August 19, 2013

Countdown to Riverside City College’s 100th Anniversary

In 1933, 70 years ago, the United States was in the depths of the Great Depression. Nevertheless, the process of education continued at Riverside Junior College. That year there was an enrollment of 636 students and the Class of 1933 consisted of 143 graduates. Despite the budget constraints that one might expect at a time like this, RJC managed to provide a number of extracurricular activities for its students. Below are a number of groups that students could be a part of that were photographed for the 1933 “Tequesquite” yearbook. The group, below left, was a newly formed organization, the “Press Club” Its membership consisted of the “Arroyo” student newspaper staff, the “Tequesquite” yearbook staff and other students interested in writing. Numerous parties were held during the year including beach outings, skating parties, jigsaw puzzle contests, horseback rides and several dances. On the right is the “Arroyo” staff. The newspaper began its eighth year of publication in the 1932-33 school year. It was published every two weeks on Mondays.

“The Black Masque” was the college drama club with a membership of thirty-five. Membership was limited to those students whose interest in dramatics and play production was considered outstanding. The student applying for membership was voted on by the club members after attending three consecutive meetings, the voters basing their decision on the interest shown by the applicant during that period. The drama presented that school year was “The Ninth Guest”, a mystery melodrama in three acts. The story of the play revolved around an unusual party in a penthouse atop an office building and fifteen stories above the ground. To this penthouse eight people are invited. These eight people suddenly find themselves locked in the penthouse with no means of escape, they are compelled to await the arrival of the ninth guest who comes in the form of hideous death.

“Press Club” ARROYO

BLACK MASQUE “THE NINTH GUEST”
“Forensics” participated in four conference debates. Two were won, one was lost and one was forfeited. The debate team also participated in a non-decision debate with U.S.C. and in a debate tournament at Redlands University. Anita Johnson (seen in the center lower row) was the 1976 RCCD Alumnus of the Year. The “Junior Lions” carried out an ambitious program of college and community work. Its motto was “Service to the school, community, and self”. The club assisted in staging a number of the college dances, furnished ushers for “The Ninth Guest” dramatic play and presented a cup to the male member of the student body who rendered the most service to the school during his years in the college.

The Y.W.C.A. was organized for the purpose of creating a more friendly relationship between the women of the college. Supper meetings were held every other Wednesday during the college year. Two of the leading social events of the year sponsored by the club were a Christmas Leap Year dance and a May Day Kid Party both held in the Y.W.C.A. gymnasium. The Y.M.C.A. club’s purpose was to create a friendly spirit among all the students which it reached in the college. Its stated goals were to maintain the high ideals of Christian leadership upon which the club was formed. It was open to any member of RJC regardless of race or creed. It was strictly non-sectarian.

The “Assembly Choir” presented many programs during the year. It was a mixed chorus composed of thirty-five men and women students, designed to develop the artistry of fine ensemble singing. The group assisted in a production of “H.M.S. Pinafore” and presented a Christmas program in connection with the play, “The Salutation of Nativity” given in an assembly. The choir also cooperated with the Riverside Community Opera Association in the presentation of “Cavaleria
Rusticana” and “Der Freischutz”. The group sang unaccompanied chorales in the oratorio “Elijah” presented on the college’s outdoor stage. Their final event of the year was the Commencement exercises. A number of members of the “Orchestra” belonged to the Riverside Little Symphony which was composed of the outstanding musicians of the city and surrounding communities. Besides giving several concerts of its own, it accompanied the operas given by the Riverside Opera association during the season. It also accompanied the oratorio “Elijah” presented by the RJC Music Department.

“Student Varieties” was a magazine on the campus. The contents consisted of serious essays on pertinent subjects, economic and otherwise; literary criticism, humor, short stories, poetry and representative work from the college’s Art Department. The photo below is noteworthy because it contains no less than four individuals that went on to be named RCCD Alumni of the Year. In the front row are Mine Okubo (extreme left-1974) and Helen Brigden Bottel (4th from left-1987). In the back row are Rexford Brandt (3rd from the left-1967) and Robert Patton (extreme right-1981). Patton at the time was a faculty member of Riverside Junior College. He graduated from the college in 1928.
It is 2 years and 29 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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