Countdown to Riverside City College’s 100th Anniversary

In January 1939, “Arroyo” student newspaper Executive Editor Marvin Hayman asked members of the Riverside Junior College faculty to write a series of opinion pieces under the title “Instructor’s Viewpoints”. Today, 75 years later, we can see what was on their minds. The fourth article appeared in the February 8, 1939 edition of the newspaper and was written by Professor Robert P. Anderson (English, 1916-1950). Anderson was one of the charter members of the faculty beginning his RJC career on the same day the college opened its doors. The two faculty group photos below are from the 1926 and 1928 yearbooks. In the top photo, Anderson is standing, ninth in from the left. In the bottom photo, he is seated, third in from the left.

In the 1938 “Tequesquite” yearbook it was written: “Mr. Anderson, who has been with the college since 1916, has delved into English Literature for twenty-two years. He reveals his discoveries to full classes. Between times he teaches short story writing.” In the 1939 yearbook he was described as: “affable, sympathetic, with graying hair, twinkling blue eyes, and a delightful sense of humor. His course on a survey of English literature is ever popular with the students, and he lectures to full classes each year. In addition, he teaches Advanced Composition, which is mainly short story writing, to a select group of students.” In his article, Anderson had the following advice for his students.
“Men and women have always delighted to speculate in the light of later experiences on how they would spend their lost youth if they still had it to spend. Accordingly, while I know as well as anyone, if I were a student at junior college at the proper age, I should behave like any other normal — I hope — college student, I find it amusing to indulge in such a speculation. This is to be regarded as neither criticism nor advice, but simply my personal feelings about a purely hypothetical situation. In the first place I should take my college course seriously. I should realize that it was my first ‘grown-up’ job and that my reputation in the world about me for considerable time to come would depend on how I filled it. Further, I should be rather curious on my own account to note whether my behavior was that of a young adult or of a delayed adolescent. If it were necessary, as it probably would be, to contribute to my support, I should be content with a part-time job outside, and should try my best to give my college work the right of way. It would seem rather stupid to make sacrifices of time and energy for an education and then damage the very article for which I was working so hard. If my circumstances were such that I needed a full-time outside job to get me through, I believe that I should leave college altogether until I could save enough money to see me through at least one year. I should avoid attempting two full-time jobs and probably being a flop in one or both. I should select my courses with an eye to my plans for the future and according to my interest in the content and not according to units or convenience of schedule. I should, however, try to place myself under teachers with whom I was intellectually and temperamentally congenial; and, having so placed myself, I should try to get the best that they had to offer in every way. If academic exigencies should place me under men who irritated or bored me, I should still try to get from them what I could. I should realize that in later years I should probably meet many such persons, and that it would be foolish now to begin letting them get me down. I should engage in one, and probably only one, extra-curriculum activity, which I should choose according to my own tastes and desires and not according to the wishes of anyone else or to any sense of duty. The ‘stern daughter of the Voice of God’ should be kept rigidly in her place, presiding over my serious work and moral character, and away from my pleasures and pastimes. However, to that activity I should give the best I had and try not to let any of my colleagues down. My friends would be chosen on a similar principle, those whom I liked and who liked me, with whom I could establish a joyous give and take, with no regard to the ‘right crowd’ nor again to any misplaced sense of duty. Few things seem more dreary to me than dictated ‘friendships.’ One facility of the junior college which I should certainly not neglect is the library. I should realize that, in spite of all surface appearances of being already over-crowded, my college days would offer one of the best opportunities for reading that I should ever have, and that the junior college library with its wide and excellent selection, its accessible shelves, and its personal and friendly attitude offered unique advantages. I should have at least one book of my own choosing, entirely apart from any of my courses, going all the time, and I should do my very best to form the permanent friendship good books to my own taste. I should use the Tiger’s Den for physical refreshments, for short and snappy chat and comment, not as an all-day hangout. Bridge I believe I should leave as a refuge for the middle-aged, for the physically and mentally inert. I should try to resist the allurements of our sun-drenched campus save for ten or fifteen minutes at a time and should concentrate my loafing — where it would do the most good and the least harm, on occasional evenings and most week-ends. I should refrain from indulging in conversations or boyish sports under the classroom windows — it is somewhat humiliating to be considered a nuisance by busy people; and I should not throw cigarette and chewing papers on the campus — messy front yards are as unpleasant to live with as messy shirt fronts and spotted vests. What I should do about the young women and their distracting charm I do not know. You see, I went to a man’s college and have no experience to guide me.”

Below are four photos of Anderson from “Tequesquite” yearbooks of the 1930s. The top two are from 1932 and 1935. The bottom two are from 1938 and 1939.
It is 1 year and 22 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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