April 2, 2012

Countdown to Riverside City College's 100th Anniversary

Next week (April 8-14 2012) is National Library Week, as sponsored by the American Library Association. Riverside City College has been served by four libraries in its almost 100-year history.

RCC’s first library was actually housed in Riverside Poly High School from 1916 to 1924 while the college was sharing facilities with the high school. The photo below was printed in the 1918 “Tequesquite” yearbook.

Riverside Junior College’s second library was located in what is now Quad 144 (dedicated as Singletary Hall in May 2008). This building was actually a multi-purpose room early on called the “Assembly and Music Hall-Library”. It measured 35 by 70 feet, with a cork floor, 18 foot ceiling, and five large arched windows (facing Terracina Avenue). This library was the college’s longest lasting, in use for almost four and one-half decades from 1924 to 1968. Today this building houses the hall dedicated to Barbara and Bart Singletary. The photo below is from the 1924 “Tequesquite” yearbook.
The third library was known as the “Martin Luther King Jr. Library”, named after the civil rights leader. It was in use from 1968 to 2003. At a Board meeting on July 9, 1968, RCCD Trustee Joseph Aguilar made the motion to name the library after the then recently assassinated King stating that it was “a unique opportunity to do a lot for Riverside and for the memory of one who was very special to educational institutions”. The building opened for student use in September of 1968 and was called the nation's largest junior college library (in terms of its seating capacity of 800). It is now called the “Marin Luther King Jr. Teaching / Learning Center” (rededicated August 31, 2005). The photo below is from the 1969 RCC “Spectator” magazine.

The fourth and current library to serve the students of RCC is the “Salvatore G. Rotella Digital Library and Learning Resources Center”. Originally dedicated on August 23, 2003, a second ceremony was held on February 26, 2009 to rededicate it in the name of Dr. Salvatore G. Rotella (RCCD Superintendent/President 1992-2004; Chancellor 2005-2007).

Two current RCC employees, Barbara Van Tomme (Library Clerk II 1966-date) and Gilbert Finch
(Library Clerk 1968-date) have worked in all three of the libraries build exclusively for the use of the college. Van Tomme and Finch were also student workers in the Quadrangle library before they began their full-time RCC careers.

It is 3 years and 49 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. For copyright purposes, all images originating from Riverside City College publications and the District’s Office of Strategic Communications and Relations are the property of the Riverside Community College District.