

Livingston College's Larry Ridley Celebrates Jazz Career



Jazz legend and bassist extraordinaire Larry Ridley in 2013 celebrated his 75th birthday year with a two-part interview on the New Jersey jazz radio station, WBG0 88.3 FM.



Ridley was chairman of the Livingston College music department from 1972 to 1980 and a Rutgers music professor from 1971 to 1999.

Ed Berger's interview with Ridley aired on consecutive Sundays, March 31 and April 7, 2013, on the program *Jazz From the Archives*.

Ridley's stellar career includes associations with jazz luminaries Thelonious Monk, Dexter Gordon, Benny Carter, Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard, Horace Silver, Sonny Rollins, Dizzy Gillespie, Jackie McLean, Philly Joe Jones, Roy Haynes, Max Roach, Wes Montgomery, Dinah Washington, Carmen McRae, and many others.

The Livingston Alumni Association honored Ridley in 2011 with the Livingston Legacy Award. The award recognizes faculty and staff who played a key role in the establishment and growth of Livingston College and its mission, and contributions to the overall Rutgers and global communities.

Roger Cohen, Professor Emeritus of Journalism, Receives Livingston Legacy Award for His Role in Developing Livingston College



The 2013 Livingston Legacy Award honoring **Roger Cohen**, a professor emeritus of journalism at Rutgers University, was presented Wednesday, October 9, 2013, by the Livingston Alumni Association (LAA) of Rutgers University. View his award video on this page or open in a new window.



Cohen joined seven other Livingston College faculty and staff honored since 2009 for their exemplary roles in the establishment and growth of Livingston College and its mission.

Cohen, a professor emeritus of Rutgers' School of Communication and Information (SC&I), graduated from Rutgers College in 1965. He was a radio news and sports journalist before joining the Rutgers Radio/Television Center in 1970. He began teaching in Livingston College's Department of Journalism and Urban Communication on a volunteer basis in 1975. He became a full-time faculty member in 1980.

From 1981 to about 2000, he chaired the Livingston College Faculty Admissions Committee, which reviewed applications from potential students referred by the university's admissions office.

Cohen was hired to teach radio production and broadcast news writing courses, but taught many others, including the TV/radio survey course and advanced television production. When Rutgers was implementing a campus-wide cable television system, he designed a course that not only examined how TV executives develop and schedule content, but also produced student programming for the RUTV channel.

He ran the department's internship program for 18 years. This brought him into contact with every student major because the internship was required at the time. As an administrator, he was SC&I's acting associate dean in 1985. He also

served as department chair for seven years, where he oversaw faculty, student, and curriculum growth.

In 2012 Cohen received SC&I's first annual Journalism and Media Studies Lifetime Achievement Award.

Cohen passed away in 2022 at age 78. Read a remembrance posted on the SC&I website.

[‘On the Banks’: Rutgers and New Brunswick Music History Exhibit Displayed at Alexander Library](#)

Livingston College's Liberated Gospel Choir, 1977. Courtesy of Rutgers University Archives.




The fall 2013 exhibition, *On the Banks of the Raritan: Music at Rutgers and New Brunswick*, was on view from October 9, 2013 until January 31, 2014, in the galleries on the ground floor and lower level of Alexander Library. The exhibit examined more than a century of New Brunswick's musical landscape.

The exhibition featured documents, photographs, and artifacts from Special Collections and University Archives and the Performing Arts Library, including the papers of pioneering composer and Rutgers Professor of Music Robert Moevs.

The Music at Rutgers portion of the exhibit focused on students and professors who participated in the musical clubs and programs at Rutgers College, New Jersey College for Women (Douglass College), Livingston College, and Mason Gross School of the Arts from 1880 to the mid- to late 1980s.

Highlighted clubs included the Rutgers College Chapel Choir, Glee Club, and band; New Jersey College for Women's Weeping Willows, Drum Corps, and Voorhees Chapel Choir; Livingston College's Liberated Gospel Choir and jazz clubs; the various ensembles of Mason Gross School of the Arts, cross-college groups and events including the University Choir, WRSU radio, and the University Concert Series; and music played at dances, athletic events, and other college traditions.

 Livingston College drums class (undated). Courtesy of Rutgers University Archives.

Although the schools of Rutgers University functioned fairly independently for much of this period, this shared interest and passion for music as an activity, entertainment, and tradition united the student body. At Rutgers, music is as rooted in history and tradition as going to a football game, reading the *Targum*, participating in Yule Log or Sacred Path, or singing your Alma Mater at graduation.

On the Banks of the Raritan was on display in Gallery '50 and the Special Collections and University Archives Gallery in the Archibald S. Alexander Library. The exhibition was curated by Flora Boros, Kathy Fleming DC '08, Thomas Izbicki, and Fernanda Perrone.

Arts and Culture History

We present here links to pages celebrating the artistic and cultural history of Livingston College:

- Livingston College's Larry Ridley Celebrates Jazz Career
- Livingston Women's Art Show in 1972 Was 'Strictly Unpolitical'
- 'On the Banks': Rutgers and New Brunswick Music History Exhibit Displayed at Alexander Library
- Relive the Livingston Theatre Company's Productions

Yours in Blackness: Livingston College's Weusi Kuumba Dancers and Drummers



William Bellinger, an alumnus from Livingston College's first four-year graduating class in 1973, founded the Livingston College Weusi Kuumba Dancers and Drummers, an all-Black troupe, before the college even opened, in July 1969. Bellinger was also the student speaker at the 1973 Livingston College graduation convocation.

The 1973 Livingston College yearbook included a photo of the troupe and a

description and history of the troupe by Bellinger. Below is the text (with minor edits) as it appeared in the yearbook. The original yearbook page is available [here](#).

The spirit of Africa is upon me.
She has annointed Me to bring good tidings.

William Bellinger 5/1/73

YOURS IN BLACKNESS

The Livingston College Weusi Kuumba Dancers and Drummers, an all Black Troupe, was organized in July 1969 by William Bellinger, of Rahway, a member of the class of 1973.

Soon afterwards, the troupe took as its purpose, "promoting a language, a mode of expression, which addressed itself to the mind, through the heart, using related, relevant and significant movements which are related to our everyday activities for expression of special [and] real-life experiences in our special and rhythmic sequence."

"We as a group are striving for a dwelling and clearer insight of our way of life, labor, culture, aspirations, history, social, economic, and religious beliefs, and disbeliefs, movements and festivity, and sadness.

"In short, we are attempting to portray a heritage, a culture, conceived and felt by our troupe."

The Weusi Kuumba African Dancers and Drummers have traveled much. Among performance locations are: Somerset County College, Hilton Hotel, N.Y., Malcolm X University and Boston University.

Monies earned, or donated to the group, are used to assist needy Black students wishing to major in community development, and to assist the scientific research for a Sickkle Cell disease cure.

Bill Bellinger '73

Music, Risk, Three-Eyed Frogs and Other Experiments: Life in Livingston College's House 15, Circa 1972-1975



By Joe Birish, LC'75

[Read more Livingston College Students' Memories.]

I graduated from Livingston College as part of the Class of 1975. I lived in the House 15 dorm from the fall of 1972 to June 1975. House 15 was a great dorm to live in at the time, as it had a lot of students who were into an alternative lifestyle, which was typical of that time. Most of us were advocates for the legalization of marijuana, and House 15 was a fairly safe place for students to indulge in experimenting with pot and other substances.

This dorm had a real communal feel to it, as most of the students were really into the music of the era. Quite a few of us had big record collections and we enjoyed blasting our music very loudly. Board games like "Risk" were very popular, and we played them in the House 15 lounge several times a week. (I included a line about the Risk game in my song lyrics.)

Every Thursday night we had a low-stakes poker game (penny, nickel, dime, quarter betting only). The poker games started around 9 p.m. and sometimes would continue till 2 a.m.

Since the drinking age was 18 back then, alcohol kept the poker games pretty interesting. By midnight some players were not seeing their cards correctly!

In the spring of 1973, we had "House-15" T-shirts made up, and most of us purchased one. The T-shirt included a cartoon of a green three-eyed frog as our dorm mascot.

In 1973, I wrote an original song about some House 15 experiences, and I made a home recording of the song with me on vocals and guitar that summer. In 2014, I was going through my old tapes and rediscovered this song. I liked the original recording but wanted to add to it, so I copied the recording to an eight-track tape deck and added drums, a second guitar and harmony vocals. (Listen to the

[House 15](#) song [2 minutes, 51 seconds]. See the lyrics below.)

I also found a recording of an instrumental rock jam from the spring of 1973 that was recorded in the lounge of a dorm in Quad 2. It included me on drums, a bass player from House 15, and two guitarists from Quad 2. (Listen to *Quad Rumble* [3 minutes, 47 seconds].)

HOUSE 15

Original music and lyrics by Joe Birish (c. 1973)

I must be out-spaced, or is it spaced out?

That hash oil flavor has confused all my doubts.

The stairs are now cushioned, as I glide smoothly down.

The lights are much cooler, as my mind spins around.

Chorus:

All in 15, we came to know, some quite nice times, belonging and close.

We were together, partners in crime, parties and ludes, oh what good times.

Where are they now, in how many jails, who's behind bars and who's out on bail?

What we did wrong is a mystery to me, but the system can't stand, us kids being free!

I need some sleep, I need a rest.

I want to love you, but I'm such a mess.

Been partying all night, I've got classes to miss.

Here comes the daylight, and we've just finished Risk.

Repeat chorus twice.

Joe Birish (pictured above in 2001) is a 1975 graduate of Livingston College at Rutgers University. His opinions are not necessarily those of the Livingston Alumni Association or Rutgers University.

Email Joe () , and hear more of his original songs.

Livingston College's Challenges at Age 21

By Eric Schwarz, LC'92, SCILS'92,'07

[[Read more Livingston College Alumni Memories.](#)]

In 1990, Livingston College faced a transition as W. Robert Jenkins left as college dean. (Walton R. Johnson would be the next dean, serving from 1990 to 1993.) In a *Daily Targum* article from May 4, 1990 [PDF], Dean Jenkins noted that some of the college's achievements included coeducational residence halls, new academic departments such as anthropology, computer science and journalism, and a diverse student population. Ernest Lynton, the college's dean from its planning stages until 1973, recently had been honored by the university, which renamed the North and South Towers residence halls on campus for him. (The college opened in 1969.)

Students and administrators in 1990 hoped to secure more development on campus, such as an expanded student center, fraternity and sorority housing, and a Kilmer Village residential and shopping complex. I chronicled these events and reflections as Livingston College correspondent for the *Targum*.

It would take another 20 years before some of the visions voiced in 1990 would come to fruition at Livingston.

A student center expansion was completed in 2010, enlarging the center from approximately 35,000 square feet to more than 61,000 square feet.

The Livingston apartment complex, the largest single project Rutgers has ever built, total 650,000 square feet, including 25,000 square feet of retail space, and opened in fall 2012. The mid-rise buildings provide apartment-style living space for 1,500 students along with retail on the first level. Read a fuller description of the 2012 housing and retail project [PDF file].

Other major projects (completed or under construction) are listed in the university's Vision for Livingston Campus site; the site chronicles development on the campus far beyond what had been planned in the late 1980s/early 1990s.

Eric Schwarz is a 1992 graduate of Livingston College and the School of Communication, Information and Library Studies (SCILS) at Rutgers University, where he majored in Journalism and Mass Media, and English. He also earned a

A 1974 Graduate's Memories of a Groundbreaking College on a Diverse Campus

By **Marian Murray**, LC'74

[This article was first posted September 20, 2010, on our old blog.]

Where to begin? I entered Livingston College in the fall of 1970 and graduated in the spring of 1974—my B.A. was in Urban Teacher Education (Secondary) and English. As Rutgers approved a double major—instead of a major and minor—one came out with a “double B.A.,” for all intents and purposes. To give you an idea of how serious this requirement was, there were 22 required courses for the Education major and 18 for the English major! And, even though there were no prerequisite courses, I took them anyway and am glad to have been rounded out as a liberal arts student.

My extra-curricular activities included eight consecutive terms as a student government representative, a formidable group composed of both faculty and students, which was imperative on the most memorable committee that I served on, the “Scholastic Evaluation and Scholastic Standing Committee.” In this committee, the fate of undergraduates literally was in the hands of we faculty and students saddled with the task of determining who could stay and who had to leave Livingston. [At our 10-year Reunion, several classmates came up to me to thank me for the compassion that I and some faculty members showed in allowing them to stay to go on to do good things, professionally and personally. Another of my activities was a wonderful memory of my participation in the glee club, as well as being a reporter/editor for the Third World Report (a paper put out by the Third World Coalition).

Because of Livingston's existence a direct result of the Newark summer rebellions (not riots), the time was thick with heavy issues, including but not limited to the lack of equal rights for African Americans (among others), Open Admissions/Enrollment was struggling to become a reality—I participated in demonstrations and rallies even though I could not qualify for the kind of financial aid that was so desperately needed by so many—, then there was the Vietnam War (or as the Vietnamese termed it “the American War”). There were mind-opening Teach-Ins about virtually every political theme one can imagine. Women's Studies got off the ground, as did Africana Studies, Asian Studies,

Puerto Rican Studies, and such.

The dormitory Quads were unique and were named by the students for their compositions: Quad 1 was called "Woodstock"; Quad 2, "Suburbia"; and Quad 3 "The Ghetto". In the last Quad were three "Black Houses" and one "Puerto Rican House". The dorms of the Black Houses were both all female/male and co-ed! Being virtually bi-lingual, I found another "home" in the Puerto Rican House. The nights were magical with Congo drumming in which women as well as men were allowed to play to their heart's content.

This was a multi-racial, multi-generational, multi-religious, and multi-ethnic campus. For the most part, we all lived in harmony and there was a solidarity that was remarkable achieve in any times, let alone the turbulent '60s and '70s. This was a time when anti-war demonstrations/protest rallies around the country were taking place. And, sadly, the National Guard was called in to "restore order" on some campuses, namely Jackson State and Ohio State where senseless student deaths occurred. What many people do not realize is the Guard is armed with the same munitions that is being used by the military during war time. Consequently, we had M-16s trained on us at some of the education-related as well as political rallies! I have never been prouder of Livingston's president, Mason Gross, who boldly and loudly refused the Governor's call to have the National Guard come onto the Livingston campus! [I believe he paid the price in the coming years when he was ultimately removed from his post.] That was a sad day, indeed. Then there were the takeovers of the President's quarter—I was among those who sat-in until demands were met. And, after I graduated I heard of some students took over the Registrar's offices and destroyed academic records. I cannot understand how that senseless act was going to advance their cause! But, I guess, in any movement it takes all kinds!

On the political front, there were moderates, conservatives and revolutionaries. Discussions between the differinig groups were lively to say the least. But what was terrific was that we listened to one another and much was learned by all—if one was open to hear sentiments different from one's own.

Academically, it was groundbreaking to have access to all classes that the different colleges offered, Livingston, Douglass and Rutgers New Brunswick, as well as the other campuses. Getting around was made easy by the three bus lines (A, B, and C) which made the commute a breeze. Being able to attend classes at the different institutions made for meaningful and lasting friendships and relationships, not to mention the broadening of one's horizons.

It was at Livingston that some innovative teachers used dormitory lounges to conduct class when space was tight, e.g., Vertamae Grosvenor's cooking class (she went on to have her own cooking show on PBS)! On one occasion, my Spanish Translation class was held in my apartment! It was taught by Miguel Algarin, who is the founder of the Poet's Cafe in Loisaida (The Lower East Side, in New

York City). In this vein, some of my English professors would go on to international acclaim or had already established themselves, e.g., Toni Cade Bambara, Nikki Giovanni, Hattie Gossett, A.B. Spellman, Sonia Sanchez, and Marc Crawford, just to name a few. Toni Cade Bambara (who made her transition in '95) made such an indelible impression on me that I have dedicated my book to her! [I will most likely self-publish; and a renowned poet, historian and scholar, Louis Reyes Rivera, who is a good friend of mine, is doing the editing of the book.] In Women's Studies I was introduced to the remarkable Chilean singer/songwriter, Suni Paz. This association included attending her concerts in the summers, in midtown Manhattan.

Let us not forget how many couples came out of liaisons at the College—including some that would end in marriage and long-term commitments. (I was one of those fortunates.)

Livingston was ground-breaking in the artists of all hues, activists, revolutionaries, educators, international political figures (some who would find themselves known as political prisoners for the struggles for independence in their homelands. One such person who I had the honor of meeting on campus was the Puerto Rican independentista Juan Maribras (sp.) who recently made his transition. What I truly loved about, and appreciated, was the ethnic and generational diversity in my classes and throughout the campus.

It made for stimulating discussions and true education at its best! I had a wonderful time at the 10th year Reunion of Livingston College; as well as the 20th, which I attended with a long-time friend who I met in my freshman year. I must say that the 20th was particularly memorable because of the "young ones" who gave their perspective of what the Livingston Mission was.

It was heartbreaking to learn of the College's demise, it was truly unbelievable and inconceivable to me that such a drastic decision was made!

Marian Murray is a 1974 graduate of Livingston College at Rutgers University.

[Memorial Service Held for W. Robert Jenkins, Livingston College Dean Emeritus](#)

Family, friends and colleagues remembered William Robert ("Bob") Jenkins, Livingston College's dean from 1977 to 1990, at a memorial held Wednesday, March 9, 2016, at the Life Sciences Building Atrium on the Busch campus of




Rutgers University.

Jenkins died November 23, 2015, at age 88. He had served at Rutgers for more than 50 years, as a biology professor, college dean and director of the Health Professions Office. Read more about his remarkable life and career.

The celebration included the sharing of stories, memories, experiences and photos of an amazing man who lived life to its fullest.

[Seth Scheiner, an Original Planner of Livingston College and History Professor Emeritus, Remembered](#)


Seth M. Scheiner, a professor emeritus of history at Rutgers University and a founding faculty member at Rutgers' Livingston College, died Nov. 3, 2015, at age 82. 

Professor Scheiner had taught history for 36 years, from 1962 to 1968 at Temple University, then from 1968 to 1998 at Rutgers.

His colleague at Livingston College, Gordon Schochet, remembered Scheiner as one of the original planners of Livingston. The college opened in 1969 as a co-educational undergraduate college with a progressive curriculum and a goal of attracting underrepresented students.

Scheiner "taught urban and African-American history and was, in fact, the first person at Rutgers to work in the latter field," Schochet said. "As a Caucasian, he did eventually encounter some objections and hostility but went on to supervise the first dissertations in history at Rutgers in African-American history and/or by African-American graduate students."

Robert W. Snyder, an associate professor of journalism and American studies at Rutgers-Newark and a 1977 graduate of Livingston College, remembered Scheiner as part of "a very interesting and encouraging environment" in Livingston's history department.

 Scheiner had a "gentle and kind" sense of humor and was a "mensch" who consistently supported civil liberties at Livingston and at the larger Rutgers University, said Norman Markowitz, associate professor of history at Rutgers who had worked with Scheiner since 1971.

"Seth was a kind, warm, gentle, person who served his students and the

university with great distinction and dignity,” said Ronald L. Becker, head of Special Collections and University Archives at Rutgers.

“He was a thoroughly decent man and a fine colleague, and, whatever the circumstances, I always enjoyed being with him and left feeling better about the world,” said Karl Morrison, a colleague of Scheiner’s in the History Department and the Lessing professor emeritus of history and poetics at Rutgers.

Scheiner is survived by his wife of 30 years, Eveline Scheiner; two sons and two daughters-in-law, Jeffrey and Robin Scheiner, and Adam Scheiner and Lana Faye Taradash; a sister, Martha Lederer; a stepdaughter, Ellen Goldstein and her husband, Allan; a stepson, Evan Shurak, and his girlfriend, Sarah Wilson; and seven grandchildren, Amy, Matthew, Madeline, Amelia, Noah, Carly and Brooke. He was laid to rest on Nov. 5, 2015. Memorial contributions may be made to the [Alzheimer’s Association](#).

Photos of Seth Scheiner: (top) Courtesy of Scheiner family; (bottom) From Livingston College’s 1981 yearbook, The Last.