


Livingston Campus

The Livingston Campus (known as “Livi”) today is a thriving component of Rutgers University, boasting some of the university’s best traditions and innovations in: 

- Academics (including the Livingston Social Justice and Service Learning Community and the New Brunswick home of the Rutgers Business School).
- Student life (including an expanded student center that opened in 2010, a new dining commons that opened in 2011, and a new apartment complex for up to 1,600 students that opened in fall 2012).
- Energy innovation (serving as the home for a large solar panel installation).

Livingston Campus is also home to Jersey Mike’s Arena, known as the “RAC,” which opened in 1977. The RAC is the home of Rutgers’ men’s and women’s basketball teams, concerts, graduations, and other large events held by Rutgers and surrounding communities. A retail complex, boasting restaurants, a movie theater and a “Jersey diner,” opened in 2013.

Photo of Livingston Student Center by Tom Sulcer, via Wikimedia Commons.

Livingston College Time Capsule

Livingston College created a time capsule on the occasion of its 30th anniversary in 1999-2000, and closed the capsule on April 18, 2000. The capsule is on a shelf in the double-height Great Hall of Tillett Hall on Livingston Campus.



The Livingston College time capsule, as seen in 2019.



Livingston College’s Liberated Gospel Choir performs to celebrate the time capsule closing on April 18, 2000.



Students Michelle Massie, Melissa Carpini, and Marcella DiBenedetto, seen here, headed the Time Capsule Committee in 1999-2000.

The time capsule project and its contents were described in an article in the

Livingston Alumni Association's newsletter of summer 2000 by Ruby Keise of the Rutgers News Service, as reprinted below. The time capsule is to be opened in 2029, the 60th anniversary of the opening of Livingston College.

Celebrating 30 Years

By Ruby Keise, Rutgers News Service

Faculty, staff and students at Livingston College wrapped up the celebration of the college's 30th anniversary on April 18, by filling and closing a time capsule during a ceremony in The Great Hall in Tillet.

Among the items in the capsule are photographs of students dating back to the 1970s; an old term bill from 1969 indicating a tuition of \$280 for the semester (Spring '00 tuition was \$2,381); old student ID cards; and a 1973 recording by the Liberated Gospel Choir, a Livingston student group. The choir, which has continued to grow throughout the years, sang two selections for the capsule-closing ceremony.

Several personal items left by students were added to the capsule during the ceremony. Students also left messages written on archival-quality, acid-free postcards that were made available by the Time Capsule Committee, headed by students Michelle Massie, Melissa Carpini and Marcella DiBenedetto [Editor's Note: pictured above].

"When Livingston opened its doors in 1969 with some 800 students, the university very much needed the social and intellectual jolt that Livingston was to supply," stated Martin Gliserman, an associate professor of English and an early faculty member at Livingston, who was among the speakers at the ceremony. There have been great changes at Livingston over the years, he reflected, both in the physical plant – in the beginning there was "one elevator on campus that my 90-year-old father could beat any day" – and in academics.

Programs such as urban studies, Africana studies, anthropology, Puerto Rican studies, computer science, marketing, and women's studies originated at Livingston and have all now been integrated into the general university curriculum.

The closed capsule will be housed on a specially built shelf on the wall of The Great Hall. It will be opened in 30 years when the college celebrates its 60th anniversary.

Scarlet and Black Marker Confronts Legacy of William Livingston and His Family

A plaque installed in 2021 on the Livingston campus confronts the legacy of William Livingston, namesake of the campus and the former Livingston College, and his family, as people who enslaved other human beings.




Photos courtesy of Stephen Yanick

The two-sided marker has been placed on a prominent walkway on campus, between the Lynton North and South Towers residence halls and the Livingston Student Center.

The plaque reads:


“Livingston Campus (site of former Livingston College) was named after William Livingston, the first governor of the state of New Jersey, whose family made a fortune trafficking human beings in the transatlantic slave trade. The campus opened in 1969 as an experimental, social-justice oriented campus at the site of Camp Kilmer, a World War II-era military camp. The Livingston family collectively enslaved hundreds of people and Williams’ brothers, Philip and Robert, two of Rutgers’ founding trustees, bought and sold hundreds more. When William Livingston moved to New Jersey, he enslaved at least two people, a woman named Bell and her son Lambert. Though he later advocated for gradual abolition, he continued to represent the legal interests of his slave-trading family’s wealth throughout his career. This marker honors Bell, Lambert, and the other women, men, and children enslaved and sold by the Livingston family.”

Paul Robeson Plaza

Celebrating the 100th anniversary of the graduation of its most acclaimed alumnus, Rutgers University dedicated a plaza named for Paul Robeson on April 12, 2019, to honor his legacy as a distinguished scholar, athlete, actor, 

and global activist for civil rights and social justice.

The open-air plaza, which features eight black granite panels detailing the story of Robeson's life, stands in a prominent location next to the Voorhees Mall on the College Avenue campus at Rutgers–New Brunswick.


 The Livingston Alumni Association (LAA) is honored to support this plaza in dedication to Robeson. The LAA purchased a brick paver installed in a circle at the plaza, which reads: *Livingston College / Alumni Association / Preserve The History / Advance The Legacy /* .

More information on Robeson Plaza and Paul Robeson:

- *Rutgers Dedicates Plaza to Paul Robeson, Renaissance Man for the Ages*
- *Paul Robeson Plaza Dedication (with video and more photos)*
- *Paul Robeson Centennial Celebration (2019)*

Photo of Paul Robeson Plaza (top) by Jeffrey Armus

[James Dickson Carr Library Honors First African-American Graduate of Rutgers College; Previously Known as Kilmer Library](#)

The undergraduate and business library on Rutgers University's Livingston campus was renamed for James Dickson Carr, the first African-American graduate of Rutgers College, on February 8, 2017. The library was dedicated to Carr on October 17, 2017. 

Carr, who lived from 1868 to 1920, attended Rutgers Grammar School, completed his Rutgers College degree in 1892, and was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa honor society. He was one of the first African-American college graduates in the Northeastern United States.

According to a 1985 biography of Carr in the *Journal of the Rutgers University Libraries*, after graduating from Columbia Law School, he served as an assistant district attorney of New York County and held other offices in New York City government. He accomplished all of this despite many obstacles due to racial discrimination. In 1919 Carr wrote a remarkable letter to Rutgers President William H.S. Demarest protesting the action of the Rutgers football team to pull Paul Robeson from a game because the opposing team would not play against

a Black player.

Built in 1971 and formerly known as the Kilmer Area Library or the Kilmer Library, the James Dickson Carr Library is located close to the center of campus and adjacent to the Livingston Student Center, according to a Rutgers University Libraries announcement about the renaming. The library is a popular spot for students who can study with friends at the tables on the first floor, find a quiet carrel on the second, or use one of the largest computing and printing labs on campus.



“The Libraries are honored that one of our spaces will be named for James Carr,” said Jeanne Boyle, interim assistant vice president for information services and director of New Brunswick Libraries. “By all accounts, he was an excellent scholar and we hope students who use the Carr Library in the future will find inspiration in the personal story of ‘one of the best known of New Brunswick students,’ as he was described by his fellow student Henry Kimball Davis.”

Rutgers’ Board of Governors renamed the library for Carr as part of the university’s response to enact recommendations by the Committee on Enslaved and Disenfranchised Populations in Rutgers History. The committee, formed to examine Rutgers’ ties to slavery and the displacement of Native Americans, created the Scarlet and Black Project and has produced the book, *Scarlet and Black, Volume 1: Slavery and Dispossession in Rutgers History*.


The Board of Governors, at the same meeting on February 8, 2017, named the College Avenue Apartments for Sojourner Truth, a formerly enslaved person who was owned as a young girl by the family of Rutgers’ first president, Jacob Hardenbergh, according to a Rutgers press release. After escaping to freedom, Truth (c. 1797–1883) became an abolitionist and women’s rights activist.

The 14-story Sojourner Truth Apartments opened in fall 2016. The first floor is known as the Yard and features communal areas and green spaces, along with retailers and restaurants. The board also voted to name the walkway from Old Queens to the Voorhees Mall as Will’s Way, in honor of Will, an enslaved person who laid the foundation of Rutgers’ iconic administration building.

The university plans to install plaques at the apartments and the library to tell the stories of Truth and Carr and to put a marker along Will’s Way, said Antonio Calcado, executive vice president for strategic planning and operations at Rutgers.

Carr portrait photo courtesy of Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University Libraries (RUL). Carr Library photo courtesy of RUL.

[Dean Paula Van Riper Remembered; Honored with Memorial Bench on Livingston Campus](#)

Rutgers University has honored **Paula K. Van Riper**, a former assistant dean and director of advising for Rutgers' School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) and previously for Livingston College, with a tribute plaque erected on a bench outside the James Dickson Carr Library (formerly the Kilmer Library) on Livingston campus. 

Rutgers dedicated the plaque to Van Riper's memory at a ceremony on Saturday, September 24, 2016.

Van Riper, 67, of Branchburg, New Jersey, passed away on August 20, 2015, after a long struggle with multiple myeloma.

Van Riper had served as a dean at Rutgers in various roles since 1992. Prior to joining the university, Van Riper served on the Piscataway, New Jersey, Board of Education as a member, Vice President and President, and as President of the PTA Presidents Council.

Diagnosed with myeloma in 1999, Van Riper founded the Central Jersey Multiple Myeloma Support Group, providing information, guidance, and support to many fellow patients and their families. She had spoken and written extensively in support of the myeloma community, and had appeared as its advocate before legislative bodies. She also started a yearly 5K race to support multiple myeloma research. In fall 2015, shortly after Van Riper's death, the proceeds from the race funded a research grant in her name.

A fund-raiser for Van Riper's memorial plaque, which ran from August 10-September 12, 2016, raised \$8,840, with \$7,000 earmarked for Rutgers and \$1,840 for scholarships for Piscataway High School students.

"Thousands of students remember her fondly as the advisor ready with a word of good advice, a smile and a gentle push forward," her colleague, SAS Assistant Dean Robin Diamond, said in a video explaining the fund-raising campaign (also embedded on this page). "Need someone to talk to who would give it to you straight while still caring about your experience? Paula was your person."

Among other accomplishments, Van Riper established a connection between the radio stations at Rutgers and Piscataway High School, allowing them to merge and serve both the university and the high school since 2000.

Garth Patterson, an academic advisor in SAS since its founding in 2007, remembers Van Riper as a professional mentor “and in uncountable ways, influenced my growth as a person.”

Jason Goldstein, a 2002 alumnus of Livingston College, remembers Van Riper from an open house event he attended before entering college.

“As a dean, Paula Van Riper provided remarks, led a panel discussion, and provided insight when answering questions from the audience. She showcased her warmth, energy, and love for students, a disposition that represented Livingston College very well,” said Goldstein, who is also a former President of the Livingston Alumni Association. “As an inquisitive high school student, I had a million questions. After the event ended, I approached Paula in the hallway to introduce myself and learn a little more. Paula spent what must have been a half hour with me and my parents sharing her passion for Livingston College and tips to be successful at Rutgers and in life. I felt there was now a face, with a beautiful smile, on this intimidating university.”

Sabrina Laudent, an alumna from the SAS Class of 2015, remembers Van Riper as “thoughtful, kind, witty and very honest to me about everything.


“Dean Van Riper was thoughtful, kind, witty and very honest to me about everything. Dean Van Riper guided me through a lot of my academic and personal struggles, and was always willing to meet with me in between work and classes,” said Laudent, a secretarial assistant at the Livingston Advising Center. “During each advising session she encouraged me to try harder and simply do better, and I always left feeling a little more confident in my abilities and myself.

“There were plenty of fun conversations too, about puppies, the weather and our hair. I loved everything about Dean Van Riper from the way she appreciated everyone around her, the way she spoke, the pretty scarves she wore, her cute green Prius, and the hugs she gave me before and after every long break.”

Van Riper was born in 1947 in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and graduated from Franklin High School in 1965. Van Riper earned a B.S. in Business Administration from Rider University in 1969, and a Master’s in Social Work from Rutgers in 1997.

She is survived by her son Ryan Van Riper, daughter Renee (Whitman) and her husband Eric Whitman, brother Richard Bonopane, sister Bonnie (Fochi), brother Alan Bonopane, and grandson Alexander Whitman. She is predeceased by her parents, Vincent and Frances Bonopane.

Livingston Campus Growth (2010-2013)

Dining, housing and academic buildings were some of the large construction projects undertaken from 2010 through 2013, to greatly expand the academic and student life offerings on Rutgers University's Livingston Campus. 

The *Vision for the Livingston Campus*, unveiled in 2007, established a robust center for business and professional education on the Livingston Campus. Expansion of the campus had been on the drawing boards since at least 1990.

University Facilities & Capital Planning developed a website (updated through 2013) to communicate all *Livingston Campus Construction* information, including details on these major projects:


- **Livingston Student Center** renovation and expansion. The grand reopening was held April 7, 2010.
- **Livingston Dining Commons**: Active construction from February 2010 to July 2011. Opened in fall 2011 with seating for more than 900 people, replacing a dining facility in Tillett Hall.
- **Livingston Apartments**: Active construction from October 2010 to September 2012. Opened in fall 2012, housing 1,500 students and including street-level retail services.
- **Rutgers Business School-New Brunswick**: Active construction from October 2011 to July 2013 and opened in fall 2013. The \$85 million Business School project, partially funded by an anonymous donation of \$10 million, serves more than 3,200 undergraduate students in addition to graduate and continuing professional education students.

The Vision for the Livingston Campus is part of a long-term initiative to enhance the university's campuses to attract top students and faculty, build alumni loyalty, improve the learning environment for students, and strengthen Rutgers' ties with its host communities.

President Richard L. McCormick, in his 2006 Address to the University Community, called on Rutgers to develop "a unique academic identity for [Livingston] Campus, grounded in history but also focused on new horizons and opportunities."

In 2011, the Rutgers student newspaper *The Daily Targum* interviewed students about the newfound appeal of the renovated Livingston Campus.

The construction was a long time coming: The university had announced tentative plans for large-scale construction in 1990 and 2004 as well.

 In 1990 the university announced plans to add Kilmer Village, an apartment and shopping complex, in approximately the same location as the current Plaza at Livingston Campus. The plans also included building 20 fraternity,

sorority and special-interest houses at the intersection of Davidson Road and Metlars Lane, behind the Louis Brown Athletic Center. Among the hurdles: Piscataway Township contended that the housing portion of the project required local zoning review because the housing was not directly related to educational use. The university disagreed, and was seeking New Jersey Superior Court approval to proceed in January 1991.

In 2004 the university unveiled plans for a Livingston Campus project called College Town, in partnership with the Middlesex County Improvement Authority and Piscataway Township. Under the plan, the partners would have built a mix of student housing, affordable and market-rate housing, and retail space on a parcel bordered by Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Rockafeller Road, Suttons Lane and Road 3. The also plan would have established gateways to the campus, improved landscaping and expanded the Livingston Student Center, among other improvements.

Pictured: (Top) Rutgers' original proposal for the Vision for Livingston Campus. Note that the Rutgers Business School had not yet been included in the plans. (Bottom) A 1990 proposal for development on Kilmer (Livingston) Campus, from a Daily Targum article dated December 12, 1990.

[Livingston Campus Apartments Set New Housing Standards at Rutgers](#)

In 2012 students clamored to live in the then-new apartment buildings on the Livingston campus. The surrounding Livingston Plaza includes a movie theater, retail space and fitness centers.

Take a tour of the apartments that opened in September 2012, in the following video produced by Rutgers Media Relations:

[The Plaza Retail Complex](#)

The Plaza – a retail center that includes a movie theater, nail salon and a host of restaurants on Livingston campus – opened in January 2013.



The Rutgers Cinema was the first location in the new plaza to open to the public. Check out the parking options for visitors.

For more information please see the Nov. 27, 2012, story from The Daily Targum.

Photo: Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences students at Livingston Plaza. From left: Mariah Eppes (SAS'15), Justin Lucero (SAS'16) and Christopher Price (SAS '15). Photo by Nick Romanenko. © 2014 Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

[Livingston Dining Commons](#)

The new Livingston Dining Commons opened in late August 2011, and began operating in the fall 2011 semester. The \$30.5 million multistory dining facility, adjacent to the Livingston Student Center, replaced Tillett Dining Hall with an upscale, modern environment. The dining commons is about 58,000 square feet.

The Rutgers Club moved to the dining commons in 2017.

More about Livingston Dining Commons:

- [Official page from Rutgers Dining Services.](#)
- [The facility's Facebook page.](#)
- [Rutgers Club](#)

Check out photos of the dining commons (2011), from Dean George Jones.