

Deans' Letters to Graduates

Many of the Livingston College yearbooks include letters to the graduating class from the college's dean. The pages linked below include the text of each letter, as well as a link to the page(s) where they were printed in each yearbook.

From Ernest A. Lynton:

Classes of 1970, 1971 and 1972: No yearbooks were published; no graduation letters have been located.

Letter to the Class of 1973.

From George W. Carey:

Letter to the Class of 1974.

From Emmanuel George Mesthene:

Class of 1975: No yearbook has been located; most likely it was not published. No graduation letter has been located.

Class of 1976: No separate yearbook was produced (graduates' photos were included in the 1977 yearbook); no graduation letter has been located.

Letter to the Class of 1977.

From W. Robert Jenkins:

Letter to the Class of 1978.

Class of 1979: No separate yearbook was produced (graduates' photos were included in the 1980 yearbook); no graduation letter has been located.

Letters to the Classes of:

- 1980
- 1981
- 1982
- 1983

- 1984
- 1985
- 1986

Class of 1987: The yearbook does not include a letter from the dean; no separate letter has been located.

Letter to the Class of 1988.

Classes of 1989 and 1990: No yearbooks have been located; most likely they were not published. No separate letters have been located.

From Walton R. Johnson:

Letters to the Classes of:

- 1991
- 1992

From Arnold G. Hyndman:

Classes of 1993 through 2001: The yearbooks do not include a letter from the dean; no separate letters have been located.

Letter to the Class of 2002.

Classes of 2003 through 2007: The yearbooks do not include a letter from the dean; no separate letters have been located.

Classes of 2008 through 2010: No yearbooks were published; no graduation letters have been located.

Dean's Letter to Class of 1982: Livingston Grads 'Beginning to Be a Factor in Society'

W.

W. Robert Jenkins, dean of Livingston College, wrote the following letter to the Class of 1982, included in the college yearbook, [The Rock: A Plateau for a New Beginning](#).

Dear Members of the Class of 1982:

Much has happened while you have been at Livingston College. As a result of organizational changes in the University, your college has gone from a point of relatively great autonomy to one which is highly limited in its freedom. These limits have been imposed by faculty who were not previously associated with the College but were primarily from Rutgers and Douglass Colleges, and by the Rutgers University Administration. If we are not careful, these decisions might do away with the differences which have made us special and will render us indistinguishable from the other New Brunswick units. As alumni of Rutgers University/Livingston College, you do have a hand in the decisions of tomorrow.

Other changes have also taken place which are not so ominous in portent. We now have so many applications for admission that we can pick and choose those students who best further the mission of the College. That is truly a desirable and happy situation for us. Another change which is highly likely is that we will at long last have a Student Center of our own and correct a serious error made by our early planners.

Yet another major difference is now discernible, a difference to which you will contribute. Our graduates, more than 6000 of them in the past decade, are now beginning to be a factor in society. Almost everywhere I go, I run into a successful Livingston College alumnus who proudly speaks of her or his College and fondly reminisces about the good old days – even those that were not so good. I look forward to these chance meetings and to seeing all of you again.

Make no mistakes and no apologies, Livingston College has been a success. We are not as successful as many of us had dreamed, but I suppose that would be a truly rare occurrence. On the other hand, we are far more successful than many of our detractors thought we could ever be and more successful than many of them would ever admit. So little they know.

Now another class graduates and departs. It goes without saying that I wish you well; you are part of my dream. It is similarly unnecessary to caution you to remember your College; how could you possibly forget it? With your graduation, an era ends and another begins. With our spirit, determination and joint effort, our “reorganized” era can be as successful as the one just past.

So for now, farewell and Godspeed. Remember us well and return home when you can.

Affectionately yours,
W. Robert Jenkins
Dean

Dean's Letter to Class of 1981: Rutgers Reorganization Needn't Destroy Livingston

W.

W. Robert Jenkins, dean of Livingston College, wrote the following letter to the Class of 1981, included in the college yearbook, [The Last](#).

Dear Graduate:

There are always mixed emotions when one is graduated, emotions which range from the joys of success to the sadness of leaving friends and associates. I am sure that each of you fully understands this point and that you will understand when I say that I am happy to see you succeed but regret sincerely your leaving.

Livingston College is special to each of us. It is here that you have grown and learned to live with and tolerate others, regardless of their backgrounds and beliefs. In achieving this understanding, you have helped fulfill one of the early goals of the College. You have learned in the classrooms and laboratories as well, and with this knowledge you leave us now to employment, further study, travel, and the challenges of the future. This process surely meets another goal, not only of Livingston College but of any college, of preparing people for the rest of their lives.

At the same time, you have helped the College achieve other goals. Our impact upon Rutgers University is virtually immeasurable, an impact so great that we cannot fully define the changes we have caused. New programs of study, new approaches to learning, a diverse and outstanding faculty, the most representative student body possible; all have helped mold a unique institution of which we are justly proud.

This pride in ourselves and the certainty of our destiny caused us last year to oppose vigorously the reorganization which is now well under way for the New Brunswick campus. Our fear that this reorganization will sufficiently alter

Livingston College so as to destroy it need not be realized; we must avoid the risk of making that fear a self-fulfilling prophecy. Livingston College will remain if we wish it and are willing to put forth the efforts necessary to sustain our will. I wish to ask you, as alumni, to assist me and our loyal faculty in maintaining this College. The goals we set for ourselves in 1969 are still worthwhile and still attainable.

As you leave, I hope that the spirit of Livingston College stays with you and that you will keep in touch. We'll always be a part of each other.

With affection,
W. Robert Jenkins
Dean

Revised November 29, 2015

Dean's Letter to Class of 1980: A Decade Later, Livingston's Excitement Is Now Focused on Academics

W.

W. Robert Jenkins, dean of Livingston College, wrote the following letter to the Class of 1980, included in the college yearbook, [The Rock, Volume IV](#).

Dear Graduate:

Your class is the tenth to graduate from this College and with your graduation you now become one of the more than 4,000 alumni who hold degrees from Livingston College. Those of us who were here in the fall of 1969 and saw the college in its infancy, have seen the initial enrollment of 750 surge to over 3,800 last fall. For me, this has been an especially gratifying experience. When I joined the Livingston Adventure as a faculty member I hardly anticipated that I would ever be writing this letter as your dean, but I can assure you that I am pleased and proud to do so.

I would like to reflect a bit on our past and, in doing so, note some of the changes which have occurred besides the increase in numbers of graduates. Our first year saw faculty offices in quad rooms and classes held in lounges, living rooms, the old officer's club, and any other place where we could get together. Since then Tillett, Lucy Stone Hall, Beck, and the warehouse renovations for biology and psychology have all been completed. Although we do not have that much-desired separate student center building, we do now have a gym and additional recreational space in Tillett.

In the early days Livingston was known as a place where students were socially and politically active. This activity has been replaced with a concentration on career goals and concern about our futures as individuals. This some of the excitement is gone but to many that excitement has been replaced by a different kind. The stimulation of working together in pursuit of a strong academic experience is equally exciting. As we mature, we are reminded that we are a part of the rest of society to the extent that our worries and concerns differ little from those of others.

The faculty too has changed. We still have a generally dedicated and youthful faculty which give more of their time in informal ways to students than other college faculties. It is a group second to none so the value of their instruction and direction of you is unsurpassed in other colleges.

At the same time we have succeeded in many ways. The University is now open to large numbers of students who, in pre-Livingston years, did not enter the "hallowed halls" of the State University. We still have a campus as diverse in its people as is the population of the State. Education at Livingston College far exceeds the boundaries of the classroom, laboratory, and studio. This accomplishment is our greatest one and I am certain that you will see changes in society which are led by our graduates. Hopefully, each of you will be a part of these changes and hopefully, they will be for the better.

Finally, don't forget your College. Join our new alumni organization and help us work for our future. Keep in touch and come back to see us.

Fondly and sincerely yours,
W. Robert Jenkins
Dean

Revised November 27, 2015

Dean's Letter to Class of 1978: Your Education Has Been Guided by Outstanding Faculty and Diverse Peers

W.

W. Robert Jenkins, dean of Livingston College, wrote the following letter to the Class of 1978, included in the college yearbook, [The Rock, Volume III](#). (Jenkins was named permanent dean on March 6, 1978. Most likely, the letter below listing Jenkins as acting dean was written before that date.)

Dear Graduate:

I am addressing this letter to you since it is upon you that the reputation and future of Livingston College will lie. In your stay at Livingston you have had the opportunity to study under a truly outstanding faculty, one second to none in Rutgers University and one which includes many persons of international reputation. I hope that you have availed yourself fully of this opportunity and will always reflect upon and profit from the ideas passed on to you by these people. After all, ideas and the ability to deal with them will be the greatest single return on your four-year investment in higher education.

Another and very significant part of anyone's education involves his or her peer relationships which have been developed. At Livingston College you have been a part of an unusually diverse student body, one which represents all facets of our general population. All racial and ethnic groups are present in significant numbers, older students returning to or just entering college after a number of years outside of the educational stream constitute a visible segment of our student body, and varied political and religious beliefs are well represented. To this group you owe acknowledgement of the broadening of your horizons, and they owe to you acknowledgement of your own specific contribution to the College.

Now that you are leaving us to take your place in the job market, to assume positions in all aspects of the employment scheme, and to go on to graduate and professional schools, you can best evaluate how good an education you received. Did your studies and your associations at Livingston College prepare you adequately? Do you have the knowledge and skills of your peers? Let us know. Your responses will help us to evaluate and improve our curriculum.

Finally, it has been a pleasure having you at Livingston College. I have enjoyed our personal contacts and wish that it had been possible to know each of you. Don't forget your College; keep in touch. You are the reward for our efforts and our investment in the future.

Sincerely yours,
W. Robert Jenkins
Acting Dean

Revised December 1, 2015

Dean's Letter to Class of 1977: Livingston Has Provided a 'Better Than Average' Preparation for Life and Career

Emmanuel G.

Emmanuel G. Mesthene, dean of Livingston College, wrote the following letter to the Class of 1977, included in the yearbook, The Rock, Volume II.

FROM THE DESK OF THE DEAN

Dear Livingston College Students and Friends:

One's college years can be, in some respects, the best of one's life. Going to college means having challenged, sometimes for the first time, attitudes and assumptions formulated throughout a prior twelve years of schooling and half that many more of living.

Livingston College, as you know, is both very much like, and also different from, the "average," traditional college. As students here, you have had exposure to academic programs that are designed to provide preparation for further study and for a working life, for graduate and professional programs, for government service, and for the world of business.

At the same time, you have partaken and contributed to, the Livingston community. This yearbook, planned and put together by your fellow students, will help you to recall that community. I hope that your memories will be happy ones, that you will leave us and be able to judge that Livingston College has prepared you in better than the average way for what you will encounter in the future. To those of you who are graduating, I wish you well, and ask you to keep in touch, and to support your alma mater. The very best of luck to you!

Sincerely yours,
Emmanuel G. Mesthene

Revised November 27, 2015

Dean's Letter to Class of 1973: You're Pioneers Who Have Shaped Livingston

Ernest A. Lynton, dean of Livingston College, wrote the following letter to the Class of 1973, included in the publication, [Livingston in the Retrospect: 1969-1973](#).

To the Livingston Class of 1973:

You are the first full graduating class of Livingston College, and it is for all of us a proud and happy occasion. Many of you have been here with the College from its very beginning, back in September 1969 – which seems a very long time ago.

You and the College have come a long way since those early days, with mud everywhere and makeshift facilities, but also with a special kind of pioneering excitement which no one else at Livingston will ever know.

You have contributed a great deal to the shaping of Livingston, and we all owe you a debt of gratitude. I hope that in turn Livingston has given much to you, and that it has enhanced your ability to cope with your future and with the problems of our society in an effective and constructive fashion.

Our hopes and our good wishes accompany you in this task.

Cordially yours,
Ernest A. Lynton
Dean

Dean's Letter to Class of 1974: Be Proud of Acting in Unity Amid Shaken Society

George W. Carey, acting dean of Livingston College, wrote the following letter to the Class of 1974, included in the college yearbook, [We the People](#). Note that the yearbook misspells his last name as "Cary."

To the Graduating Class of 1974, Livingston College

This has been a year in which we have seen the legitimacy and credibility of some of the most central institutions of our society shaken. At all scales of concern – national, regional, state and local – there has been a breakdown of public faith and confidence attended by the explosive growth of disillusionment and cynicism.

What has occurred in society as a whole, has always manifested itself in Livingston College as well. We have gone through our own crisis of confidence. The reason for this is surely related to the fact that our college, more than most, represents a cross-section of society in its students and faculty: affluent, middle class, and poor: white, black and Puerto Rican, we represent a heterogenous mix of all of the elements of our social order. Since we have chosen not to be homogenized into only one class or ethnic group, we have brought with us into our collegiate halls many of the issues which are left at the threshold of more homogenous colleges. We are a part of society, not apart from society.

In Livingston during this year, pressures arising from the inadequate support of certain vital areas threatened to divide us into competing interest groups. Despite the relentless pressures of resource scarcity which we feel so acutely, we were able to respond by drawing together to fight for common goals, rather than split apart to compete with each other. Our success in this regard has been greater than society's. We may be proud of it.

As the Spring semester progresses, there seems to be growing a renewed interest in the organization of student participation in community governance. I hope and trust that students and faculty alike will continue to work out the means to enable Livingston College to respond in unity to the challenges which await us in the future.

If it is true that our college is of society rather than a thing apart, then we hope that you, the graduating class, will remain committed to our efforts to grow as a multi-racial, multi-ethnic institution dedicated to providing a

quality education to the members of all of the communities to which you now return. We hope that as you work towards the betterment of those communities, that – by word and deed – you will be advocates of the College. And we hope that you will return active and interested participants in our efforts as alumni. Goodbye and good luck.

Sincerely,
George W. [Carey]
Acting Dean