Countdown to Riverside City College's 100th Anniversary

On March 13, 1991 Riverside City College celebrated its 75th Anniversary. It was one of the most ambitious celebrations of an RCC Anniversary because it involved the opening of two new campuses in Norco and Moreno Valley. The March 27, 1991 edition of the “Viewpoints” student newspaper described the day’s events. The front page and headline articles are reproduced below.

The first article reported on the dedication of the Norco Campus:

“Excitement filled the air at the Norco Campus as a crowd of spectators awaited the symbolic torch relay to arrive and kick off the event. The flame of the Lamp of Learning was passed on by volunteer runners who started the relay at 7:15 a.m. from the Riverside City Campus. Dr.
Linda Lacy, dean of student activities, said the relay is a ‘symbolic gesture to unite the two (new) campuses into one college.’ While the crowd waited, the RCC Wind Ensemble provided celebratory, vibrant and uplifting music. The last of the torch runners arrived exactly as planned at 11 a.m. From the torch they carried, ASRCC President Dana Mosely and Norco Student Provost Linda Howard lit the Lamp of Learning. Dr. Dorothy Gates, president of the board of trustees, welcomed the audience and introduced Norco Provost Marie Pepicello. Everyone in the audience was asked to stand and salute the flag as faculty, board trustees and special guests proceeded to the front of the podium. Moments later, Roger Silva, President of the Faculty Association, presented Pepicello with a seedling from the Heritage Oak tree in the Riverside campus quad. He presented a picture of how the tree will eventually look. Mosely and Howard then introduced a group of chosen scholars from nearby high schools. ‘It is important to us to present the future students of the campus,’ said Mosely. ‘Please, congratulate them for their academic excellence.’ Norco’s mayor, Dick McGregor, congratulated RCC and welcomed the college to the city. ‘We expect excellence from the students at this campus,’ said McGregor. He ended his speech with, ‘Happy Birthday, RCC!’ Al Lopez, Mayor of Corona, proclaimed March 13th to be a day of celebration. A representative of Gov. Pete Wilson said, ‘On behalf of the Governor and his entire staff...We are delighted to have this college open.’ The longest speech was the presidential address, given by RCC President and Superintendent Dr. Charles A. Kane. He gave a brief history of the land on which the campus stands, saying that it was once a famous resort area in the Roaring 20s that entertained many celebrities. When the Depression hit hardest, the resort was closed down and bought by the Federal Government. During World War II and the Korean War, Corona Naval Hospital built on the land was used to nurse the injured servicemen of those wars. It wasn’t until Ronald Reagan’s administration that the land was donated to RCC. Kane said that he wanted to keep on good terms with the Governor’s office because, ‘We’re coming back to ask for more (money).’ Dr. Kane also said that even though the campus is new on the site, the college itself is very experienced when it comes to education. ‘We may be three campuses,’ said Kane, ‘but we are one college.’ He presented an honorary medal of the College Seal to Pepicello, ‘I know the college will be in good hands.’ The provost medallions were designed by Associate Professor John Hopkins. Hopkins also designed the commemorative lamps of learning which will be displayed on each campus. After the presentations, Kane, Pepicello and the board of trustees unveiled the commemorative plaque. They cut the ribbon that barred the doors of the building of Student Services. The ribbon-cutting was accompanied by daytime fireworks. The crowd laughed when the noise of the explosions set off several car alarms that were in the parking lot. The audience was invited to enjoy either banana or chocolate cake, along with punch and coffee. People walked in and out of the buildings to get to know the campus. Bluerock Associates, the architects and planners of the campus, attempted to design it to be aesthetically pleasing, as well as practical in reference to drought, plant life, and natural terrain considerations. Of the first-phase buildings open, there is a Student Services Building, a Food Services Building, the Little Theatre, a Science and Technology Building and Humanities Building. Twenty-four classes were held on the opening day of the Norco Campus.”

The second article told of the dedication of the Moreno Valley Campus:

“More than 200 people braved rain, cold and wind to attend the Mar. 13 dedication ceremonies of Riverside Community College’s Moreno Valley Campus. The dedication went on despite the raw weather. Speakers, facing into the slanting rain, cut their remarks to the minimum. The ceremony, scheduled for an hour, was over in less than a half hour. Moreno Valley Campus Provost David Richardson introduced the presentations by RCC President/Superintendent Dr. Charles A. Kane, RCC Board of Trustees President Dorothy Gates, Faculty Association President Roger Silva, ASRCC President Dana Mosley, and
Moreno Valley Community College Student Provost Kevin Gormont. Kane gave the presidential address and presided over the ceremony of investiture, which included the passing of a torch, hand-carried on foot by relay runners from the Riverside City RCC Campus, to Richardson. After several tries, Richardson managed to light the Lamp of Learning in the strong winds. Sliva’s presentation of a Heritage Oak sapling from the Heritage Oak on the Riverside campus will symbolically link the two campuses. Mosely and Gormont presented lamp of learning pins to students of the new campuses from local Moreno Valley Schools. Gates told the audience that students would have a unique experience at the new Mo Val campus. She also said their learning experience would be of the same quality as the two other campuses. The dedication ceremonies also included congratulatory speeches from Rosemary S.J. Schraer, Chancellor of University of California Riverside; Moreno Valley mayor Judy Neiburger; Riverside County Supervisor Norton Younglove; Richard Lowe, President of Mount San Jacinto College (RCC’s sister college); and Governor Pete Wilson’s representative Rosalas Zalas. Even though it was raining the ceremony ended with a fireworks display. The dedication ceremony was held in front of the main steps to the Student Service and Technology buildings. The rain forced the reception to be held in the Moreno Valley Tigers Den. Members of the RCC Marching Tigers band played before ceremonies began. Many alumni were also present, including former world-class runner Clyde Jeffery. Clyde Jeffery won the 200-meter race in the 1936 Berlin Olympics. He is also a former NCAA and AAU champion in the 100 and 220-yard dashes. After the reception, Kane said that the opening of the new campus gave the students a pioneer spirit because they are the first to experience the Moreno Valley Campus. He also said that even though there will be minor inconveniences as the new campus shakes down, for students who live in Moreno Valley, the proximity of the campus will more than make up for them. Kane expects the Moreno Valley campus to eventually have an enrollment of 14,000, over 12,000 more than are currently enrolled.

The photos below documented the opening of the Moreno Valley and Norco Campuses:
After the festivities at Norco and Moreno Valley, the celebration moved to the Riverside City Campus where a dinner was held. The headline and article are reproduced below:

**Dinner caps off RCC’s 75th anniversary**
Riverside Community College held a dinner in Bradshaw Center on March 13, which was the last event of college’s 75th birthday party. At the beginning of the evening, there was a small reception, followed by a patio program that included the lighting of a torch-shaped fireworks display. At the beginning of the dinner, Alan Pauw, an RCC trustee gave a toast — with non-alcoholic, sparkling cider — in honor of ‘...this historic moment and unique event to RCC. We are celebrating 75 years, and two new campuses have been dedicated ... Let us drink to the challenges of the future at RCC...’. John Ross, associate professor of music, and the RCC Chamber Singers entertained the dinner guests with renditions of ‘Shenandoah’ and ‘The Nearness of You.’ The audience sang along with the singers in both ‘America the Beautiful’ and ‘Alma Mater Riverside.’ Following the dinner, there was a slide show, which detailed the history of RCC. Geoffrey Waring, associate professor of history, narrated the show, which featured pictures of RCC, its students and faculty. Included in the slides was a picture of RCC Superintendent/President Dr. Charles A. Kane, when he was a basketball player here. Associated Students of RCC President Dana Mosley introduced a slide show, which depicted all the birthday’s events including the lighting of the torches for the relay, and the opening of the two new campuses in Moreno Valley and Norco. Richard Stover, Assistant Superintendent and Vice President of Academic Services, said during his speech, ‘This is a college for doers. This is a college for those who expect visionary students...I see a future filled with good things...’ Kane, after receiving a standing ovation, began his address by saying, ‘The year 2000 is less than nine years away. The question is, What will it be?’ ‘This college is truly a jewel,’ he continued, ‘In the year 2000, we anticipate over 44,000 students. By 1995, we are expecting more enrollment, as there will be more high school graduates. There are more women than men at RCC, and there is 35 percent minority (student population). At the turn of the century, we expect to have a 50 percent (minority population).’ ‘What a marvelous tradition this college has. May the next 25 years be as successful as the past 75 years,’ he said. Several excerpts from anniversary letters that Kane received were read aloud by John Matulich, deputy superintendent and vice president. Gov. Pete Wilson said, ‘...As you celebrate your anniversary, please accept my very best wishes. I wish you continued success...’ Kane also gave Evan Vail, RCC’s city campus provost, a bronze medal with the college seal, which will be handed down to all future provosts. Kane also gave Vail a commemorative medal for his personal possession. The State Legislature passed a joint resolution congratulating the college on its successes. Each campus received its own copy of the proclamation. Among the guests in attendance was the widow of President Arthur G. Paul, who ran the college from 1920-1950. She said, ‘He (Kane) has done a wonderful job.’ Trustee Mark Takano said, ‘It was a fabulous evening. This is a good sign for our future...I feel that it’s an exciting time to be on the board. The challenges are very unique and very stimulating.’ Kathy Kane Bonelli, Kane’s daughter said, the two new campuses were her father’s vision. Kane summed up his feelings for the entire day when he said, ‘It was a dream come true’.

There are 49 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. For copyright purposes, all images originating from Riverside City College
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