July 20, 2015

Countdown to Riverside City College's 100th Anniversary

On June 17, 2015, long-time Riverside City College administrator, John Michael Matulich passed away at the age of 85. Matulich worked at RCC 37 years, from 1955 until he retired in 1992. Matulich began his RCC career as Tiger Basketball coach. Over the years, he also coached the Tennis and Golf teams. In 1961, he began working in the Counseling Department and by 1963 he was named Associate Dean of Admissions. In 1976 he was appointed Deputy Superintendent and Dean of Student Personnel Services. In 1981, he became the Deputy Superintendent and Dean of Personnel Services. 1983 saw his title change to Deputy Superintendent and Vice-President, Administrative Services. As he approached retirement, the RCC student newspaper “Viewpoints” profiled him twice. The first article appeared in the September 9, 1991 edition.
“Viewpoints” staff writer Tony Outram wrote:

“John Matulich, Riverside Community College Deputy Superintendent and Vice President for Administrative Services, a man who has served under five of RCC’s six presidents, will retire at the beginning of 1992. Matulich was hired as RCC basketball coach in 1955 when he was finishing his graduate degree in physical education at UCLA. While an undergraduate from 1948 to 1952, he played forward on the UCLA basketball team. ‘I’m sure my having been selected for my first job at RCC was a result of my letter of recommendation from coach [John] Wooden,’ said Matulich. Wooden later coached UCLA teams to ten national titles and 88 straight victories. Matulich moved gradually from coaching to counseling. He was appointed Associate Dean of Admissions in 1963, and in 1971 he became Administrative Dean, a version of his present position. In this position, Matulich has dealt with facility’s needs, such as purchase orders for furniture, assigning office spaces and disciplinary problems. After legislation concerning labor relations was passed in 1975, Matulich’s responsibilities were expanded to include labor relations activities, such as collective bargaining. In the late 70’s, all of the personnel offices were consolidated and became Matulich’s responsibility. In 1990, Matulich was put in charge of the Office of Safety and Security. Matulich also worked with Dr. Charles Kane, President/Superintendent of RCC, on matters dealing with the district. In the 36 years he has worked at RCC, Matulich says that he has seen different styles of leadership in RCC’s presidents, and he has undergone considerable professional growth. Matulich said that he has worked in a labor union environment for 14 years without any major problems. ‘I believe in what I’m doing,’ he said. To those who disagree with the RCC administration, Matulich says, ‘This is not a popularity contest. The faculty gets very competitive salaries compared to others at similar institutions.’ In his retirement, Matulich plans to do consulting work for educational institutions. ‘There has been a great deal accomplished here. We have done a lot of things that other institutions would be interested in,’ he said. Matulich said that he would also like to travel with his wife to many of the places in the U.S. and abroad that he has not seen. Matulich said that retirement will also give him time to play week-day golf at the Victoria Club.”

The second article ran on February 28, 1992. “Viewpoints” staff writer Clayton Sandell wrote the article below on Matulich’s impending retirement. Sandell went on work for the ABC network news department. In 2011 Sandell was named the first RCC Young Alumnus of the Year.
Matulich retires from RCC; reflects on past, future

John Matulich
“In 1955 Eisenhower was president, Disneyland opened for business, and John Matulich joined the Riverside Community College staff. On Feb. 28, after nearly four decades of service, Matulich will close his office door one last time. Matulich’s current position, Deputy Superintendent and Vice President for Administrative Services, is a long way from his earliest RCC duties. He was hired originally as a physical education instructor and basketball coach after earning his Master’s Degree at UCLA. After obtaining his administrative credential at the University of Redlands, Matulich first moved to counseling and was then appointed Associate Dean of Admissions in 1963. When Matulich was hired, RCC was quite different than it is today. The college consisted of ‘the Quadrangle, the Cosmetology Building, Huntley Gymnasium, and the buildings that the maintenance department has now,’ he said. He also said that since then, RCC has continually expanded to meet the population growth that has taken place, especially in Moreno Valley. Matulich said that responding to the growth has been the biggest problem for RCC. He feels the challenge is being met, however, with the opening of the Norco and Moreno Valley campuses. He is pleased with the fact that ‘there is room on those two campuses to add buildings.’ Smiling, he added, ‘and parking.’ Matulich is assisting in the transition of new college president Salvatore Rotella to the position being vacated by outgoing President Dr. Charles A. Kane. To complete the transition, the Board of Trustees has requested that Matulich stay at RCC until February 28. His official retirement date was January 1. Future work plans for Matulich include working as an educational consultant. It is an occupation that he said could conceivably lead him back to RCC, if needed. When asked what he will miss most about RCC, he did not hesitate with an answer. ‘The people, without a doubt,’ he said. He praised the staff and students at RCC and is grateful for the relationships he has developed over the years. Working as an educational consultant will allow him to continue many of the relationships he began here, he added. Consultant work will have to be part-time, however. After 36 years, he said, ‘I certainly am not interested in full-time work.’ What does interest him is spending time with his four granddaughters, fishing, playing more golf, and traveling. To date, no replacement has been named to fill Matulich’s position.”

The photos below come from “Tequesquite” yearbooks and document Matulich’s first decade at the college. The series of photos below, from the 1956 yearbook, show him coaching his first RCC Basketball team.
In the next series of photos, Matulich is seen with his 1958, 1959 and 1960 Basketball teams.

The top 1957 photo below shows Matulich and three of his Basketball players. They all became fathers during that school year. The second photo, RCC Coaches Joe Miller, Glen Gilkeson, Matulich and Tony Steponovich pose while "viewing" a film.
In this 1962 photo, Matulich can be seen not long after becoming an RCC Counselor. He is working with Phyllis Sensor (RCC Counselor 1953-1983).
In 1964 and 1965 photos below, Matulich can be seen not long after assuming the position of Associate Dean of Admissions.
Tish Chavez (Clerk Typist, Administrative Secretary, Administrative Assistant 1974-2014) worked for 12 years with John Matulich as his Administrative Secretary. She was kind enough to share a few memories of him:

“I remember meeting Mr. Matulich in 1974, he was on my hiring committee and he liked to take credit as being the person who hired me. I was intimidated by his stern presence but after getting to know him I learned what a nice man he was. I was his Executive Secretary (before we were Administrative Assistants) for 12 years until he retired. As an administrator he was respected by faculty and staff. He was my mentor and I learned a lot from him professionally. But most important I learned how to deal with the public not just in a professional manner but also with empathy. I have a lot of good memories but what comes to mind now is I remember when an employee lost a family member Mr. Matulich was there immediately or if an employee passed away, again, he immediately reached out to the family to offer his personal as well as the college’s assistance. And there were quite a number of deaths the college has dealt with. So his death just reminds me how he was there for others in their time of grief. The last time I saw Mr. Matulich was in October at my retirement reception. I was happy he could be there and he did tell me he ‘wouldn’t have missed it’. I will miss him.”

The photo below was taken on October 29, 2014 as John Matulich attended Tish Chavez's retirement reception in the Alumni House.

There are 33 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.