Countdown to Riverside City College's 100th Anniversary

This is the second of two parts on fraternities at Riverside City College. Last week the Kappa Upsilon and Gama Iota Alpha fraternities were pictured. This week the Sigma Rho Chi and Eta Pi fraternities are discussed. The Sigma Rho Chi fraternity was founded in 1953. Below is a photo of the fraternity in its first year that appeared in that year's “Tequesquite” yearbook. This fraternity was the first to picture a number of Asian and Latino members.

The 1955 yearbook gave this run-down on the fraternity:

“SIGMA RHO CHI-Formed two years ago, this fraternity is already one of the most active on campus. They sponsor several dances and give staunch support to all school activities. Sigma Rho Chi sponsored Beverly Griffith for Dream Date Queen. She was elected.”

In 1956 the fraternity sponsored the Homecoming Queen and in 1958 they sponsored an inter-fraternity football game which raised money for Hungarian relief. The 1960 yearbook had this to say about the group:

“BUSY MEN-Sigma Rho Chi has taken part in many activities on campus this year. The Sigmas entered the second place float in the Homecoming Parade, received highest honors in the Christmas Drive, and sponsored the Dream Date Queen (the King was from their fraternity). Two of the major projects they have accomplished are coaching at the School for the Deaf, and doing extra maintenance at the Cresthaven School.”

The floats pictured below were built by the fraternity for Homecoming Parades. They are from the 1961 and 1963 yearbooks. The bottom float was built in conjunction with the Delta Chi Delta sorority.
The 1963 yearbook described their activities as:

“CAMPUS COOL-Sigma Rho Chi co-sponsored a Homecoming float, winning second in Class One competition. Their service projects were the California School for the Deaf at Riverside, Cresthaven School for the Mentally Retarded Children, S.O.S. donations, Parents Day, and Blood Donations. Sigma Rho ran an Ugly Man candidate, a Dream Date candidate, and co-sponsored Vicki Dow for Homecoming Queen. And they sponsored a surfing movie at Landis Auditorium.”

The 1966 yearbook had this to say about the fraternity:

“SIGMA RHO CHI fraternity’s goals are to serve the community as both a service and social organization. This year the fraternity has served as volunteers at county General Hospital, sponsored a book drive for Viet Nam with its sister sorority Gamma Nu, and participated in many other service projects. This year they finished second in the Marti Gras Booth fund-raising drive, and took second place in Homecoming Floats.”

Sigma Rho Chi was one of the last RCC fraternities to disband but was gone by the early 1970s. The photo below is from the 1966 yearbook.
Eta Pi was one of the last fraternities to organize in 1959. The 1959 yearbook described them as:

“AMBITIOUS-The avowed purpose of Eta Pi is to establish individualism, insure light-hearted fun, create general confusion, abolish all types of discrimination and secure favorable treatment of the group. To this end, it participated in the Christmas drive, the homecoming and dream date queen contests, intramural football and basketball, and numerous other projects.”

A close look at the 1959 yearbook photo below reveals the “individualism” of the fraternity. Eta Pi was the first fraternity to be pictured with a membership that included a number of African-American students. One of the most prominent members seen here is Art Gilmore (seen in the upper left hand corner) who was inducted into the RCC Athletic Hall of Fame in 2008.

In their second year the 1960 yearbook said of the group:

“GAY CABALLEROS-Dedicated to the proposition that life should be light-hearted; Eta Pi this year entered into numerous activities with cheerful abandon and definitely made its contribution to the spirit of good fun pervading the extra-curricular program. Among other projects, they made sure they were well represented in the Homecoming queen and float contests.”

The 1962 yearbook did not feature a photo of the fraternity but it was back in action in the 1963 yearbook as it said:

“BACK AGAIN-After a brief absence from the spot light on campus, Eta Pi was back this year in full strength, to the delight of many students. Service wise they helped at the SOS clinic. Athletic wise saw them scraping on the gym floor in intramural basketball. Highlight came when Eta Pi ran the Slave Day auction. Following this up was a charity donkey-basketball game against the (radio station) K-MEN that amused the whole town.”

The 1961 and 1963 yearbook photos below show a Homecoming Parade float built by the fraternity and a photo of the Donkey Basketball game.
In 1966 the yearbook wrote of the fraternity:

“ETA PI Fraternity promoted two dances this year, one during basketball season and one during football season. The float built by Eta Pi and Cosmos won first place during Homecoming. This was the second year they played against the K-MEN in a Donkey Basketball game, raising $150 for the community’s new YMCA building. In addition, the fraternity aided in collecting money for the United Fund.” Below is a photo of Eta Pi from the 1965 yearbook. Unfortunately, like most of RCC’s fraternities, Eta Pi did not survive the mid-1960s.
Below are seen the fraternity pins of (clockwise from the upper left hand corner) Kappa Upsilon, Gamma Iota Alpha, Sigma Rho Chi and Eta Pi that as pictured in the 1966 yearbook.

The glory days of the RCC fraternity movement spanned some 25 years but the end of the 1960s saw the general demise of Greek organizations on the campus.
It is 2 years and 4 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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