

INSIDE: SCHOOL OF MANGEMENT AND LABOR RELATIONS AT 25 HELPS WORKPLACES ADAPT IN PANDEMIC

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STRENGTH THROUGH DIVERSITY

LIVINGSTON

CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Livingston

AT 50

Celebrating the college built on 'Strength Through Diversity'

By Marty Siederer LC'77

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, the first co-ed college at Rutgers, adopted the slogan "Strength Through Diversity," which is now a foundation of the overall Rutgers University experience. Academic majors and programs like psychology, computer studies, philosophy, jazz, and Africana and Latino studies got their starts at Livingston and grew to be leading courses of study at the overall University when the Livingston curriculum was absorbed into the New Brunswick-Piscataway campus' offerings of courses and selections of majors.

Livingston Dining Commons
PHOTO COURTESY OF GEORGE JONES

“Livingston provided the best part of going to a small college – personal attention from faculty and staff, and a close-knit campus community – with the benefits of being part of a larger University,” recalled Yash Dalal LC’92, a past president of the Livingston Alumni Association and now a member of the School of Arts and Sciences Deans Advisory Council.

In reflecting back on his undergraduate years, Dalal said one of his key experiences took place outside the classroom, serving as an elected representative to the Livingston College Government Association. “I was involved in student government at Rutgers from the first possible day to the last possible day,” Dalal said. “That’s where I gained leadership experience, learned how to debate, and practiced expressing my ideas to my fellow students and to university leaders.”

Today, one of Dalal’s signature accomplishments remains in place. In the early 1990s, Dalal and two other students went before the Board of Governors to propose changing the name of Kilmer Campus to Livingston Campus.

“To make a presentation to the Rutgers Board of Governors: that was huge,” he said. “The skills you get in college from researching, writing, and presenting your ideas can translate to any job you do in the future.”

Livingston Alumni Reunite at 50th Anniversary Celebration

Last October at the James Dickson Carr Library (formerly Kilmer Library) on the Livingston campus, “Livi at 50: A Celebration of Livingston College’s 50th Anniversary” was held to celebrate the milestone.

Organized by the Rutgers University–New Brunswick Libraries and the Livingston Alumni Association, guest speakers included Christopher J. Molloy, Rutgers–New Brunswick Chancellor, Staci Berger LC’94, President and CEO of the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey, Robert W. Snyder LC’77, Rutgers–Newark, Professor of Journalism and American Studies, and Noah Hart Jr. LC’73, coordinator of First Year Advising for

Monmouth University.

“Livingston was a challenging but rewarding school because it tried to reconcile opposites,” said Snyder. “Our professors included international scholars and street-smart activists. Our courses blended theory and practice. Our classroom held students with solid high school educations and students who were denied a just measure of learning. We studied with many different kinds of people. Opinions were sharp and emotions ran high. But if you embraced Livingston’s challenges, you learned something about yourself and the world.”

Hart said “Livingston grew out of the social unrest of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. The student body, faculty, and staff brought life experiences to campus which reflected the tensions of the time and had not yet been experienced in Rutgers history. The Livingston curriculum was flexible and challenged students to explore their interests and embrace the present, while preparing for the future. Student life was flexible and offered a broad variety of engaging opportunities. The spirit of the Livingston curriculum and student life permeate the Rutgers curriculum and student life programming today.”

Steve Zurier LC’77 found that “Livingston wasn’t for everyone. Some students needed the structure of the distribution requirements so they could sample a broad range of courses before selecting a major. I knew I wanted to study history and politics, and when I got more interested in journalism, with the help of my faculty advisors, I was able to craft an inter-disciplinary package of courses in history, political science, economics, and journalism that has served as deep background for my long career in journalism and publishing. Livingston had a lot to offer, but it required that each student take responsibility for his or her education. A lot of students floundered with all the freedom.”

Berger said, “I am eternally grateful that I was rejected by Georgetown but accepted at Livingston College. My college experience – rooted at and in Livingston’s commitment to fundamental, systemic social change through academic excellence and community empowerment – shaped my entire professional and personal life.”



“Rutgers today is a much more open and diverse university than it was when Livingston opened. It is sometimes even said that Rutgers has become what Livingston was.”

ROBERT W. SNYDER LC’77
AND PROFESSOR OF JOURNALISM
AND AMERICAN STUDIES
AT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY–NEWARK



Above: The Livingston Dining Commons is Rutgers newest dining hall. The building is also home to the Rutgers Club. PHOTO COURTESY OF GEORGE JONES

Left: Students outside Tillet Hall in 1984. PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Berger currently serves as president and CEO of the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey. “I am proud that my yearbook prediction, that I would still be fighting for social and political justice in the decades to come, remains true,” she said. “Livingston itself has changed, but our collective experience speaks to how much the college changed us and made us who we are today. Nothing can ever take that away. Once you have been there, ‘the Rock’ is always part of your soul.”

Jeffrey Armus LC’77 RBS’82 and president of the Livingston Alumni Association (LAA), said that his experience at Livingston College helped him gain insights into a changing world. “I came from a suburban community of Rockaway, NJ, into a more diverse community at Livingston. I entered as a computer science major, where Livingston was one of the few colleges offering that major, and eventually graduated as an economics major,” said Armus. “The Livingston professors really taught us how to think. At the time, we learned ‘radical’ teachings, but had the freedom to form our own opinions and that helped me become the person that I am today. The emphasis was on learning rather than GPA. We got to really get to know our professors, often meeting after class, even at the campus pub!”

“My Livingston experience also instilled my passion for community service, which I continue to participate whether through the Rutgers Alumni Association or LAA, or volunteering to help those not as fortunate as me,” said Armus, a co-chair of the RAA’s Community Service Committee and past RAA board secretary.

Judy Kleiman LC’77 had “many positive memories of life on the Livingston campus and the great friendships I developed, many whom I continue to be in contact with today. Life on campus was fun and an adventure to say the least. Dorms were co-ed, a rarity in those years and the Livingston Campus consisted primarily of the three main Quads, and each one had its own unique personality. Quad 1 was known as “Woodstock” and when the weather was sunny, scores of students were hanging out in the middle of the quad, throwing Frisbees or footballs or sitting on the grass and kiosk, listening to

“I remember walking through the Quads and bumping into students who didn’t look like I did, who didn’t have the same background as I did, and having engaging conversations. That’s what I came to Livingston for.”

NOAH HART JR. LC’73,
COORDINATOR OF FIRST
YEAR ADVISING FOR
MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY



Above: Livingston College students Gary Warren, left, and Anthony Sloan, center, edit tapes at the Urban Communications Teaching and Research Center, with professor Jerome Aumente Rutgers-Newark ‘59, right.



Left: Students study at Kilmer Library.



Far left: Students on campus.

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rock music or R & B blasting loudly out of the dorm windows, including from my mega-speakers in House 13 facing directly out into the Quad. Quad 2, known as “The Suburbs” was more diverse and more R&B music was heard throughout and at Quad 3, I recall Latin music and salsa dancing reigned supreme. There was racial, cultural, and gender diversity in every dorm which, in my opinion, ultimately contributed to a better understanding and embracing of each other’s life experiences and differences.”

“Life on Livingston campus opened me up to and exposed me to a whole new world of racial, cultural, and gender diversity that I otherwise may never have experienced at most other universities and certainly not in my hometown area of Northeast Pennsylvania, which while ethnically diverse, was almost entirely white. And, just as importantly, academically, the Livingston courses I took in Criminal Justice, Corrections, Urban Studies Political Science, Sociology, Economics, and Women Studies opened my mind to the impact that race and gender had on these issues/ topics. The total immersion in this unique environment on campus and in the classroom helped me immensely in my lifelong career in the criminal justice field, first in Corrections and later at the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General.”

While facilities on the Livingston Campus were wanting during the college’s existence, the campus has since been a hotbed of new construction, including facilities for the Rutgers Business School and athletics, a new dining hall and nearby restaurants, student housing, and movie theatre. Students living on the Livingston Campus today “love Livi” but may not be aware of the history of Livingston College, but its place in Rutgers’ history is being celebrated through organizations like the Livingston Alumni Association.

For more information about the history of Livingston College, visit www.livingstonalumni.org.

Professor Robert W. Snyder’s quotes courtesy of his “Livingston at 50” tribute article for the October 25, 2019 “Livi at 50” event.