

February 21, 2012

Countdown to Riverside City College's 100th Anniversary

This week, a story continuation of Riverside Junior College student Anita Johnson Mackey. The April 18, 2011 "Countdown" told of how this early 1930s African-American student wrote an article in the January 16, 1933 RJC "Arroyo" student newspaper dealing with race relations. The article is reproduced below, along with her photo from the 1933 "Tequesquite" yearbook.

**Anita Johnson Answers Questions
On Negroes for Inquisitive Students**

Students who do not wish to make themselves known have evinced an interest in the attitude taken by negro students of Riverside Junior College. In an anonymous letter to Anita Johnson, sophomore girl of negro parentage and winner of second place in last year's oratorical contest, they have asked certain questions which Anita answers below.

By Anita Johnson

Question: What is the attitude of the negro students attending a mixed school?

Answer: Satisfaction. An indifferent attitude is experienced only when social life is evidenced. Lack of negro associates tends to give one a decided feeling of loneliness.

Question: Are the negroes in favor of separate schools?

Answer: No. Where negro schools are in practice in three out of five cases the negro schools are not equipped as properly as the white schools. Mixed school assure the negro the same advantages that his white classmates have.

Question: Does the negro desire social equality?

Answer: No. We desire only equality of justice, assuring us of the rights handed down by the Federal Government.

Question: What is your opinion of Amos and Andy?

Answer: They should be placed so far away from the microphone that hearing would be impossible.

Question: What is your opinion of the past "all negro" films?

Answer: Rotten! Not true to the race at all. Enough to raise the blood pressure of any race conscious Black American.

Question: Should the Federal Government take a hand in the lynching of the negro?

Answer: Yes. If a state fails to give a citizen protection, I firmly believe that the Federal Government should take a hand and see to the protection of the individual.

Question: Whom do you think the most outstanding male student in the college?

Answer: For broad-mindedness, congeniality, scholarship, and stamina enough to stand up for what he knows is right, regardless of others, I cast my vote for Julian Hayden.

Question: Whom do you think the most outstanding woman student?

Answer: Pauline Hirst. Isn't she charming?

Question: Do you believe in intermarriage?

Answer: No. The negro race is mixed up enough now. Although I believe that in time a new race will be formed. No extremes of black and white,—bronsae.

Question: Is the negro problem a problem within a problem?

Answer: Yes. But the problem within a problem isn't as great as the problem.



ANITA JOHNSON
Social service course; forensics, 1, 2; Black Masque, 1; Y. W. C. A., 1.

Following her 1933 RJC graduation, she attended the University of Redlands, graduating in 1937 with a B.A. In 1941 she earned an M.A. degree from the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration. From 1940 to 1943, she was employed as a social worker in pediatrics at Chicago's Provident Hospital and for another three years as a Home Services case worker with the American Red Cross. She then began a career of more than 29 years as a social worker with the Veterans Administration in Chicago, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. During most of her service with the VA, she held supervisory positions. She retired in 1976 with a special commendation from the VA. Much of her time was devoted to helping the underprivileged and disadvantaged. She was a board member of the NAACP, of the Santa Barbara County Committee for Equal Opportunity in Apprenticeship and Training for Minority Groups, and of the advisory board for the Center for Black Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She was the first instructor of Afro-American culture at Santa Barbara City College. The tenets and the life of the Seventh Day Adventist Church played a big part of her being. She served as a board member of the Santa Barbara Seventh Day Adventist Parochial School and as a member of the Human Relations Committee of the Pacific Union Conference of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. She was also a trustee of Loma Linda University with a particular interest in the university's hospital. Her church acknowledged her dedication by calling on her in 1974 to deliver the centenary graduation address at Andrews University at Berrien Springs, Michigan. At that time, the university awarded her an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters Degree. In June of 1976, Anita Johnson Mackey was honored as the 20th RCC Alumnus of the Year at the college's commencement ceremony.

The two photos below show her at the time of her RCC Alumnus of the Year Award. In the photo on the right she can be seen visiting the RCC Quadrangle where she attended as a student more than forty years earlier. Accompanying her is Foster Davidoff (RCC Superintendent/President 1974-78).



Regarding her parents, she declared, “I learned at home that what was in my head was more important than the color of my skin”.

It is 4 years and 3 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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