February 25, 2013

Countdown to Riverside City College's 100th Anniversary

Quadrangle Room 105 on the Riverside City College campus is dedicated to William Wiley. The plaque seen below is mounted next to the classroom.

William “Bill” Wiley taught English and American Literature at RCC from 1956 to 1992. Wiley, born in Palm Beach, Florida but raised in Riverside, graduated from Poly High School in 1944. He then joined the U.S. Army Air Forces and served in Alaska until his discharge in 1946. He went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in English from Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana and a master’s degree in English from UCLA. Wiley was hired by O.W. Noble (RCC President 1950-63) in 1956. RCC was the only college where Wiley applied to teach. President Noble had been the attendance officer at Riverside Poly High when Wiley was a student there. In a 1991 interview with RCC’s “Viewpoints” student newspaper, Wiley joked that Noble probably wanted to talk to him about unserved detentions at the high school. Below are two photos from Wiley’s early years at RCC. In the left 1957 photo, Wiley is seen pouring a cup of coffee for Howard A. Burton (Associate Professor of English & History 1956-82). In the 1959 photo on the right, Wiley is with another RCC Faculty member, Wilbert F. Hunt (Associate Professor of English & Speech 1958-84).
While at RCC, Wiley founded the Honors Colloquium in the Humanities for sophomores. In 1971 he established and was the director of the Indian Education Program traveling to Arizona and New Mexico reservations to recruit students. He helped found the Faculty Senate and served as its president in the early 1970s. For a time, he was the Associate Dean of Instruction and served as chairman of RCC’s English Department. Professor Thomas M. Johnson (Vice President Academic Affairs, Associate Professor of English & Humanities 1958-97) called Wiley “a terrific innovator”. In 1972, Bill Wiley was chosen by his colleagues to deliver the 12th Faculty Lecture. The title of his talk was “Some Romantic Illusions of Our Time”. Below is a May 12, 1972 article from the “Tiger Times” student newspaper.

Nature good and society bad?
‘Only illusions’ says Wiley

By JANET LaLONDE
Assistant News Editor

Man’s ability to solve his problems is hampered by the illusion that nature is good and society is bad, said William Wiley, an associate professor of English at RCC. He delivered his address, called “Some Romantic Illusion of Our Time,” before an audience of several hundred at the 12th annual Faculty Lecture.

He said the sentimentalized view of the American Indian is an example of the revival of early Romantic ideas from the late 18th and early 19th century. The idea then was that nature was good, even divine and that savages were noble.

PRIMITIVE MAN has to live in harmony with nature, because he has no other choice. He uses what technology he has and then prays, said Wiley.

“All animals and plants must develop defenses to cope with nature. Man’s main weapon against nature is society.” But as man develops a civilization to cope with nature, new problems arise and he wants to return to nature to escape from society, said Wiley.

HE SAID THAT in determining man’s relationship to nature man should shed his romantic illusions and see nature as she really is, violent and unpredictable.

The RCC faculty lecturer is chosen by his colleagues to deliver an address on a scholarly subject of general interest. The series started in 1961.

WILEY WILEY

Wiley educational interests went beyond RCC. He served on the Riverside Unified School District board from 1978 until 1992 including five years as board president. An avid outdoorsman, Wiley was a Boy Scout leader for more than 25 years and led many hiking, nature walks and backpacking excursions through RCC’s Community Activities Program. “I think I was lucky” to be hired at RCC, said Wiley in a June 6, 1991 “Viewpoints” interview prior to his retirement. “This is an exceptionally good college”. Below are photos of William Wiley throughout his more than three and one half decade tenure at Riverside City College.
It is 3 years and 2 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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