

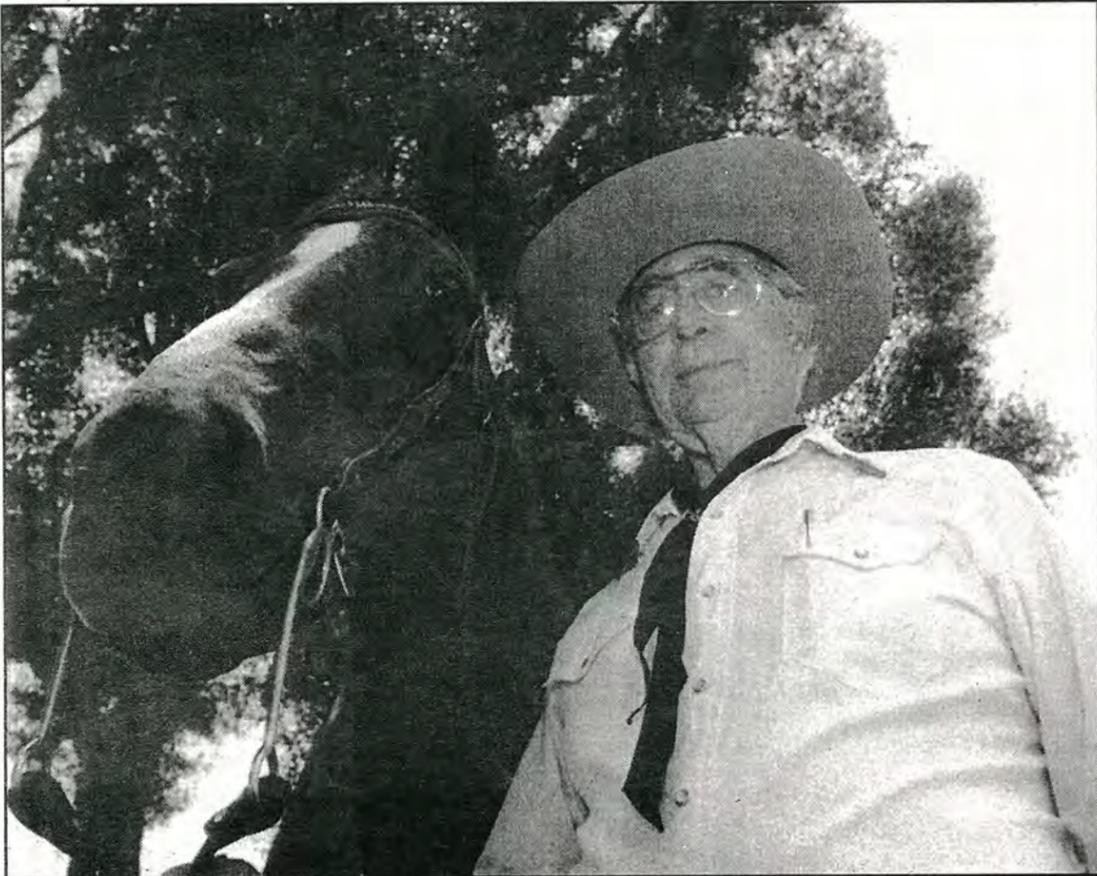


LEISURE WORLD NEWS

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A man with 'the right stuff'



David E. Caballero/The News

Earl Donaldson, July's Leisure World, relaxes at the stables with his horse "Sasha."

July's honoree believes in service to community

By Cheryl Walker
The News

He may have been "shocked" when he was chosen Leisure Worldeer of the Month for July, but people who know Earl Donaldson say the distinction is richly merited and long overdue.

Since moving to Leisure World in 1980, Donaldson, a retired dentist, native of Colorado and 40 year resident of Long Beach, has lived by his creed of giving back to the community in which one lives, works, worships and

plays.

His credits include his current position as Golden Rain Foundation secretary, former position as a director of Third Laguna Hills Mutual, and chairing or working as a member of various committees, subcommittees and special study groups, in particular maintenance and construction, grounds, architectural control, community activities and bylaws.

He's also been an active member of the Saddle, Jewelry and Enameling, Ballroom Dance, Men's Golf, California, Travel, Lawn Bowling and Rotary clubs; Opera 100; Historical Society; Associates of Saddleback Hospital; and Geneva Presbyterian Church.

The lifelong equestrian who

exercises his running quarter horse Sasha on daily morning rides, is also a charter member of the Leisure World Earthquake and Disaster Preparedness Task Force Horse Patrol.

Although his list of credits is impressive, those who know Donaldson say that what really

separates the former Eagle Scout (with three palms) from other committed individuals is his fairness, generosity and unshakable composure.

"I have never met a more gentle man - he's a joy to be associated with - and a true believer in the Leisure World way of life," says Recreation Director Debby Lamb.

She adds that when faced with
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difficult governance decision Donaldson makes every effort to completely understand the situation and "come up with a logical compromise solution."

Former Third Mutual President Virginia Halley agrees, "He's a prince of a man, everybody's friend."

"He was my mentor when I first came on the Third board and got me started on the right path, encouraging me to come to him with a question or problem."

Former Golden Rain Director and retired fire chief and Navy captain Don Smith says he persuaded Donaldson to take on the challenges of community governance because he knew he had "the right stuff" for the job.

"(In my leadership jobs), I picked good people and he's a good person and a capable man in there for the good of Leisure World. I'm glad I made a wise choice."

Horse Patrol Co-Founder Jack Chezick adds that although Donaldson is well-educated, analytical and a thorough professional, he gets on well with

everyone. "He's a real ambassador (of good will)."

Chezick notes, for example that, thanks to Donaldson acting as teacher, horse patrol members were given the training in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation necessary to really help their injured neighbors in case of an emergency.

Background: Born in a small town in Colorado (so small he suggests even the modest population figures it claimed included cattle), the only child decided to make medicine his career after seeing first hand the misery physical ills could bring to daily living through the health problems of his parents.

Opting for dentistry over general medicine so he could spend more time with his family, he received his degree from the University of Southern California and, after serving in the Army Dental Corps and achieving the rank of major, specialized in orthodontics.

Family vacations in the Golden State gave him an idea of where to hang up his shingle. Although originally hoping for a beach city closer to Los Angeles, Long Beach won out because of the

opportunities it offered a new dentist.

The choice proved fortuitous and the growing metropolis became his home for the next four decades.

While building a thriving practice, teaching his speciality at his alma mater and qualifying for membership in major professional organizations, Donaldson helped build a better Long Beach.

"I always felt when you take advantage of something, you owe something back," he explains. "And I've always been interested in working with people."

Donaldson's credits demonstrate those were not idle words.

Besides memberships in numerous organizations he also started the first orthodontic study club and the local Assistance League's orthodontic clinic in Long Beach, which offered no cost services to the poor.

Leisure World: Donaldson says a friend urged him to make Leisure World, Laguna Hills home, but he was already partially sold on the project by prior knowledge of its developer, Ross Cortese.

Cermeony facts

Who: Earl Donaldson
What: Leisure Worlder for July
When: 10 a.m. Wednesday, July 5
Where: Clubhouse 6
Sponsor: Leisure World Historical Society

Donaldson says he watched Seal Beach Leisure World being constructed and got first hand reports that Cortese had a real commitment to its future inhabitants.

Donaldson says he hopes the community can remain true to its founder's vision, particularly maintaining the shared-cost concept which makes available a wonderland of recreational, educational and self-improvement activities.

He also believes it's in the best interests of Leisure World to work for the betterment of the community by trying to resolve conflicts fairly even when the issues are complex.

"I always figure there are two sides to a problem - and it's always better to solve problems than fight it out."