

LEISURE WORLDER OF THE MONTH

RUTH Mc CLEARY PAYNE

SEPTEMBER, 1992

The Leisure World Historical Society is pleased to announce the selection of Ruth McCleary Payne, Leisure Worlder of the Month for September. The event is sponsored by the Leisure World Historical Society, supported by the Ross Cortese Commemorative Fund.

Ruth McCleary Payne is truly a "Woman of the West." She is a Californian, born, bred and brought up on a 100 acre working farm, established by Grandma Rachel in true pioneer fashion. In Westward Ho style, covered wagon and all, some one hundred and thirty years ago, Grandma came west from Michigan. It was all her responsibility, since Grandpa was not well. By caravan, across the plains and through Indian country, after a journey of five months, the family of five, parents and three young children finally settled in Mountain View, California. It was land and good water for which they had searched, not gold.

In 1926, father John McCleary moved the family to the warmer, drier climate of the San Joaquin Valley. There, Ruth graduated from Denair with honors, then on to Modesto Jr. College, finally completing her undergraduate study for a B.S. at the University of Washington, Seattle, in 1941. Further study under the auspices of the American Red Cross took place at American University in Washington, D.C., and graduate studies in Social Work at U.S.C. in Los Angeles.

It was on that awesome December 7th day of 1941 that fate took hold of Ruth's future, bringing to nearby Fort Lewis, Washington, the young soldier she was to meet while working for the Boeing Aircraft Company shortly after graduation. Separated by the demands of army assignments, they never-the-less managed to marry, and newly commissioned Lt. Ward Payne took for his bride, Ruth McCleary, at the home of his aunt and uncle in Oklahoma City.

The hectic life of an army wife followed, as Ruth traveled with Ward to postings in the deep South during WW II. Civilian life did not reduce the pace of their existence, with much travel required by Ward's business demands. Yet Ruth, for her part, managed to become president of the Essex County Women's Republicans Club, was instrumental in bringing Essex County College to Newark, served as board member of the Freeman Garden Association, was president of the Women's Association of the Glen Ridge Congregational Church, and member of the Civic Conference and the Community Fund.

When finally, Ward retired in 1980, they took up residence in Leisure World, occupying the manor previously owned by Ward's parents. The Paynes wasted no time in becoming active in the community. They joined the Tennis Club, and the Garden Club, of which Ruth served as president. Ruth rose to the presidency of the Ebell Club, has been chairperson of Ebell's Past Officers Club, Old Treasurers Antique Guild, and now chairs the Ebell Book Reviews. Ruth is the church clerk for the Mayflower Congregational Church of Laguna Hills, and is assisting with the U.S.T.A. Women's 65-75 Hard Court Championships to be held in LW on September 28. She is also an active member of the Washington State Club and the Canine Club.

For all that she has done for others, Ruth Payne still considers it a privilege to serve others, to work for conflict resolution, and to believe in one another. She sees in LW the rich possibilities for close relationships. For all of her good works, she richly deserves joining her husband Ward as a Leisure Worlder of the Month.