Guide to the Palos Verdes College Collection 006

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Palos Verdes College was a private, two-year, co-ed, liberal arts college, located off of Crest Road in the Rolling Hills area of Rancho Palos Verdes. It opened in September 1947 under the direction of founding president, Dr. Richard P. Saunders, who came to Palos Verdes from New York University. The site of the school was a former Army Air Force base, composed of barrack-like buildings. The site was temporary pending the construction of a large permanent campus on a nearby parcel of land.

The campus consisted of two women’s dormitories, a men’s dormitory, a classroom and recreation building, a kitchen and dining room building, a library, an office building, and cottages for the president and a faculty family. The buildings were grouped, moved, and altered under the supervision of Los Angeles architect Harwell Hamilton Harris. Landscaping was planned by Hammond Sadler, noted landscape designer and member of the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects firm, which was part of the original Palos Verdes Project team.

The Korean War (1950-1953) had a major effect on the College. Enrollment dropped from 111 to 55. Both staff and students were called to serve, causing a major financial drain on usable funds.

Faced with the possibility of closure in June 1951, administration and trustees developed measures to reduce expenses and keep the College relevant and sound. The measures included limiting enrollment and revamping the curriculum to provide a single 2-year liberal arts program which all students would take, as well as a travel-study program for the whole student body each semester using leaders of government, industry and cultural institutions from sites visited as adjunct faculty. President John Howard agreed to work for a salary of $1.00 a year and some teachers volunteered to work without pay until the College regained solvency.

In October 1953, Frank Vanderlip, Jr. deeded fifty-five acres of land, a gift from the Palos Verdes Corporation, to be developed as the College’s permanent home. Welton Beckett and Associates were commissioned to proceed with architectural drawings for a campus to serve an enrollment of 400 students.

In the spring of 1954, an announcement was made that a full 4-year program would begin in the fall, and seven new instructors were hired. The College was becoming a community center for the Peninsula as well, hosting a cooperative nursery school, a Cub Scout troop, and the Rolling Hills Community Chest.

However, by the summer of 1955, all fund raising efforts to raise the $150,000 needed to pay debts and finance another school year had failed. On August 15, President John Howard announced the closing of the College.

In September 1955, the site was leased by the school district. The Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District eventually purchased the property for one of its school sites.

Arrangement

Scope and Contents
Includes photographs, scrapbooks, student handbooks and yearbooks, college bulletins, announcements and promotional material, programming files, correspondence and meeting notes. Two drawings by Gene Shrewsbury for Welton Beckett
and Associates for the proposed permanent campus are also included.

**Processing Information**
Initial rehousing of materials by Local History Center volunteers Jeremy Berry-Cahn and Donna Chian. Historical research by volunteer Marjeanne Blinn. Final arrangement and description by Monique Sugimoto, November 2016.

**Related Materials**
Local History Center Subject and Biographical File collection (Folder Palos Verdes College).

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**
Saunders, Richard P. (1901-1990)
Education, Humanistic
Rolling Hills (Calif.)
*Welton Becket Associates*
Harris, Harwell Hamilton, 1903-1990
Sadler, Hammond
Palos Verdes College
Palos Verdes Peninsula (Calif.)
Universities and colleges

**Photographs 1945-1955**
- **Physical Description:** 224 Photographic Prints
- **Scope and Contents**
  Photographs include snapshots and publicity shots. Many photographs taken by photographer Peter Gowland and architect Harwell Harris. The subjects in the images include buildings, campus scenes, student activities, dormitories and sports.

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<tr>
<th>Box</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Campus (16.1-16.34)</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Library &amp; Study (16.42-16.48)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Faculty (16.49-16.67)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Campus Life (16.68-16.116)</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Dining (17.134-17.139)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Labs, Classes and Arts (17.140-17.173)</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Drama (18.189-18.198)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Snow Day (18.199-18.201)) 1949-01-12</td>
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<td>AJJC Convention (18.202-18.210)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Founders Day (18.208-18.210)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>First Conferment (18.211-18.222)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Advisory Council (18.223-18.224)</td>
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**Scrapbooks 1946-1955**
- **Physical Description:** 5 Volumes
- **Scope and Contents**
  Scrapbooks include mostly clippings from local newspapers, the Palos Verdes Peninsula News and the San Pedro News Pilot.

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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sept 1946 - June 1948</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>June 1948 - June 1952</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>July 1952 - April 1954</td>
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<td>March 1953 - Dec. 1953</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>May 1954 -May 1955</td>
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</table>
Administrative records 1947-1955

Scope and Contents

Administrative records include Advisory Council meeting minutes, constitution, bylaws and reports, student handbooks, yearbooks, programming files and event flyers, news bulletins, correspondence, and promotional material.

Box 1

Christmas Charity Ball flyers 1948
Box 1

College Advisory Council Constitution 1948-1954
Box 1

The Corral - Roundup of College News May 21, 1948

Physical Description: .5 Cubic Feet
General

Includes a single issue of the bi-weekly student run newspaper.

Box 1

Correspondence Jan 1947-June 1949
Box 1

Course Programming ca Feb 1948
Box 1

Driftwood yearbook 1948; 1950; 1954
Box 1

Enrichment of Courses 1948-1949
Box 1

Faculty Pre-opening meeting schedule 1949
Box 1

Financials 1947-1948
Box 1

Founders Day 1949
Box 1

List of equipment needed nd
Box 1

Maps

General

Includes a Renie Map System atlas key map showing portions of Los Angeles and Orange counties and an unidentified map showing the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

Box 1

News bulletin July 1947-March 1954

General

Includes monthly reports, initially edited by staff then turned over to the students, to provide updates on campus activities, campus construction progress, student life, faculty, programs, clubs, financial status, enrollment, clubs, fund-raising, and course offerings. Of particular interest are efforts to build the library's collection through community donations and the creation of a Horse Owners Association and other student led clubs.

Box 1

PV College Advisory Council minutes March 1947-Oct 1954
Box 1

PV College Board of Trustees March 1949-Sept 1959
Box 1

PV College Bulletins 1947-1950
Box 2

PV College Bulletins 1950-1956

Physical Description: 2 Folders

Box 2

PV College Clippings 1955
Box 2

PV College commencement programs 1949
Box 2

PV College founders roster nd
Box 2

PV College music academy nd
Box 2

PV College Peninsula Homes Tour 1950-1951
Box 2

PV College promotional material nd
Box 2

PV College proposed campus drawings

Physical Description: 2 Leaves
General

Cross reference folder for items moved to map case.

Box 2

PV College stationary nd
Box 2

PV College student handbook 1954-1955
Box 2

Student programming flyers nd
Box 2

Theater flyers 1950-1951