Countdown to Riverside City College’s 100th Anniversary

When Arthur Gordon Paul (Riverside City College’s Chief Administrative Officer 1920-1950) passed away on March 16, 1970, it marked the end of an era for RCC. Paul’s roots stretched back to the second year of the college’s existence. From 1917 to 1920, Paul was a faculty member of what was then known as Riverside Junior College. Below are 1917 and 1918 “Kollege Ko-Ed” yearbook photos of Paul as a faculty member of R.J.C.

Below is a photo of Paul (back row, center) and the 1919 “Kollege Ko-Ed” yearbook staff.
In 1920 he was promoted to the dual role of Principal of Riverside Poly High and Riverside Junior College. The high school and the college were then located across the street from one another. By 1922 he was still the Principal of Riverside Poly High but was now called the Director of Riverside Junior College. In 1945 the Board of Education separated the chief administrative positions of the college and the high school and Paul became solely responsible for the Junior College as its Director. By 1946 his title was changed to President of Riverside College, a position he held until his retirement in 1950. The March 20, 1970 edition of the “Tiger Times” student newspaper carried the story below about the his passing:

“All too often, people are not aware of another’s achievements until that person has passed away and his life’s accomplishments are gathered. Unfortunately, this may be the case with Arthur G. Paul as far as today’s RCC students are concerned. Paul formed a deep affection for RCC by serving as its director for over 30 years. The senior RCC faculty members will probably remember his as a devoted and warm man. But the feeling should not stop there . . .
today’s students need not have known the gentleman to realize his greatness. Paul, even after his retirement, kept in close contact with his associates. He took up his association with RCC in 1917 and began a 33 year connection with the Riverside Public School System. In 1920 he became Principle and Director of the High School and Junior College, and in 1945 he became President of RCC. In spite of all his activities at RCC, Paul also managed to hold offices in various organizations such as the Riverside Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club, Professional Men’s Club, Southern California Junior College Association, and others. His membership in clubs are too numerous to mention. Assuredly, Paul was of another generation as he was 85 at the time of his death, but without his strong beliefs and actions, our college in all probability would not be the institution that it is today. Paul introduced cosmetology, a cooperative nursing program, aeronautics, and police training in the curriculum. He also presided over the college’s first building program. Surviving him are his wife, Nancy, and three sons, Samuel Charlesworth, John Randolph, and William Gordon. He was eleven times a grandfather and 5 times a great grandfather at the time of his death. Mrs. Paul has asked that in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to the Arthur G. Paul Memorial Fund here at RCC.”

The June 16, 1970 issue of “RCC Reports” also noted the passing of Arthur G. Paul:

“A. G. Paul’s Death Severs Ties With Earliest Days of College

“Arthur G. Paul, president emeritus of Riverside City College, died March 16, and with his death was severed the community’s last tie with the earliest days of the college. Mr. Paul came to the then Riverside Junior College in 1917, just a year after its founding. He was made its director in 1920, the same year he became principal of the city’s high school. In 1945 he became the first man to hold the title of president of the college. Mr. Paul was an innovative administrator, and during his tenure cosmetology, a cooperative vocational program that included nursing, aeronautics, and police training were added to the curriculum. Changing needs of the community subsequently led to the dropping of aeronautics and the discontinuation of the cooperative nursing program. Nursing, however, has since been reintroduced into the curriculum. The cooperative program itself fell a victim of the job shortage of the Depression. Community Service Setting a pattern which was to be followed by other administrators, Mr. Paul assumed much responsibility for community leadership. He was a member of the Board of Freeholders that framed the 1929 city charter, and he was active in the early days of the Community Players, the Riverside Art Center, and the Riverside Opera Association. He served as president of the Kiwanis Club and of the Present Day Club, and he was a College longtime member of the Riverside Museum’s board of directors. The college’s first extensive building program was conducted under Mr. Paul’s guidance. The first two units which make up the present Quadrangle were completed in 1924 and the final unit, which now houses home economics and social science classes and offices, was finished in 1950, just after his retirement. The current building program excited the former president’s interest, and he was a frequent visitor to the campus to check on its progress. He became a regular visitor to Open House programs, and he always made a point to chat with faculty and students. To the young people, Mr. Paul became something of a mascot, a symbol of the finest traditions of the college. When he spoke at the college’s fiftieth anniversary program, the applause, which greeted him, revealed the genuine affection which they had for this
kindly gentleman who embodied so much of the history of RCC. Mr. Paul is survived by his wife Nancy, and three sons: Samuel C. Paul of Clear Lake, John R. Paul of San Bernardino, and W. Gordon Paul of Reno, Nevada. There are 11 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. The family has initiated an Arthur G. Paul Memorial Scholarship Fund, and the first winner will be announced at today's Awards Breakfast. Additional contributions may be sent to the college.”

Below are “Tequesquite” yearbook photos of A.G. Paul during his tenure as Director / President of Riverside Junior College / Riverside College. The top row portraits are from 1926, 1930 and 1933. The second rows of portraits are from 1937, 1940 and 1947.

When authors Thomas Johnson and Gilbert Jimenez published their book, “Riverside City College 1916-1981 – A 65 Year History”, they included the tribute to A.G. Paul, reproduced below:

ARTHUR GORDON PAUL
“A Genial and Aware Administrator. . .”
Arthur Gordon Paul served the longest term (1920-1950) of any chief administrator of the junior college. His 30-year term as the college’s director-president plus his three years as a college faculty member (1917-1920) covered more than half of the college’s 65 year history, and his influence on its development was enormous. Arriving in Riverside in 1917 after having been an administrator and instructor at Occidental College (his alma mater), he obtained a position at the new junior college. His talents and energies helped him to secure the directorship of the college’s Extension Division (1919) and then the dual position of principal of the high school and director of the college in 1920. As director of the college Mr. Paul enthusiastically supported the construction program of the 20’s and early 30’s, hired a distinguished faculty, and helped to establish a warm and congenial relationship among staff and students. But his role was more than that of a capable administrator who used his powers wisely. In carrying out his job Mr. Paul was liked and respected. Tributes such as the following (from the 1938 Tequesquite) were typical: ‘... an idealist, yet always completely human, he is a man who knows the heart and soul of youth. And so it is, to this warm-
hearted friend . . . that youth offers a pledge of affection, loyalty and admiration such as few men can ever know.' Locally he was highly regarded as an important community leader. Nationally known artist Rexford Brandt, Alumnus of the year in 1967 and former college instructor, ranks Mr. Paul among Riverside's most influential citizens. In discussing the college's role in developing community cultural programs during the 30's, Brandt declared that 'Arthur G. Paul was the genial and aware administrator who made all this happen ... He was truly a great person and his name belongs alongside Frank Miller's (well-known to Riversiders as the founder and Master of the Mission Inn) as the source of Riverside's uniqueness.' Nationally and regionally Mr. Paul was known as an articulate and creative administrator. At conferences of the American Association of Junior Colleges he frequently distinguished himself by skillfully presenting his ideas to large audiences. For example, on January 20, 1946, New York Times writer Benjamin Fine quoted at length his views on the role of the junior college in the education of returning veterans. There will never be another Arthur Paul nor an era in the college’s history such as that over which he presided. But the college’s history is richer, its reputation more solidly established, its campus more beautiful as a result of his contributions.

In 1982 the Quadrangle was renamed the “Arthur G. Paul Quadrangle”. Below is a plaque that can be seen in the Quad’s northern archway entrance. Just around the corner from this plaque is the location of A.G. Paul's office.

Inscribed on the plaque is the following:

ARTHUR GORDON PAUL
PRESIDENT, RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE 1920-1950

Arthur G. Paul was the skillful and visionary administrator who built Riverside Community College from its infancy to a strong institution which reflects to this day his solid values – the discipline of mind and character, the development of intellectual maturity, the realization of potentialities. He was committed to the College – to the quality of its offerings, the standard of its achievement, the effectiveness of its instruction and the relevance of its programs, “MAY THIS EXPRESSION SERVE IN STIMULATING US TO MOUNT TO NEW REACHES OF APPRECIATION OF ALL THAT IS NOBLE AND FINE IN LIFE, CREATIVE GENIUS IN ALL LINES, AND WITH WIT AND HUMOR WHICH SHOWS A GENUINE LOVE OF LIFE” And so it is, to this warm-hearted friend, that youth offers a pledge of affection and loyalty
such as few men can ever know.

He was a true source of this College’s uniqueness and was liked and respected by the faculty and students.

“He fought the fight, he kept the faith, and he finished the course.”

This tribute to Mr. Paul is made possible by the generous donation of The Phil and Theta Baldwin Family, October 9, 1997

There are 40 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 publications and the District's Office of Strategic Communications and Relations are the property of the Riverside Community College District.