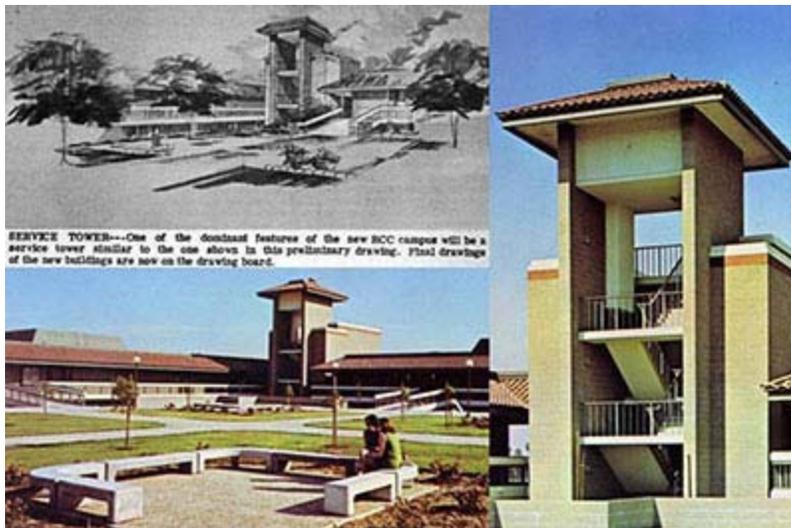


January 14, 2013

Countdown to Riverside City College's 100th Anniversary

The Riverside City College Promontory Tower located between the old Physical and Life Science Buildings has been part of the campus landscape since it was dedicated (along with the PS, LS, Student Center, Library and Planetarium Buildings) in 1969. It was one of the structures that took the place of the old Riverside Poly High School after the campus was purchased and razed by Riverside City College in the mid-1960s. In the black and white photo below (from the September 16, 1965 "Tiger Times" newspaper) it is referred to as the "Service Tower". This term is proper because the largest part of the structure (behind the tower) housed the heating boiler and cooling chiller for the PS & LS Buildings although each building had its own air handlers. The color photos below (from a 1969 RCC "Spectator" magazine) show the tower as it looked not long after the dedication. Note that there was not yet a clock face in the space set aside for it to occupy.



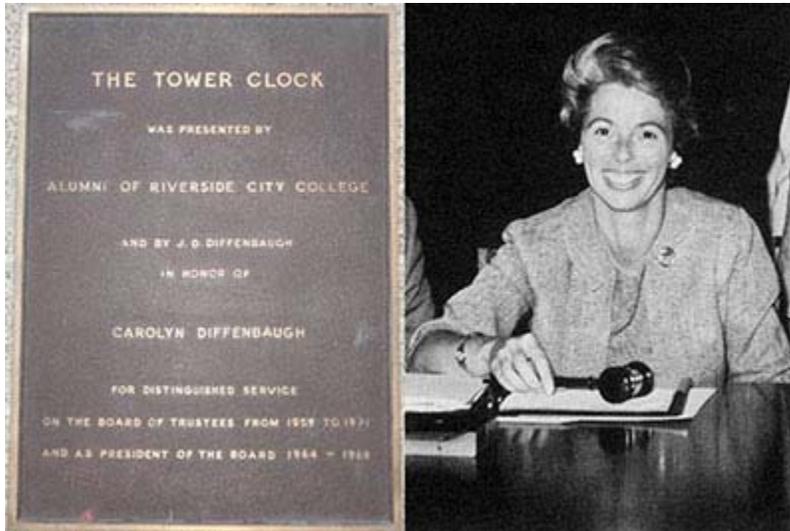
A May 2, 1969 story in the "Tiger Times" reported that the RCC Alumni Association had volunteered to raise funds for a \$1000 timepiece to be installed on the tower. The 48 inch (in diameter) clock was reported to be an electrically powered remote reset mechanism from the Cincinnati Time Equipment Company which would also install it. Assistant Dean of Students, Mary Jane Merrick optimistically reported that the clock would probably be installed in the summer of 1969 and in operation for the fall semester. However this was not to be the case. The staff of the "Tiger Times" declared the installation of the clock to be in a "State of Hibernation" in an October 10, 1969 editorial:

"A magnificent structure beams down upon our Student Center. This neglected tower of bricks serves the campus nothing but a blank stare with its wide, untouched face. What and interesting sight one might experience, if only he could gain entrance to the virgin stairs. A place it could be, to divorce one's thoughts from school. A state of hibernation it must be in, for no clock has appeared, and the gate remains locked ... shall we let it rest another year?"

The problem of the gate and student access refers to the fact that entry above the second level was denied due to "safety issues". The situation was still not resolved in 1971 when another story about the tower appeared in the March 5, 1971 "Tiger Times".

“There is a fund forwarded by RCC alumni to install a clock on the Tower. The fund has been dormant for a year. Should sufficient monies be raised to affix a timepiece to the structure, RCC would possess a very expensive clock pedestal and machinery space. Only time will tell.”

By the mid-1970s, the clock had been installed and dedicated to former President of the RCCD Board of Trustees Carolyn Diffenbaugh. Seen below is the plaque dedicating the tower clock to Diffenbaugh and a photo of her when she was President of the RCCD Board of Trustees from 1964 to 1968.



Chimes were heard on the hour. Also morning, noon and evening bell concerts were performed daily. However the source of the chimes and concert was not from the Tower but from the roof of the Bradshaw Student Center. Speakers were installed there and controlled from inside the Student Center. The chimes and concerts were prerecorded on an endless loop tape cartridge. In the mid 1970's, the Tower became the iconic image of RCC, appearing on letterheads and (below) on the cover of District publication "RCC Reports".



By the late 1980s the clock and chimes had fallen on hard times and ceased to operate. An attempt was made in the mid-1990s to restore the clock but it was determined that it was not cost effective to repair. Below is a photo of the tower as it looks today.



It is 3 years and 8 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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