1956 edition of the RCC “Tiger Times” student newspaper.
The first photo is an artist’s conception of what the completed pool would look like. It was printed in the October 24, 1957 “Tiger Times”.

The second photo shows the progress of construction in early 1958. It appeared in the February 28, 1958 “Tiger Times”.

It is 4 years and 8 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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