

Leisure Worlder

OF THE MONTH

NINA CRAFT JOHNSON

A modern day "Florence Nightingale" whose contribution to the betterment of hospital and nursing programs has made an important impact across the nation and abroad, Nina Craft Johnson sometimes ponders what life might have held in store had she pursued her original inclination and become a school marm.

"It certainly couldn't have been more exciting," says the woman who is recognized far and wide as a top authority on almost every facet of hospital service, management and education of nurses.

In 1974 she was named Woman of the Year by the American Hospital Supply Corporation.

"When I was in school as a girl in Norfolk, Va., I thought I wanted to be a teacher. My older sister wanted to be a nurse, so, giving in to parental persuasion that we two must stick together, I went along."

Now, after a fruitful and exciting career that took her to such faraway places as Iran, Jordan and Peru as well as serving many prominent hospitals and organizations in the United States, Nina has retired to Leisure World with husband Chariton.

That's a loose use of the word "retired." Mrs. Johnson currently is applying her expertise to the Saddleback Community Hospital as vice president and member of the board of directors.

Not inclined to turn her back completely on the business world either, she also is serving on the board of directors of Helix 1960, a San Diego real estate investment corporation.

In appreciation of her outstanding and continuing contributions in the field of nursing, Mrs. Johnson has been named Rossmore Leisure Worlder of the Month for February.

Once she and her sister had studied at DePaul Hospital in Norfolk, Va., where she earned her nurse's diploma, the course of Nina's life was ordained. She attended Louisiana State University and then went on to Columbia University to obtain a degree in hospital administration. This was followed by residency at Luke's Hospital in New York. Later she obtained a master of science degree at Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles.

Initially Mrs. Johnson served as an operating room supervisor at DePaul Hospital. From there she went to Lynnhaven, Va., where, at the age of 24, she became director and head of the nursing service at Tidewater Memorial Hospital.

In 1946 Nina accepted her first overseas assignment as hospital superintendent and nursing director at British-American Hospital in Lima, Peru.

After two years she turned her humanitarian attentions to Southern California, first with the Barlow Sanatorium in Los Angeles.

In 1949 Nina was named director of nursing services and education at Los Angeles County General Hospital, where she was in charge of over 3,000 nursing students and employees.

"The polio epidemic was at its peak," she recalls. "We would have as many as 90 patients in respirators at a time." During those early days of her 10 years in the position, she instituted an intensive training program for the nursing of polio victims.

This started her in the direction of writing and collaborating with others for the publication of half a dozen books on nursing service and hospital management.

After six years as head of her own organization on management training and hospital consultation, Mrs. Johnson joined with James Moore, an architect, and Medical Planning Associates International was formed.

This firm's thrust was directed to architectural planning of hospitals, health facilities and medical centers throughout the United States and the Middle East. She directed the planning of 28 government hospitals in Iran and the King Hussein Medical Center in Jordan from 1974 to 1976 while living in Teheran.

For the two years prior to her retirement, Mrs. Johnson served the firm as a consultant.

You might assume Nina B. Craft Johnson's busy schedule precludes her joining clubs. Almost. Only the Ebell Club, Antique Guild and the Stamp Club are on her list.