

STOCKTON COLLEGE

THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY



Mayflower Faculty Member, College Dean Collaborating to Document Stockton's History

Book to Be Released During 40th Anniversary of Teaching

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Galloway Township, NJ- In September 2011, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey will celebrate its 40th anniversary of teaching. While College community members look forward to the fast approaching milestone, two members in particular are looking at the College's past.

Dr. Kenneth Tompkins, professor emeritus of literature, and Dr. Robert Gregg, dean of the School of Arts and Humanities, are collaborating to co-edit *Reaching 40*, a book that will document the history of the College.

"The first step was to select the 'kinds' of history the book would include. We knew it should include a pedagogical history (teaching), a physical history (buildings), a conceptual history (disciplinary programs) and a cultural history (anecdotes, etc.). Once these were agreed upon, we asked various faculty and staff to write for us," explained Kenneth Tompkins.

The book will be a coffee table-style publication featuring more than 50 essays, photography, architectural drawings and anecdotes written for a diverse audience.

"Often when the public thinks of history, they think of dry accounts of what happened or anecdotal stories placed within a timeline. We wanted much more than that," said Tompkins. "The 50 plus essays are generally serious reviews of teaching, curricula and what made Stockton distinctive. The photos are visual histories of the early days of the College," he explained.

Reaching 40 has a history of its own. Robert Gregg explained, "A couple of years ago, I had been talking with [Professor] Paul Lyons and during our conversation he mentioned...that he was planning to write a history of Stockton."

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Sadly, Professor Lyons passed away in 2009. At the time of their conversation, Gregg didn't believe it likely that he would be involved in the project, as he is a member of a younger cohort. Later, Gregg discovered that prior to Professor Lyons' attempt to drafting a history, "two earlier attempts had been made by Ingie LaFleur, a former dean, and Bill Gilmore-Lehne, a history professor, and both had died suddenly before the project had really taken off."

The urgency of the project became very apparent, and the task became a reality when Gregg was asked to put together the book by President Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr. Gregg didn't have to search hard for a co-editor because "Ken was the obvious choice."

Gregg explained, "[he has] a commitment to the topic unmatched by any person on campus."

Stockton's history is buried within the past issues of the student newspaper, the *Argo*, College Bulletins, where courses and programs are outlined, and in archived Board of Trustees meeting minutes. Both Tompkins and Gregg are keeping a blog as a means of documenting their editing process, and they are using a website to compile and archive their research findings.

In a recent blog post, Tompkins and Gregg list a series of names suggested by the public to name the College. Among the list are Berry Bottom Bog State College, Jersey Tomato College, Boardwalk College, Blueberry State College and Einstein State College.

Video and audio files, resting in the College's archives for the past 40 years, have been unearthed. Many of the original documents that the editors are delving through have never been published or even written about. Among the editor's rare finds was a video of Senator Hap Farley discussing his efforts to establish Stockton College.

"We have for example, essays on the complete history of the literature program, of faculty governance efforts, of the faculty union; more recently, we have a long essay on our advising efforts," said Tompkins.

Reaching 40 is scheduled to be completed in fall 2011. In addition to commemorating the College and tracing its history, the book will provide an insightful study based on the themes that highlight the College's innovations and achievements.

About Dr. Kenneth Tompkins: Kenneth Tompkins has been teaching for 46 years; though retired he continues to teach one course—Shakespeare—per term. Tompkins earned his Ph.D. in medieval literature from Indiana University.

His first full-time teaching position was at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois. It was there that he met Wes Tilley who later hired him as a founding dean of Stockton. He left Millikin University in 1968 to become chairman of the English department at Central College in Pella, Iowa.

In March of 1970, his former chairman, Wes Tilley, asked him to interview for a deanship at the yet-to-be-created Stockton State College. He was offered the position of Dean of General Studies and arrived at Stockton in June of 1970.

He was the dean until 1974 when he returned to the literature faculty. Until his retirement, he was the most senior employee at the College. He is one of two surviving founding deans of the College.

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