

College History




Livingston College was founded in 1965, and opened in 1969, at Rutgers University's Kilmer Campus (renamed as Livingston Campus in 1991) in Piscataway, New Jersey. It had a mission to bring together a diverse group of students, faculty and staff in a shared-learning community committed to the pursuit of academic innovation and excellence.

- College/campus timeline.
- *Rutgers* magazine's history of Livingston College, *Great Expectations*, published in spring 2012.

Livingston College had the distinction of being Rutgers-New Brunswick's first coeducational undergraduate residential college for the liberal arts.

The college's mission eventually was embraced by the entire university, honoring the college's distinction of community building through leadership and understanding.

Dedicated to expanding opportunities for its students, the college fulfilled its mission through its core curriculum, its minor in organizational leadership, its internship programs, and its student life activities. Livingston offered students the personal attention of a small college community within a major research institution.

 Its original motto, "Strength through Diversity," came to life in the college's signature lecture series, the Global Futures Symposia. Livingston College offered an undergraduate education that prepared students to think critically and to act responsibly in the contemporary world. The college offered the broadest possible choice at the university of more than 60 majors, with an academic program designed to give students an excellent foundation in the liberal arts and an in-depth understanding of their chosen fields of interest. Courses in fulfillment of distribution requirements gave students experience in the humanities, natural and social sciences, and quantitative and analytical studies. Livingston College students were also introduced to the diversity of world cultures as they developed insight into the origins and character of contemporary national and global issues.

Livingston offered a unique minor in organizational leadership. Unifying the theoretical and practical elements of organizational dynamics, the minor ensured that the student's academic background included a component immediately recognizable as valuable by potential employers. The program complemented instruction offered in Rutgers' professional schools and offered important curricular options to students pursuing degrees in arts and sciences. The college was committed to providing an open forum where ideas and values were examined and restructured in the light of knowledge acquired within and beyond

the classroom.

Rutgers' new School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) enrolled its first students for the fall 2007 semester, replacing the New Brunswick-area liberal arts undergraduate colleges, including Livingston College. Livingston's final commencement as a separate college was held in 2010. SAS is now the largest school at Rutgers.

Read more about the vibrant current Livingston Campus.

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.”

About William Livingston

Livingston: A Governor, a College, and the Long Echoes of Slavery at Rutgers online program held Jan. 18, 2022: More info or view the video.

(Information on this page is condensed from text from Rutgers’ Scarlet & Black Digital Archive.)

Livingston Campus was named after **William Livingston**, the first governor of the state of New Jersey after the American Revolution. 

The Livingston family was connected with Rutgers from the college’s earliest days. William Livingston’s brothers Philip and Robert Livingston were two of the original founding trustees of the school.

The Livingston family’s wealth in the 18th century came largely from their roles as merchants and slave traders operating out of New York City. Founding trustee **Philip Livingston** traded slaves from Jamaica and Antigua and owned plantations in Jamaica. He also held black people in bondage in New York.

William Livingston, on the other hand, was torn between his family’s slave trading and his belief that slavery was incompatible with the young American nation’s ideals of freedom.

William Livingston called slavery “an indelible blot” upon humanity. As governor of New Jersey, he opposed the slave trade and hoped to pass a gradual abolition program after the Revolution. He won a ban on the Atlantic slave trade in New Jersey in 1786 (22 years before the Atlantic slave trade became illegal nationwide). But he was not able to achieve abolition during his tenure as governor, because slaveholders who opposed Livingston’s views held too much power in the New Jersey legislature.

William Livingston at one time enslaved at least two people, a woman named Bell and her son, Lambert, as noted on a plaque installed on the Livingston campus in 2021.

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Additional information and resources:

Scarlet & Black Digital Archive: Livingston

Rutgers Confronts Ties to Slavery With New Historical Markers

[Documents and Photos Related to Livingston College's 50th Anniversary and Beyond](#)

- *Additional information on the documentation of Livingston College's history*
- *Livi at 50 and other celebrations of Livingston College's history*

In conjunction with the 50th anniversary of Livingston College, the Livingston Alumni Association, Rutgers University Libraries, and other Rutgers partners have started several projects to document the history of the college and of the anniversary celebrations.

These projects and documents include:

Livi at 50: A Celebration of Livingston College's 50th Anniversary

This curated selection of archival materials and event documentation capture moments from the special event "Livi at 50." Held at the James Dickson Carr Library on Livingston Campus on October 25, 2019, it was hosted by Rutgers University–New Brunswick Libraries and the Livingston Alumni Association. Reproductions of the historical materials were used in an exhibition on display at the event. Also includes many photos from the event.



New Digital Collection: Livi at 50: A Celebration of Livingston College's 50th

Anniversary: Rutgers University Libraries article on the digital collection.


Livi@50: A celebration of Livingston College's 50th anniversary: Commemorative program from the Oct. 25, 2019, event (8 pages, PDF).

Libraries, Alumni Celebrate Livingston College's 50th Anniversary: Rutgers Universities Libraries article (Nov. 13, 2019) on the Oct. 25, 2019, event.

Twitter: Livi at 50: Photos and tweets celebrating the college's 50th anniversary and commemorating the Oct. 25, 2019, event, based on the hashtag #livi50.

Pfaff, L. G. (2019, December 18). Keeping the Rutgers' Livingston story alive 50 years after the trailblazing college opened. *Rutgers Focus*.

An article on the history of Livingston College, with a focus on history preservation projects by the Livingston Alumni Association, Rutgers University Libraries, and the Rutgers Oral History Archives.

 Siederer, M. (2020, Spring/Summer). Livingston at 50: Celebrating the college built on 'Strength Through Diversity'. *1766 [alumni magazine]*, 37(1), 14-19. [Full text online]

When Livingston College welcomed its first students in September 1969, many of the campus' buildings, sidewalks, and landscaping were still under construction, with piles of mud throughout, giving rise to the original name of the student newspaper: The Mud Pile. Between 1969 and 2010, when Livingston had its final commencement, the Piscataway-based college was a hub of innovation for Rutgers University. Livingston adopted the slogan "Strength Through Diversity," which is now a foundation of the overall Rutgers University experience.

[Programs Celebrating Livingston College's 50th Anniversary and Beyond](#)

Information and links to documents and photos related to the 50-year anniversary of Livingston College.

Livingston Legacy Lectures (2009-2010)

Alumni Talks (Since 2021)

The Livingston Alumni Association (LAA), in association with our partners within Rutgers University, has held multiple events and embarked on projects to celebrate and commemorate the 50+ years since Livingston College opened in 1969. These include events specifically related to the college's history.



Livi at 50: A Celebration of Livingston College's 50th Anniversary kicked off with a keystone event at the James Dickson Carr Library on Livingston campus on October 25, 2019. The event was co-presented by Rutgers University–New Brunswick Libraries and the LAA.

It featured a panel discussion of prominent Livingston alumni, a presentation of the Riki Jacobs Livingston Pride Award, and an exhibition from the University Archives of materials including yearbooks, photographs, and other artifacts that captured Livingston's evolution from its beginnings as the military base Camp Kilmer in the 1950s through the present day.

A panel discussion reflected this diversity, with alumni Noah Hart Jr. LC'73, GSED'88, Staci Berger LC'94, EJB/GSNB'04, and Robert W. Snyder, LC'77 all speaking about their formative years at Livingston and the impact the college had on them. In addition to the panel discussion and audience Q&A, student Eshan Kaul, SEBS'19, RWJMS'22, was named recipient of the 2019 Riki Jacobs Livingston Pride Award.

Pictured: Hart, Snyder, and Berger.

Livi at 50: A Remembrance of Livingston College: Latino Studies and the Livingston Panthers Sports Teams



Livingston College Panthers cheerleaders, circa 1970. Courtesy of Rutgers University Libraries.

Our April 22, 2021, "Livi at 50" online event celebrated the formation of the Latino Studies program and the history of the Livingston Panthers sports teams. Iris Martinez Campbell LC'75, SSW'81, moderated a discussion about the Latino Studies program with Margie Rivera LC'72 and Grizel Ubarry LC'74. LAA President Jeff Armus led a discussion about the Livingston Panthers with Lucille Lo Sapio LC'76, BernaDette Session LC'75, Dwight Williams, defensive coordinator of the Panthers, and Rick Williams LC'74, a member of the team. Watch a replay (58 minutes).

Livingston: A Governor, a College, and the Long Echoes of Slavery at Rutgers

A historical marker on the Livingston campus, placed in 2021, explains its namesake William Livingston's deep involvement in slavery and his halting efforts to abolish slavery as New Jersey's first governor.

Video from ***Livingston: A Governor, a College, and the Long Echoes of Slavery at Rutgers*** (58 minutes)

In a virtual presentation held Jan. 18, 2022, Robert Snyder LC'77, a professor emeritus of journalism and American studies at Rutgers–Newark, talked with Jesse Bayker SGS'19, digital archivist for the Scarlet and Black Project at Rutgers–New Brunswick, who discussed Livingston's life.

Brooke A. Thomas, an African American history doctoral candidate at Rutgers–New Brunswick, shared the importance of Livingston College to Rutgers, why it was created, and how activism was one of its important contributions to Rutgers. Thomas is also a co-author of the chapter "We the People: Student Activism at Rutgers and Livingston College, 1960–1985" in *Scarlet and Black, Volume 3*.

Livingston College graduates Snyder and Debra O'Neal LC'87 shared their experiences of educational innovation and campus activism from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s. The discussion ended with a question-and-answer forum.

This event was sponsored by the RUAA, the LAA, the School of Arts and Sciences, and the Rutgers Alumni Association.

[Timeline of Livingston College and Livingston Campus](#)

Livingston College history (overview)

- 1964 Rutgers acquires 540 acres of the former Camp Kilmer base from the federal government. The base was named for Joyce Kilmer, a New Brunswick poet who was killed in action while serving in the New York National Guard during World War I.
- 1965 The Rutgers Board of Governors (BOG) names the first of three colleges planned on the Kilmer property, for William Livingston, who served as New Jersey's first governor from 1766 to 1790.
- 1965-1973 Ernest A. Lynton is the first Dean of Livingston College.

Lynton led a number of curriculum innovations, including the establishment of majors in computer science, African-American studies, urban studies and comparative literature. He also started programs in city and regional planning, and anthropology at Livingston.

- 1969 Livingston College opens in September, with about 700 students. Nearly one in three students was a minority, and students were included as voting members of the college assembly. Students in the new Organization for Black Unity (OBU), with the college's permission, designated House 25 in the Quad II dormitory as the "Malcolm X house." Quads I and III were built but not yet open.
- 1970-1971 The college establishes intercollegiate men's baseball and football teams, as well as a cheerleading squad and a co-ed intramural baseball program.
- 1970 Tillett Hall opens in the spring as the college's main academic building, including a campus center and a dining hall. A student newspaper, The Medium, debuts in October. Previous campus newspapers were titled Mudslide, Fango, and General Motors.
- 1971 Livingston College students begin AM radio station. Kilmer Area Library opens.
- 1972 North and South Towers dorms open. New Academic Building (later named Lucy Stone Hall) opens.
- 1973 Livingston College graduates its first full four-year class of 500 students. The graduates are approximately 80% white, 15% black, 3% Puerto Rican, and 2% Asian.
- 1973-1974 George Warren Carey serves as Acting Dean of Livingston College. On Nov. 5, 1973, a group of black students takes over Carey's office. The students demanded the resignation of the dean of student affairs and a reconstitution of student services on campus. Four days later, 350 black, white and Puerto Rican Rutgers University students pack the BOG meeting to support the demands of Livingston's black students.
- 1974-1977 Emmanuel George Mesthene serves as Dean of Livingston College.
- 1975-1976 Livingston College Association of Graduates (LCAG) is formed. Renamed as Livingston Alumni Association (LAA) in 1988.
- 1977 Rutgers Athletic Center (RAC) opens with a men's basketball victory over rival Seton Hall. Today it is home to the Rutgers men's and women's basketball, wrestling, and gymnastics programs, as well as hosting other events. Renamed as Louis Brown Athletic Center in 1986, renamed back to RAC in 2019, and renamed Jersey Mike's Arena in 2021.
- 1977-1990 W. Robert Jenkins serves as Dean of Livingston College.
- 1980 The BOG merges the faculties of the liberal arts schools in New Brunswick into two main groups – the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and the Faculty of Professional Studies. The reorganization largely mutes Livingston's academic autonomy.
- 1986 Livingston Student Center (LSC) opens.
- 1990-1993 Walton R. Johnson serves as Dean of Livingston College.
- 1990 BOG renames Towers dorms for Lynton. The LAA honors its first Livingston Pride Award winner. The award continues to honor graduating

seniors from Rutgers-New Brunswick colleges each year.

- 1991 BOG votes to rename campus from “Kilmer” to “Livingston,” ending a yearlong struggle by Livingston College students to strengthen their school’s identity.
- 1993-2007 Arnold G. Hyndman serves as the final Dean of Livingston College.
- 1999 Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, the first production of the Livingston Theatre Company, opens.
- 2000 Livingston’s radio station, RLC-WVPH (The Core), in partnership with Piscataway High School, begins broadcasting at 90.3 FM. The LAA honors its first four Livingston College Distinguished Alumni.
- 2007 Rutgers merges Livingston, Rutgers, Douglass, and University colleges in New Brunswick into the School of Arts and Sciences, and Livingston College officially ends. Currently enrolled students are permitted to complete their degrees as Livingston graduates until 2010.
- 2009 The LAA gives its first Livingston Legacy Awards to three faculty members.
- 2010 A renovated and expanded LSC has a grand reopening. Livingston College holds its final commencement.
- 2011 Livingston Dining Commons opens.
- 2012 The Livingston Apartments open.
- 2013 The Plaza, a retail center that includes a movie theater and several eateries, opens. The Rutgers Business School-New Brunswick building opens.
- 2017 Kilmer Area Library renamed for James Dickson Carr, the first African-American graduate of Rutgers College.
- 2019 RWJBarnabas Health Athletic Performance Center opens.

Great Expectations: Writings on Livingston College History

Livingston College’s innovations in academics, student life and governance, especially in its early years, have been the topic of multiple published articles, both popular and scholarly. Here is a selected bibliography:

Clemens, P. G. E., & Yanni, C. (2016). The early years of Livingston College, 1964–1973: Revisiting the “college of good intentions.” *The Journal of the Rutgers University Libraries*, 68(2), 71-114. [Full text online]

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Abstract: Livingston College was planned in the late 1960s and opened in fall 1969 as part of Rutgers University-New Brunswick/Piscataway. Ernest Lynton, its first dean and chief architect, envisioned a college that emphasized interdisciplinary studies, that had a faculty and student body who would carry what was learned in the classroom into the community, that would empower students to shape the college and their own education, and that would recruit significant numbers of new students from historically disadvantaged minority groups. This “college of good intentions” fell short of Lynton’s hopes. This article examines why this happened, but also seeks to illustrate the many ways the hopes for educational reform embodied in the college’s design foreshadowed what many universities, including Rutgers, would accomplish in the future.



Hann, C. (2012, Spring). Great expectations. *Rutgers Magazine*, 92(2), 50-55. [Full text online]

“More than 40 years ago, at the height of the Vietnam War, a bold experiment in higher education got under way at Rutgers. It was called Livingston College. During its formative years, the college’s ideals—from its progressive curriculum to its goal of serving underrepresented students—attracted distinguished faculty from top universities and ushered in the diversity that today is a hallmark of Rutgers.”

This article details and celebrates the history of Livingston College, which was one of Rutgers-New Brunswick’s undergraduate units from 1969 to 2007. A sidebar article details the transformation of the Livingston campus “into a state-of-the-art center for business and professional education.”

Hidalgo, H. (1973). No one model American: A collegiate case in point. *The Journal of Teacher Education*, 24(4), 294-301. [Excerpts from the article]

Abstract: An examination of Livingston College at Rutgers as an example of some

of the difficulties and successes in the implementation of the “No One Model American” statement.

Horowitz, I. L., and Feigenbaum, J. (1980, July). Experiment perilous: The first year of Livingston College of Rutgers University. *Urban Education*, 15(2), 131-168.

Abstract: Livingston College was established to provide a terminal social science program, particularly for lower-income minority students, though the majority of its students are Jewish and middle class. Despite efforts to make Livingston a model college, however, external social, racial, and economic variables cannot be controlled.

Siederer, M. (2020, Spring/Summer). Livingston at 50: Celebrating the college built on ‘Strength Through Diversity’. *1766 [alumni magazine]*, 37(1), 14-19. [Full text online]

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Photos courtesy of Rutgers Magazine.

[Documentation of Livingston College History](#)

Documents and Photos Related to Livingston College’s 50th Anniversary and Beyond


– A short history of Livingston College, from its planning in 1965 to its final commencement in 2010, is available on another page on this site.



– Several authors have written about Livingston College’s history in both popular and scholarly works. See a selected bibliography.

– For a list of student yearbooks produced during Livingston College’s history, including links to cover-to-cover online versions of the yearbooks, please see this page.

In addition to the yearbooks, handbooks, newspapers and other publications and documents from Livingston College, scanned by the Internet Archive, are available.


 Many of the materials are from the collection of Louis T. Economopoulos (pictured at left), a 1973 graduate of Livingston College.

– Kenneth Lew has included a few Livingston College documents within his collection of publications and other documents on New Brunswick and Rutgers history. The Livingston College items are:

- * Livingston College – Admission to the University in New Brunswick, New Jersey (1971). (The 1969 and 1970 editions of the same document are available in LAA’s collection hosted by the Internet Archive.)

- * To Members of the Class of 1983 (March 1, 1979)

- * Dear Freshman (May 12, 1979)

– Rutgers’ Special Collections and University Archives (held within Alexander Library on the College Avenue campus in New Brunswick) holds numerous documents on Livingston College’s history. Note that the documents themselves are available for review in person only at the library. Among the relevant Livingston College documents are: 

- Records of the Office of the Dean of Livingston College, Ernest A. Lynton, 1965-1973
- Guide to the Walton R. Johnson Papers, 1949-2001
- Guide to the Rutgers Grass Roots – Progressive Activists Files, 1921-1993 (1979-1993, bulk)

– The Penn State University (PSU) Libraries website DOES offer online access to some documents related to Livingston College’s history, via the Horowitz Transaction Publishers Archive.

In August 2006 the Historical Collections and Labor Archives (HCLA) division of the Special Collections Library of the PSU acquired the corporate archives of Transaction Publishers, a gift of Dr. Irving Louis Horowitz, chairman of the board of Transaction Publishers and the Hannah Arendt Distinguished University Professor (Emeritus), Department of Sociology, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

Top photo: A model showing the three Quads dorms and Tillett Hall. Frank Grad and Sons, Architects, 1965–70, photo dated April 20, 1966. The quads were reinterpretations of the quadrangular colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, broken up into smaller volumes along each side. The shape creates an intimate outdoor courtyard. Source: R-Photo, Buildings and Grounds, Box 33, Livingston College, Architectural Model folder, as published in the article, The early years of Livingston College, 1964–1973: Revisiting the “college of good intentions.” Courtesy of Rutgers University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives.

Center photo: Louis T. Economopoulos (LC’73), covering Rutgers lacrosse as a reporter for The Home News in 1973.

Bottom photo: Student playing pool at the Livingston student union, 1978. The current Livingston Student Center opened in 1986 and was expanded in 2010. Tillett Hall was the previous home of student activities, including the dining hall and pub.

Early History: 1960s and 1970s

According to a December 1973 article in *The Journal of Teacher Education*, by Hilda Hidalgo, Chairman of the Department of Urban Studies and Community Development at Livingston College:



- “Livingston College ... opened its doors in 1969 with a freshman class of about 600 men and women” (Hidalgo, 1973).
- “Dr. Ernest A. Lynton, a physicist, scholar and humanist, has been the College’s main ideological architect; he was appointed dean by former Rutgers University President Mason W. Gross in 1965, when the College was just an idea” (Hidalgo, 1973).
- According the college catalog for 1971-1972, *This Is Livingston* (quoted in Hidalgo, 1973), Livingston College students had formed “multiple ethnical and special interest groups, including the Black Student Union, the United Puerto Rican Students, The Foreign Students Group, the Third World Coalition, Women’s Liberation Group, and the Commuters’ Association. In addition, students may join the Philosophy Club, Psychology Association, Student Employment Service, Peer Counseling Group, and others. Any group of at least fifteen students may start a club; they may then apply to the Club Finance Board for funding.”
- “Livingston College’s message can best be summarized by quoting excerpts of Dean Ernest Lynton’s commencement address to our first full graduating class of 500 seniors on May 20, 1973” (quoted in Hidalgo, 1973):

✖ We have shown, unmistakably that a College within a university can contribute to the highest levels of scholarship, research, and instruction of a university, while at the same time it can meet the educational needs of a broadly heterogeneous student body – the needs of black and Puerto Rican, the needs of the poor as well as the rich, the needs of the sons and daughters of working-class parents as much as those of the progeny of merchants and bankers – the needs as well of older and of part-time students as much as those of younger, and full-time ones.

There are two common threads running through this multifaceted educational enterprise. One is a universal commitment to quality – and that is something which we have had to learn from each other slowly and sometimes painfully. It is only in a truly multiracial institution like ours that the white liberal can learn, from his black and Puerto Rican colleagues and critics, that the greatest arrogance of whites is their low expectation with regard to the performance of minority students – and gradually the lesson is being learned that high expectations and demanding goals are what each of us owes to every one of our students.

And this common emphasis on quality makes possible the second common thread of our effort – the refusal to accept any track system of education in which students are channelled and boxed in according to their background. The most important feature of Livingston's fascinating educational mix is that it provides for all students the full range of opportunities – and encourages each to explore the very limits of his or her potential and aspirations, regardless of background and prior training. You who graduate here today have come from many different societal groups, many races and classes, many backgrounds. You go from here into a wide variety of occupations – further graduate and professional education, medical and law schools, jobs in private and public agencies, teaching and – inevitably – some with no jobs at all. A great diversity – but the achievement of the College is that there is no correlation between where you are going and where you came from.

To be many things to many people, to provide a broad spectrum of education and career opportunities, to serve the needs of a heterogeneous student body – such achievements should, indeed must, be the ultimate aims of all colleges and all universities – but as yet Livingston stands nearly alone in this.

TABLE 2: Racial Distribution – Livingston College 1972-73 ("Statistics provided by Livingston College registrar and office of the Dean," as quoted in Hidalgo, 1973)

Categories	White	Black	P.R. [Puerto Rican]	Asian	Total
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	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Students	2409	80	448	15	72	3	59	2	2988	100
Faculty	173	72	52	22	8	3	7	3	240	100
Administrators*	10	40	12	48	3	12	0	0	25	100

* Administrators – Under this category we have included only administrators listed by name and function in the Livingston catalog, representing only key positions with considerable responsibility and authority. Clerical staff has been omitted.

Hidalgo, H. (1973). No one model American: A collegiate case in point. *The Journal of Teacher Education*, 24(4), 294-301.