

The History of Santa Rosa Junior College

A driving tour as told by Steve Morris, August 2007

Points/Location

Welcome to the History of Santa Rosa Junior College tour.

We'll be taking a 45-minute trip as we visit the SRJC campus to discuss its history and some fun facts you probably never heard before. SRJC is part of the California Community College system numbering 109 colleges. It is the 10th oldest, founded in 1918. It is one of two community colleges in California that has retained the Junior College name, a college with a rich history. The Junior College name was coined by David Star Jordan, President of Stanford University.

- In 1918 there were 13,000 people living in Santa Rosa. SRJC started with 19 students.
- It would be 9 years before SRJC would be independent of Santa Rosa High School. The eight original faculty members taught at both SRHS and SRJC. That first year hundreds died of influenza. The JC closed for one month.

College Avenue

Does anyone know how College Avenue got its name? In the 1880's, Pacific Methodist College was located near where Santa Rosa Middle School is currently located.

Fremont School

The first location of SRJC was in the basement of SRHS/Fremont School. SRJC was nicknamed "Fremont University" while at this site. SRJC was located there until it burned to the ground on November 15, 1921. Hilliard Comstock, the President of the Board, called this the "glorious calamity"..... For four years following the fire, SRJC was located in stores, churches and warehouses throughout Santa Rosa.

In 1925 the JC moved with SRHS to its current location and in 1927 the SRJC District was created with only Santa Rosa joining. In 1929 Analy joined the district and in 1930 the JC acquired its own land on Mendocino Avenue where we are teaching now. The original 40 acres were co-owned by the City (20 acres) and 20 acres owned by the Santa Rosa Chamber of

Commerce. Many Santa Rosans were hoping for a park dedicated to Luther Burbank thus the agreement to have a 350 foot set back on the 40 acres to assure a “park like” setting.

Pacific/Mendocino SRJC experienced many growth spurts over the years. You’ll hear about some of them tonight, but I’d like to point out that we are currently experiencing wonderful building projects, funded by Measure A, which will assure SRJC remains one of the premier community colleges in the nation.

Legion Gate Sports came to the campus with the building of Pioneer. The legion gate was the entrance to the football field. Money was raised to construct a Legion Gate by a group effort of the American Legion and Block S. It was constructed in 1935. The idea was suggested by Red Tauzer, the first SRJC Board of Trustees President.

**Luther Burbank
Auditorium**

The building to the front of campus is Pioneer Hall. This was the first building constructed on this campus, completed in 1931 for \$30,000. This was the entire college – classrooms, offices, the library, and even a theater. At the time, the enrollment at SRJC was 300 students. Pioneer now houses the Bookstore and the Student Activities Office.

Luther Burbank Auditorium was built in 1939.

**A Premier Community
College Library**

The large building to the west is the Frank P. Doyle Library which opened in August 2006. I invite every one of you to visit this library. It is a resource for our community. It is a four-star library with hundreds of computers for students, gorgeous reading rooms and has an ice system that produces 300 tons of ice to cool the building each night. The library is in its fourth location – Analy Hall, Pioneer, Plover and now Doyle.

Plover Library was built in 1971, it cost \$1.169 million, 34/sq.ft. Doyle Library opened Fall 2006, it cost \$45 million, 350/sq. ft.

Roscoe

There was a Student Body Contest to name Roscoe in 1949.

Elliott

To our left we see the Doyle Student Center, built in 1954. It housed the Cafeteria, Assessment and at one time, the Bookstore. It is interest in the money to help build the Doyle Center. This building was demolished this fall to make way for the 3-story Larry Bertolini Student Service Center with the new Cafeteria, Student Activities and Government and Student Counseling to be completed in 2009.

To our right is the former Plover Library – soon to be a one-stop for new students with Admissions and Assessment to open in Spring '08.

Race Building

To the back of the quad is the Race Building -- housing Student Health Sciences and our Health Services program including Nursing, RAD Tech, Dental Assistant, Dental Hygiene, and others.

Bit of history about Nursing – Our program started in 1947 with a residential 3-year program by Sutter Hospital. Now housed in Race – 2 years of prerequisites for a 2-year program, but you live at home.

Also, for years this site housed Quonset huts where the GI's lived after returning from WWII. Then known as Vets Village, they paid \$35/month including utilities. My folks lived there when I was born, my father having graduated from SRJC in 1936.

Bech Lot

We are passing the science halls of SRJC including Chemistry in Bech, Engineering and Math in Shuhaw, Biology and Life Sciences in Baker and Physical Sciences such as Astronomy and Agriculture in Lark. How many of you have seen the Planetarium at SRJC? What color is the projector in the Planetarium? Answer - red!

Disability

Resources

How many of you know what used to be here? Kent Hall, of course. Disability Resources started around 1974. We now serve 2,500 students per semester. You know about students with physical limitations and learning disabilities. How about help with back injuries, psychological disabilities, students with Cancer or Aids? Over 120 staff to serve students. Disability Resources used to be called Learning Skills Department “LSD”.

Doyle Scholarship

Doyle Scholarship – one of the largest scholarship funds ever created for a junior college started in 1949 when Frank P. Doyle bequeathed a controlling interest in trust from the Exchange Bank to a scholarship fund which has given over \$71 million to over 112,000 students.

Students with a 2.5 or higher GPA have funded their college goals for up to 3 years with the Doyle Fund. This community continues to support this college through our Foundation with such programs as Shone Farm and hundreds of other scholarships.

Jesse Peter Native

American Museum

Have any of you visited the Jesse Peter Museum or attended Day Under the Oaks and seen the Native American Celebration?

The Museum was finished in 1938, opened in 1940 as a natural history exhibit with a small Native American art collection. Jesse was a naturalist, collector, and explorer with a keen interest in ceramic Native American art.

In 1975 SRJC Instructor Bill Smith and Native American students built the models of a Pomo Roundhouse and transformed the museum to a collection of 300 pieces of art.

Now, Ben Benson, Anthropology instructor extraordinaire, has overseen this exhibit and has watched it grow to over 2,800 pieces.

Sports

How many of you know that SRJC had a hockey team in 1939-41 that beat the Bakersfield Oilers, the University of Southern Cal and UC Cal Berkeley?

Grace Bros. Brewery built the Ice Arena (they already had the ice). Most of the players were from Canada

Our first football team had no matching outfits. Many wore their own shoes with cleats on them. One football player wore patent leather shoes with no cleats.

The first Homecoming Celebration was in 1945.

Some teams of note over the years:

- SRJC has fielded many years of State Championship teams. Recently, in 2002, our Men's Soccer team was State Champs and in 2001 they were National Champs.
- We have had Baseball Statewide Champs in 1952 with Coaches Bob Mastin and Dolph Camolini, and in 2005 with Coach Damon Neidlinger earned a championship after being down 11/12 runs to "0" and won the "have to" win and went on to earn the championship.
- We have Women's Swimming powerhouse, winning the State Championships in 1979, 1983, 2004 and 2005.
- We have had State Championships in Basketball, Softball and a very successful Football program.
- For 2 years in 1949 and 1950, Football lost only 1 game and in 1950 the team went undefeated including a very strong win in the State Championship game. Those teams might have been the first in the nation.

Night School

Classes in the 7-10 p.m. range started in 1952 and have grown. Every classroom at JC and many of our off campus locations are used at night, with parking at a premium.

Summer School

Summer School started in 1958 and has grown to a strong 6/8 weeks of offerings.

End Piece

SRJC now has 14 major high school districts in its borders, encompassing 1,400 square miles.

- Now – 100+ acres in Santa Rosa
40 acres in Petaluma since 1995
- Public Safety Center *i.e.* Police, Fire, and EMT/Paramedics, in Windsor
- A 365 acre Shone Farm near Forestville
- Students continue to transfer to 4-year universities, complete one of over 170 Occupational Certificates and complete Associates of Arts & Science, which we celebrate each year.

SRJC has had only 4 Presidents
Floyd Bailey 1921-1957
Randolph Newman 1957-1970
Roy Mikalsen 1971-1990
Dr. Robert Agrella 1990- present

Serves over 35,000 each year

Themes: Quality, Democracy, Continuity, Confidence, Material Resources, Beauty and Community Support

This year (2006) SRJC – 1,151 AA's
4,000 Occupational Certificates
35,000 students/semester
53,000 students in 1 year
\$18 million in financial aid