
Leisure Worlder of the Month

Isabella Leland

After receiving her business degree from the University of Kentucky in 1925, Isabella Leland went to work for a local bank filing cancelled checks. A few months later, she was put in charge of the drafts and collections window, the first woman to ever hold such a position in that bank.

Today, that go getter spirit of those early days remains. To recognize all her contributions, Isabella Leland will be honored as "Leisure Worlder of the Month," for August, in the program sponsored by Home Federal Savings and the Leisure World Historical Society. The program will commence on Thursday, August 1, at 10:00 a.m., in Leisure World Clubhouse Six. The public is invited to attend.

A major portion of Isabella's career was spent with TIME Inc., where she began as a general office girl, but as was typical, she was soon headed for new challenges. Isabella moved to New York and married her college sweetheart, Stanley Leland, a pediatrician, who was honored as Leisure Worlder of the Month in March, 1983.

She set up a department to answer customers' letters to TIME and LIFE. She served in the department which supplied news from TIME to radio stations. At the 1939 World's Fair in New York, she helped design and was in charge of the TIME and LIFE Subscriber's Library.

Later, she supervised the advertising material submitted for publication in TIME and LIFE. She also served on the committee of major periodical publishers to mediate disputes between advertisers and the publishers. The same committee later negotiated the first group health care coverage for TIME Inc. employees, which later became Blue Cross.

After service in the medical corps of the Army in Europe during World War II, Dr. Leland accepted appointment to head the medical activities of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in China, which was headquartered in Shanghai. Isabella went to Shanghai to work for TIME-LIFE International, a newly organized subsidiary of TIME Inc. She set up the correspondent headquarters and the sales network in China. This included such varied responsibilities as finding homes for arriving correspondents, recruiting subscription salesmen and newsstand dealers for editions in English of TIME and LIFE which were printed in Japan. She also found and trained employees for the Shanghai office and served as liaison with the head office in New York.

In the fall of 1947, both UNRRA and TIME-LIFE International had to leave before the encroaching Communists and the flight of the former government of mainland China. The Lelands took the long way home to New York, touring India before its battles for independence from the British and spending two months touring South Africa by car.

The year 1949 saw the couple on a freight ship bound for Liberia in West Africa to work for a private enterprise corporation formed for the economic development of what was then the only Negro republic in Africa. While Dr. Leland organized a health and education program, Isabella took the responsibility for information and public relations for the Liberia Company. This included helping the Liberian Government start its own newspaper.

When that tour of duty was completed, the Lelands next memorable visit was to Santa Fe, New Mexico. From 1954 to 1963, Dr. Leland was the state health director and Isabella served on many volunteer boards, including; the Red Cross, the League of Women Voters, the Tuberculosis Association, the Mental Health Association and the Women's Auxiliary to the State Medical Society, of which she was president for one year.

In 1963, the Lelands moved to California, and settled in Napa. Typical of Isabella, she jumped right in and joined the state and local boards of the Mental Health Association, which awarded her an achievement award in 1964. She was appointed to the Citizens Committee on Transportation by the Napa County Board of Supervisors. She also served on the local board of the Social Services Coordination Council, the Napa County Volunteer Center and the Napa County Committee on Aging.

Coming to Leisure World in 1975 was not a time to slow down for this pair. Isabella is a member of the Woman's Club, where she chaired the section of World Neighbors in 1977 and as Chairman of the Club's Philanthropies, she inaugurated a display detailing the recipients of the Club's money. She has been a camera club member since 1979, and served on the "Show Case" committee until 1983. She was a member of the United Mutual Board from 1977 through 1980. As chairman of United's Community Relations committee, she and resident Marian Fox began a twice-yearly program for new residents of United Mutual. She participated in the study which resulted in all the laundries in United making use of solar heat. She was on the tax legislation committee and on the Governance Committee which initiated the study of possible incorporation of Leisure World into a town.