Countdown to Riverside City College's 100th Anniversary

Over the past almost one hundred years, Riverside City College has gone by various names. Students of the early 1940s and back would say they went to "RJC". Students of the mid 1940s and early 1950s would say they went to "RC". All students since the late 1950s would say they went to "RCC" but even those initials have had different meanings. When the college was first established on March 13, 1916, it was known as Riverside Junior College. The college had no buildings of its own then and used eleven rooms at old Riverside Poly High. When the college constructed its first two buildings in 1924 (the east and west wings of the Quadrangle) the name "Junior College" was etched in stone above the northeast entrance. That nameplate can be seen in the 1939 "Tequesquite" yearbook photo below. The second photo is a current view of the same area showing the sign installed in the 1980s when the Quadrangle was named in honor of A.G. Paul (RCC Principal-Director-President 1920-50).

By the 1940s, the term "Junior College" fell into disfavor and a discussion began on what to call the college in the post World War II years. As can been seen in the October 22, 1943 "Arroyo" student newspaper below, "The College of Riverside" and "City College" were two names under consideration. On June 4, 1945 the Riverside Board of Education formally changed the name of "Riverside Junior College" to "Riverside College". When the southwest corner of the Quadrangle was completed in 1950, "Riverside College" was etched in stone above the new south entrance. Below, next to the 1943 "Arroyo" newspaper article, is a view of the Quad south entrance as it appears today.
In the mid-1950s, dissatisfaction began to emerge about the name “Riverside College”. Some thought the initials “RC” made the public think of the “Red Cross” or worse yet, “Royal Crown” cola. In 1956, seeking a more distinctive name, the RC Administrative Council consisting of President O.W. Noble (1950-63), Registrar Earl McDermont (1921-58) and Dean of Women Frances Fraser (1923-56) and others suggested “Riverside City College”. Interestingly, in the 1940s, the term “RCC” had first been considered and rejected. On March 18, 1957, the Riverside City School Board voted unanimously to change the name of the college to “RCC”. The March 21, 1957 “Tiger Times” newspaper article, reproduced below, reports the name change.

‘City College’ Name Debated by Board

A proposal that Riverside Junior College change its name to “The College of the City of Riverside,” or “City College,” was debated last week by a postwar planning committee composed of honor graduates and faculty members.

Such a change, it was suggested, would be in keeping with movements already past the experimental stage and leading to the replacement of the term “junior college” by a title less limiting in its implications and of greater psychological influence upon regularly incoming students, returning soldiers, and upon adults.

Unanimous Vote Alters Name To Riverside City College

The Riverside City School Board, unanimously voted Monday to change the name of this college to Riverside City College.

The move by the board climaxed a drive by the students of Riverside's sole two year institute of higher learning for the alteration. The school will now be referred to as RCC and in the sports world its teams will bear the name "Riverside City College Tigers."

TT Started Move

The first move toward making the change occurred last year when Mel Gauntz, then editor of the Tiger Times, wrote an editorial calling for the change. Since then student leaders have done everything in their power to influence the Board to make the alteration.

Early this year the Riverside City College Executive Board wrote a letter to President O. W. Noble requesting his support in the name change campaign.

Student leaders also met with Superintendent of Schools Bruce Miller to lay the groundwork for the new moniker.
But this was not to be the last change in RCC’s appellation. More next week in part two of “RCC’s Changing Identity”.

It is 4 years and 1 week 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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