

# NJCU CELEBRATES ITS 90<sup>TH</sup> YEAR.

NJCU Magazine chronicles the school's history throughout each decade.



## 1927

"Jersey City State was opening. It was a small, wonderful school, a beautiful building. All I had to do was take the bus. It was 30 cents round trip to get there from Union City and 30 cents to eat. It was free as long as I promised them that I would teach at least two years."

At a time of national prosperity and a growing school population, The New Jersey State Normal School at Jersey City was chartered. On a plot of 10 acres on Hudson (now Kennedy) Boulevard, Hepburn Hall was built to accommodate 1,000 students. Housing an eight-room demonstration school, a 35,000-volume-capacity library wing, a gymnasium, auditorium and a 400 seat cafeteria, the college welcomed 330 young women and one man.

The Board of Education expanded the length of the Normal School curricula from two to three years, leaving the Normal School at Jersey City to be the only teacher preparatory school in the country to begin with a three-year program. Dr. William A Messler headed the faculty as Principal.



## 1933

A men's basketball team was formed, starting with 30 men.

## 1934

Dr. Roy Lee Shaffer, head of the State Normal School at Paterson, became Principal at Jersey City. The men's basketball team participated in 14 home and away games.

## 1930



As the College became an institution, the 1930s established new traditions on campus. There was an annual interclass "sing" competition, May Day called for a festival featuring a Maypole dance and no Halloween went without a celebration.

## 1935

With rapid changes in the field of education, The Normal School at Jersey City became the New Jersey State Teachers College at Jersey City. Students now attended the institution for four years and would be awarded the bachelor of science in education.



## 1936

The institution added a degree program in Health Education and Nursing for the training of school nurses in cooperation with the Jersey City Medical Center. This new mission would be supplemented during the war years with a pre-clinical training program for nursing students.



## 1937

While he continued to champion a bill in the Assembly for the creation of a New Jersey University as part of the free public school system, Dr. Shaffer's title was changed to President. The 55-minute classes ran from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with attendance taken and no cutting class allowed. In addition to the 22 semester hours in general and subject methods, there was a course in each: Tests and Measurement, Children's Literature, and Handwriting. The only difference from high school was that regular courses met three times a week and an assembly of the entire student body was held weekly.

## 1938

*Green and Gold* became the permanent choice as the school's Alma Mater song.

## 1940

Full-time and part-time enrollment mounted to 818, plus 35 faculty members. Dr. Shaffer was succeeded by Dr. Chris C. Rossey, who had served as dean of instruction at the College for three years prior.

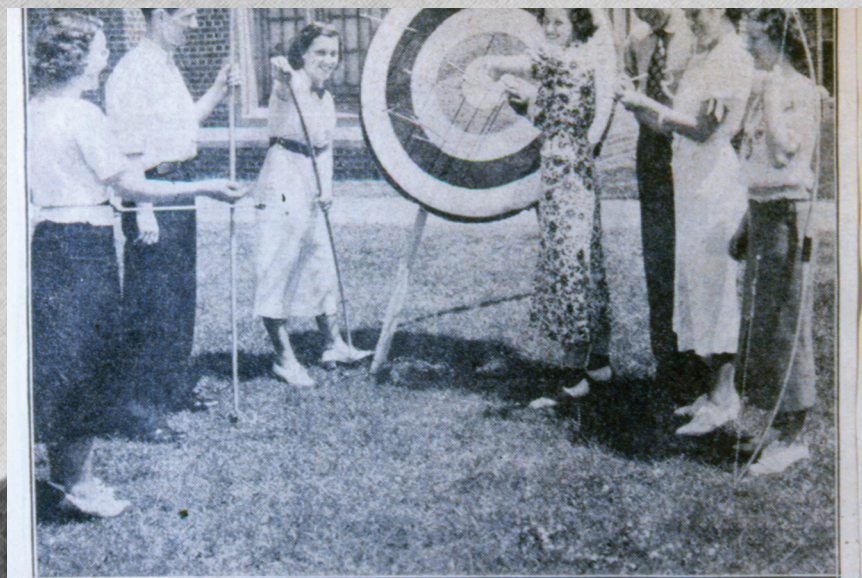
The College became involved in military preparedness with the outbreak of World War II by establishing a civilian pilot training program, subsidized by the government. Overseen by the Dean of Men, the volunteers received their flight training at the seaplane base at Overpeck Creek, taking meteorology and navigation courses in Grossnickle. The volunteers all went on to serve in the Army Air Corps.



1927 1928 1929 1930 1931 1932 1933 1934 1935 1936 1937 1938 1939 1940 1941

# 1943

A pre-clinical training program was started for contingents of cadets under the United States Cadet Nurse Corps. Academic changes hit the campus with the authorization of a two-year general curriculum.



**MODERN ROBIN HOODS**—The sport of archery, one of the oldest, finds new devotees at Jersey City Teachers' College. A daily scene on the campus:

## Archery Is Growing Sport at J. C. Teachers College

and table tennis stimulate keen rivalry among the classes. A fencing club, organized in 1937, has performed well in intercollegiate matches. Under the leadership of Coach Tom Gerrity, the

# 1950

The Arts and Science program was discontinued, leaving General Elementary, Kindergarten-Primary, and Health Education and Nursing the only curricula.

# 1953

Students begin to learn how to teach in grades five to nine in public schools. The College undertook its first institutional self-study and outside evaluation, resulting in its official accreditation by the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education.

# 1954

Dean Michael B. Gilligan becomes president of the College.

# 1955



Enrollment drops to 400 students, with the number of men in the graduating class at only seven percent. Irwin decides to launch a plan to expand the institution, despite rumors of the institution's demise. A small addition is added to the library, expanding the collection to 65,000 volumes. A new gymnasium is added as an extension to the auditorium wing. The new athletic facility brought a regulation-sized basketball court, bleachers, a dance studio, lockers, and shower rooms.

# 1946

Forrest A. Irwin becomes President of the College. After the war ends, full-time enrollment rises to nearly 700. The graduating class of 1950 had been 45 percent male, many of them veterans of the war. Michael Gilligan becomes the Dean of Instruction.

The president's salary in 1946 was set at \$7,500.

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1958

New Jersey State Teachers College at Jersey City became Jersey City State College and was authorized to award the bachelor of arts degree. The College launched programs for secondary majors and minors in the fields of English, mathematics, science, social studies, and art. The College also went through its second self-study and received accreditation from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

1959

The institution began to offer the Master of Arts in Elementary Education.

1962

The College acquires the A. Harry Moore School to enhance the Special Education curriculum, making it one of the few in the nation, at the time, with a campus-based special education demonstration school. In the same year, the first free-standing addition to the campus was opened—Grossnickle Hall.



1963

Vodra Hall opens as a six-story women's dormitory, the first living accommodations for non-commuters. Another expansion to the athletic facility brought an Olympic swimming pool to campus.

1967

The student body grew to more than 5,700 students, including nearly 800 graduate students, and a faculty of 179. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education accreditation was reaffirmed and the first Jersey City State board of trustees convened.



1968

Jersey City State College became a multipurpose institution, now authorized to develop a liberal arts program and expand teacher preparation programs. Dr. James Mullen became President. The 13 existing departments expanded to 25, and the School of Arts and Science and School of Education were established. This later became the School of Professional Studies.

1969

The Middle States Association renewed its accreditation.

1970

Rossey Hall opened as a six-story classroom building.

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Tidelands Athletic Complex was completed on 15 acres of landfill at Newark Bay.

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## 1973

The five-story Science Building opens and Dr. William J. Maxwell became President.



## 1975

The Student Union Building opened as student enrollment climbed to more than 10,500, with 337 faculty members in 26 departments.

## 1976

A 50,000-square-foot industrial building on West Side Avenue was renovated, establishing the Center for Media and Performing Arts.



## 1985

The institution was awarded a \$5.7 million Governor's Challenge Grant for an expanded Cooperative Education Program, which would serve all academic majors.



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# 1994


The Professional Studies Building opened, and the Athletic and Fitness Centers were built.

# 1998

With a climbing enrollment and advanced academic departments, The New Jersey Commission on Higher Education approved the renaming of the College to New Jersey City University. The university was restructured into three colleges: Arts and Sciences, Education, and Professional Studies.

# 2003

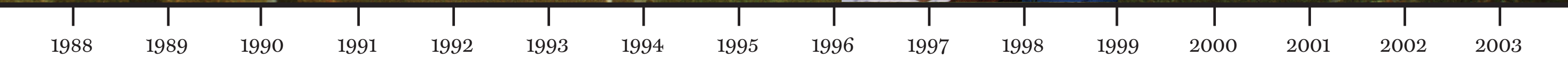
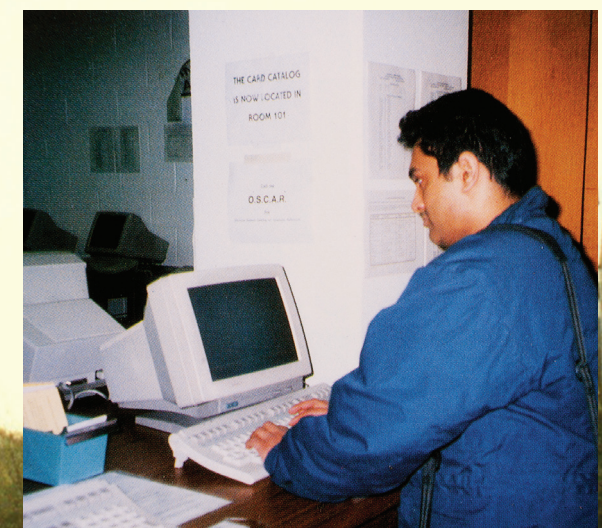
NJCU joined with the City of Jersey City, the Jersey City Board of Education, and New Jersey Transit to collaborate on the Jersey City Bayfront Plan. New Jersey City University West Campus Redevelopment Plan began to roll out.

**"Jersey City State just may be the best urban college in America."**  
 (60th Anniversary Convocation, Jersey City State College, September 12, 1989)  
**Dr. Terrel H. Bell**  
 U.S. Secretary of Education  
 1981 - 1984

# 1996

The Center for Public Policy and Urban Research was established.





**2011**

After 19 years, NJCU President Carlos Hernández retired. Under his tenure, three new buildings were erected and, in 1998, the school became a university.

**2012**

Dr. Sue Henderson became the first female president of the University.



**2015**

The School of Business opened in the Jersey City financial district.

*\*Not an Ivory Tower: An Intimate History of Jersey City State College by Professor Emeritus of History Dr. Stanley Worton was a source of information for some of the material in this feature story.*

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