City of Arts & Innovation

Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

TO: **MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD** **DATE: SEPTEMBER 24, 2025**

FROM: **MUSEUM COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE**

SUBJECT: **RECOMMENDATION TO ACCESSION INTO THE PERMANENT COLLECTION THIRTY-SEVEN (37) COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS, TWO (2) RIVERSIDE JUNIOR COLLEGE YEAR BOOKLETS, TWO (2) KOALA YEARBOOKS FROM POLYTECHNIC HIGH SCHOOL, AND ONE (1) RIVERSIDE POLYTECHNIC HIGH SCHOOL REUNION SOUVENIR BOOKLET FROM A LOCAL DONOR**

ISSUE:

To recommend to the City Council to approve accession into the permanent collection of thirty-seven (37) color photographs, two (2) Riverside Junior College year booklets, two (2) Koala yearbooks from Polytechnic High School, and one (1) Riverside Polytechnic High School reunion souvenir booklet from a local donor

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Museum of Riverside Board recommends that the City Council approves accession into the permanent collection of thirty-seven (37) color photographs, two (2) Riverside Junior College year booklets, two (2) Koala yearbooks from Polytechnic High School, and one (1) Riverside Polytechnic High School reunion souvenir booklet from a local donor.

BACKGROUND:

These materials were once owned by Doyle Merle Fraley (1922-January 13, 2004) and Wanda *née* Brooks Fraley (1930-November 10, 2024). Mr. Fraley was a coach for the Riverside Jaycees' little league team, the Cubs, from at least 1974-1979. Wanda was the team mom. The team photos were taken at the Wheelock field, which was once owned by RCC and is now a three-story parking structure. They both attended Riverside Polytechnic Highschool, Merle graduating in 1941 and Wanda in 1949. Both Merle and Wanda moved to Riverside when very young. The donors are family descendants.

The 1949 Koala Yearbook contains Wanda Brooks's senior photo (pg. 61). It also contains advertisements for local businesses including Cole's Corral Drive-in (pg. 142), Blue Bonnet Drive-in (pg. 148), and Ruby's Fried Chicken drive-in (pg. 152). The 1940 Koala Yearbook contains Merle Fraley's junior class photo and is filled with signatures including a drawing of a

baseball player with “Keep up the baseball kid!” written beside it. It also includes advertisements for Ruby’s Drive-In and Reed and Bell’s restaurant (possibly a drive-in once located at corner Twelfth and Main) located near the end of the book. The 1944 Riverside Junior College Arroyo-Tequesquite year booklet includes a section listing former RJC students believed to be casualties of war as of June 3, 1944. The 1945 Riverside Junior College Arroyo-Tequesquite year booklet after July 1, 1945, is a “A Wartime Publication.” The final pages include a list of those killed in action followed by a list of known prisoners of war.

There are thirty-seven (37) color photographs of coaches and teams, which include: Cubs, Dodgers, Red Sox, Tigers, Braves, and Yankees for the little league divisions: Pinto pony, Farm, Minor, and Major. These date from 1974-1979.

At its meeting on July 9, 2025, the Museum of Riverside’s Collection Committee voted unanimously in support of recommending that the Museum of Riverside Board forward the recommendation regarding the archival items to the City Council.

DISCUSSION:

To “accession” an object is the process of including it formally in a museum’s permanent collection, which is the category of collection for which the greatest effort will be made to preserve the object in perpetuity and document it fully.

The Museum’s mid-20th-century collections are sparse, and this collection would assist in filling that gap. The material comprises a glimpse into the leisure activities of young Riversiders and reveals how community members contributed by volunteering as coaches and caretakers for young sports teams. The yearbooks document young adult life in the middle and post-World War II period with a focus on the activities of two long-time residents. The Museum intends to curate an exhibition about local fast food and car culture for the grand reopening in 2027, and the yearbooks contain images of some of the earliest drive-thru restaurants in the City. The contents of this donation document Riverside and its people. It supports the Museum’s mission to preserve the local history of this City.

The items are in stable condition and place minimal demands on storage space.

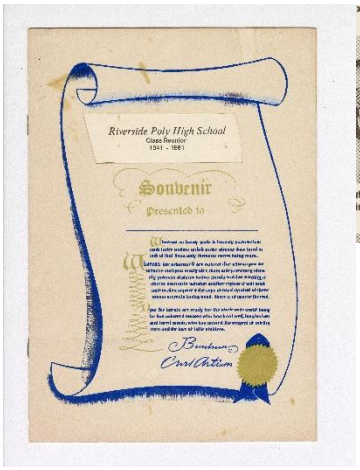
FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by: Robyn G. Peterson, Museum Director
Reviewed by: Ann Lovell, Manager of Operations

Wanda Brooks, 1949

Signature in Merle Fraley's yearbook, 1940



Souvenir, Poly High reunion 1941-1981

1976 Tournament photo

1876 team photo

1974 team photo