January 28, 2013

Countdown to Riverside City College’s 100th Anniversary

In 1969, the first Riverside City College Alumnus of the Year honor to be presented posthumously was made to Major-General Robert Franklin Worley who died in the Vietnam War. The then deputy commander of the U.S. 7th Air Force was killed on July 23, 1968 when his reconnaissance plane was shot down by enemy ground fire only 17 days before he was to leave Vietnam. Maj. Gen. Worley, 48, was the third general killed in action in the Vietnam War. He was directly in charge of the huge armada of Air Force planes bombing North and South Vietnam. Worley’s death came as heavy ground fighting erupted in the northern and central provinces coupled with fresh intelligence reports that a third enemy offensive might begin in August. An Air Force spokesman said Worley was piloting an RF-4C, a Phantom fighter-bomber converted for photo reconnaissance, when it was hit by enemy gunners 65 miles northwest of Da Nang. Worley attended what was then called Riverside Junior College from 1937 to 1939. After taking aviation cadet training at March Field in 1940, he went on to fly 120 combat missions in World War II. After WWII, he commanded the jet training school at Williams Air Force Base in Arizona and served as director of operations for U.S. Air Forces in Europe. He was awarded the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Air Metal with seven oak leaf clusters. He also had been decorated by the South Vietnamese government. His brother, Riverside dentist Dr. Donald Worley, accepted the award on behalf of the family.

Below left is a photo of Worley as an RJC student from the 1939 “Tequesquite” yearbook. To the right is a 1968 photo.

To read more information about Major-General Worley, follow this link to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund website:
It is 3 years and 6 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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