August 11, 2014

Countdown to Riverside City College's 100th Anniversary

Continuing this summer’s “Countdown” looks at stories appearing in “Riverside City College Reports”, is this overview of Volume 4, Number 1 from October 4, 1968. The headline article spoke of an upcoming “Open House” where members of the public could tour the new buildings on the Riverside City Campus. Available for inspection was to be the new Life and Physical Science Buildings, Student Center, Library and Planetarium. Other areas that were renovated were also mentioned in the article:

“Remodeling still is underway on the south and west wings of the Quad. Demolition of the Little Theater will be complete, or nearly so, by October 12, but plans for the large lecture hall and other social science classrooms which will replace it have not been completed. Several rooms in the classroom wing of the Administration Building on Fairfax Avenue were converted within the last year to business education use, and visitors can inspect some of the latest equipment for teaching the use of office and stenographic equipment. Completed and open for inspection by the time of last year’s Open House, but nonetheless a part of RCC’s current expansion program have been remodeling of Wheelock Gymnasium and of Graphic Arts, electronics, and Automotive Technology facilities in the former Poly shop buildings just west of the parking lots in the Arroyo. Data Processing, both the instructional and production programs, has been moved to the former Poly library, which was used last year as a temporary student center. All of these facilities will be open for inspection during Open House. T. Mark Johnson, director of athletics, particularly would like to show off Wheelock Gymnasium and its new locker rooms, the beautifully equipped weight room, and the excellent facilities for teaching wrestling. All parts of the gymnasium will be open to both men and women visitors. An addition to the Open House program this year is presentation of water polo and diving techniques in Cutter Pool. A free shuttle bus will leave in front of Landis Auditorium every ten or fifteen minutes to take visitors to the shop areas, Cutter Pool and the Cosmetology buildings. The campus is open to anyone between 4 to 6 p.m. those who stay for dinner in the student center, which will be served from 6-7:30 p.m., will also receive free tickets to the north bleachers for the Riverside-Cypress football game. Dinner tickets are $1.35, and they can be purchased through Wednesday, Oct. 16, at the Office of Community Services.”
A featured facility of the Open House was the Planetarium. The article read:

“...A first for Riverside County, the planetarium continues RCC’s policy of coupling academic instruction with community service. The facility, operated by Robert Dixon, planetarium director and assistant professor of Astronomy, includes a 24-foot domed ceiling housed in a building adjacent to the Library. A Spitz planetarium projector, Model A-4, with remote controls, special effects projectors and sound system complete the equipment of the circular lecture room. According to Dixon, the planetarium projector makes it possible to create the Riverside night sky for any time of the year while controlling the weather and the motion of the sky. One advantage of this control, Dixon said, is the ability to project different parts of the sky. A special feature of the facility is the planned geology and astronomy museum in the entrance hall of the planetarium. An inter-departmental project, the museum and planetarium is available to students in physical science and geology classes for instructional purposes as well as those enrolled in astronomy. The instructional program is geared to the liberal arts student and does not require backgrounds in mathematics or science generally expected of students in programs of this type. Community involvement is encouraged by the public lecture series, the first of which promotes general orientation to the planetarium. In February the public is invited to participate in a more detailed study of the sky. These lectures are spaced from four to six weeks apart. Specific dates for the lectures will be announced later in the fall.”
On the mind of President Ralph Bradshaw (RCC President 1963-1972) was Proposition 9.
Proposition 9 was somewhat similar to 1978s Proposition 13, the "People's Initiative to Limit Property Taxation," known popularly as the "Jarvis-Gann Amendment". President Bradshaw said the effects of the passage of proposition 9 would be:

“At Riverside City College, for example, we would face a reduction of $360,000 in our income from local sources next year. This represents just about 10% of our operating budget. The following year we would be cut an additional 10%. The year after another 10% and so on, until at the end of five years we would have lost just about half the funds which now support our annual operation. All educational programs in the state from kindergarten through the community colleges would be affected in this way. Proposition 9 simply takes away present funds; it makes no provision for restoring them from other sources. This is left to the Legislature, and it leaves us with these questions: What are the prospects that the Legislature will provide the necessary funds to replace the cuts mandated in every district by Proposition 9? If they do provide funds, what tax sources will produce them and at what cost to taxpayers? Are the people willing to accept a reduction in the services now provided, if the Legislature fails to replace the cuts? Do the people expect to retain any local control of their schools if all funding is provided by the State? Questions like these are the real issues raised by Proposition 9. Its enactment in November would mean major changes in public policy, with far reaching effects. It is much more than a property tax issue, and we have an obligation to help people understand that.”

Proposition 9 was defeated by California voters in the November 5, 1968 election. Of course, in 1978, Proposition 13 was passed by the voters and forever changed the funding of education in California.
The Riverside City College District Board of Trustees opposed the passage of Proposition 9 for the reasons given below:

Proposition 9 on the November ballot provides a vital test of our democratic government. It submits to a direct vote of the people a constitutional amendment which would reduce property taxes over the next five years to about half their present level, and which would shift the total cost of education and other "people related" services to the State.

Proposition 9 is opposed by a wide range of interests both in and out of education. But it will have a powerful appeal to voters interested in reducing their property taxes in a state that has been slow to achieve meaningful tax reform. The great danger is that people may make their decision solely on the property tax issue without regard to the broader implications. Some of these relate to limitations on future bond sales, which could produce drastic reductions and delays in several kinds of public construction. These are involved questions, and space does not permit their discussion here. But the effect on school district operating budgets is simple and direct, and opens up major questions very clearly.
It is 1 year and 30 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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