



LEISURE WORLD NEWS

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A 'Tower'house of Art

Couple will share
November honors

By Cheryl Walker
The News.

From their opening in 1974, Leisure World's twin condominium Towers have defined "grace and elegance."

But, the couple who the Historical Society selected as Leisure Worlders of the Month for November took that status a step further by adding to the luxurious dwellings a touch of class: in the form of original art.

"From the day Jack and Irene Taylor moved in, the Towers became art conscious - we now have a community that knows what art is all about," says Jack Sylvester, Towers resident and benefactor of the new Florence Sylvester Senior Center in Moulton Plaza.

"Jack and Irene are real assets to the Towers: a great advantage, a great help," says fellow resident and associate Monaca Green.

And no wonder.

For the past three years, Jack Taylor, with the assistance of his spouse, Irene, has presented an "Artist of the Month" program, featuring the exhibit of original works and collections of Towers artists; art video showcases which delve into the works and biographies of master artists, both classic and modern, from all over the globe; art classes (watercolors, doodles); and art lectures on a variety of topics.

Jack, a master artist in a variety of media, has contributed original artworks for Towers events and projects, including for the recent 25 year celebration; Saddleback Memorial Hospital's Critical Care Pavilion; and the Reform Temple's "Festival of Art."

While Irene served on the Towers Board, various committees and as chair of the Towers 25th anniversary.



Rod Veal/The News

Jack and Irene Taylor are being honored for bringing art awareness to the Towers.

"The Taylors are a remarkably generous couple," says former Towers President Tom Beckwith noting that Irene has given freely of her business expertise and organizational skills and Jack has shared his artistic gifts to enhance the lives of their neighbors."

It's hard to believe this perfectly matched couple haven't been together for years, but the two had quite different lives before they met less than 20 years ago on a bus ride to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and she asked if he'd be willing to give her art lessons.

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Jack's story: A native of Pennsylvania, Jack's fascination with art began when, as a boy, he crept into his neighbor's yard and watched the German rugmaker, in his home studio.

Mesmerized by what he saw, when he was given a pot of paint and allowed to add color to an Oriental rug pattern he knew he was hooked.

Before his recent losing battle with macular degeneration, Jack followed his dream mastering ceramics, cloisonne, textiles, enameling and acrylic painting; earning numerous awards and reviews; and exhibiting worldwide.

He also dabbled in costume and scenic design, fashion illustration, puppeteering, weaving, ceramic manufacturing, radio announcing, acting and arts reviewing, lecturing and teaching even providing talks on art as a tour guide at the World's Fair in New York City in 1939.

He moved to Laguna Beach in 1945 where he opened the Golden Kiln, manufacturing ceramics, and became deeply involved in the local art scene.

He is credited with starting that city's Crafts Guild which, in turn, is credited with founding the Sawdust Festival.

He moved to Leisure World in 1979 after the death of his second wife and, after several years met Irene, who loved both him and his own passions: art and travel.

Irene's story: The native of the Windy City with a master's in merchandise and advertising from NYU, co-owned with her first husband radio stations and

was active in civic and social groups dealing with beautification, schools, scouting, limiting population growth and chamber of commerce activities.

Like Jack, she also received numerous awards for her work including, from the greater Petaluma (Northern California) Area Chamber of Commerce's "Woman of the Year" for two years.

After moving to the Towers in 1971, the cloisonne collector served on the board and on various committees, as well as delivering Meals on Wheels for more than five years.

Neither Jack nor Irene believed it when they were told they were being considered for Leisure Worlder of the Month honors - until Historical Society President Evelyn Shopp made it official.

Jack says he only did at the Towers what came naturally since art has always enriched his and Irene's lives.

Jack points out that when he came to the Towers he knew there were many who had artistic talents and only needed a way to let it free.

Although his failing vision has caused him to suspend the Artist of the Month program, he and Irene plan to continue to bring the joy of art to the Towers through the video presentations.

And the Taylors hope that that sense of artistic wonder will be shared with others as well; in fact, they have willed their own private collection of sculpture, paintings, cloisonne and other original pieces to the Bowers Museum.