

'Water' man named Leisure Worlder



Gilbert Nelson

Almost from the day he became a lawyer, Gil Nelson has been up to his neck in water.

Among other accomplishments, Nelson, represented the state of California, under Attorney General Earl Warren in litigation and legislation which assured California residents they would have water.

Nelson will be honored for his various achievements as "Leisure Worlder of the Month" for October in the program sponsored by Home Federal Savings and the Leisure World Historical Society. His ceremony will be on Monday, Oct. 1, at 10 a.m. in Clubhouse 6, with the public invited to attend.

A graduate of University of Illinois and USC Law School, Nelson began practicing in the courts in 1931. In 1936, he played a part as senior counsel in securing the federal charter for First Federal Savings of Beverly Hills, one of the first savings and loans approved after President Roosevelt took office.

And two years after that, Nelson was into water. "A jury turned a substantial verdict for me in a case where a home was filled with mud as the result of a flood," he recalled. That case sparked his interest in water litigation.

In 1940, Warren appointed Nelson as deputy to his staff, where he was assigned to protracted litigation by the state of California against the city of Los Angeles to restrain the city from flooding Owens Lake.

The war years interrupted his law career, but in 1946 Nelson returned to the attorney general's office to represent California in federal water matters.

In 1950, Earl Warren, then Governor of California, was appointed as chief justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Nelson was in Washington, D.C. at the time and was admitted to practice before the highest court in the land, with Warren as presiding judge. Thereafter, Nelson was frequently before

the court in the lawsuit that Arizona filed claiming the water of the Colorado River. That suit lasted more than 10 years.

In 1970, Nelson and his wife Alice moved to Leisure World where he became active in the community. He has been secretary of Mutual 33, president of Third Laguna, a member of the Golden Rain Board, member of the nominating committee for GRF, president of the Saddleback Kiwanis Club and Travel Club 1 and a director of the Aerospace Club.

But Gil Nelson did not forgo his association with water. He was recently elected to his second term as a director of the El Toro Water District.

Besides the enjoyment Nelson and his wife derive from traveling, he is also an avid gardener and lawn bowler. The couple also welcomes visits from their daughter, granddaughter and two great-grandchildren.