Countdown to Riverside City College's 100th Anniversary

In the 1930s Riverside City College (then known as Riverside Junior College) experimented with cooperative residences for the male and female students. RJC was the first, and very likely the only, junior college to try such living arrangements. Women’s organizations relating to housing appeared in the early 1930s. These groups lived in college sponsored and supervised “dormitories” at Lovekin, Hennessey, Sheffer and Fraser Halls. Women’s residence, Fraser Hall, was the longest lasting dormitory. It was in operation from 1933 to 1939. Located off-campus at 3908 Tenth Street, it was named after RJC Dean of Women Frances Fraser (1923-1956). The photo of Fraser below appeared in the 1933 “Tequesquite” yearbook.

The photo below appeared in the 1936 “Tequesquite” yearbook. The following text accompanied the photo:

“Twenty-six girls living together in a cooperative way create that variety which is the spice of life. Thus many individual personalities each with diversified interests, yet all with the same common purpose – college – contribute some new values to every other member of the group. There are two house mothers, Mrs. Ruth Rowe and Mrs. Catherine Chamberlain who have charge of the house. The lighter duties are divided so that each girl has some share in the household management. Four college boys serve dinner and do the heavier work. Certain mutually agreed upon rules are kept by all residents. In the afternoon and evening quiet hours are set aside for study, but the “dorm” is not without its social life. In addition to and invitational event each quarter, taffy pulls and birthday spreads take place. The gains in sharing one’s life with others, most girls agree, outweigh by far the minor disadvantages of not living at home.”
Below is an interior and exterior of Fraser House from 1930s era “Tequesquite” yearbooks.

The headline above is from the March 1, 1939 edition of the “Arroyo” student newspaper. The article went over the house rules for Fraser Hall. They read:

“Residents must be in by 10:30pm Sunday through Thursday. The only exception to this ruling is college affairs. There are six mid-week privileges a quarter and not more than one special privilege a week. Residents who expect to be out later than 10:30 must report before leaving and immediately upon returning. Special privileges are denied any woman not receiving an average of “C”. During examination week no special privileges are granted. Hours of study are from 2 to 4 in the afternoon, and from 7 to 9:30 at night. During this time radios are not to be used during study hours or after 11pm. Baths are not to be taken after 11 pm or before 6am. Dancing in the house is allowed until 12. Guests are allowed in the house until 12:30 after dances and on Friday and Saturday nights. The room lights must be turned out at 12 and special permission to study after 12 must be secured from the house mother. As to the manner of dress, shorts may be worn only in the utility kitchen and back porch. The women are not allowed to appear in informal dress in the living rooms, dining rooms and kitchen. Women in slacks may not appear at dinner. Breakfast at the dormitory is served at 6:45 on Monday through Friday. However, Saturday and Sunday mornings, breakfast is not served until 8am. Dinner is served at 6pm and the residents are expected to assemble in the living room at 5:55 each evening. No smoking is allowed in the rooms on the lower floor.”

By the end of the 1930s, Riverside Junior College’s experiment with cooperative dormitories had come to an end.
It is 2 years and 24 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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