

# News From



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DR. ERNEST O. THEDINGA

CHOSEN LEISURE WORLDER OF THE MONTH

FOR SEPTEMBER

When the Thedingas moved into Leisure World in 1971 they found a vexing situation. Many memberships in the community's clubs were closed.

As a retired Vice President of Student Affairs of the University of Wisconsin, Dr. Ernest O. (Ted) Thedinga was a man of action.

Rossmoor Corporation's Leisure Worlder for the month of September struck no Don Quixote pose at this unfortunate circumstance. He tilted with no windmills. Instead he joined with officers of such organizations as The Forum and the Keyboard Club and helped bring them into successful second organizations.

Dr. Thedinga currently is president of Forum II, a director of a third club and past president of three other Leisure World groups.

His many friends are invited to join Ted at an informal

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ceremony at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, September 4 when his color portrait will be hung in a place of honor in the rotunda of the Rossmoor New Sales Office.

On October 1st there will be another ceremony and the picture of the October Leisure Worllder of the Month will replace it. A special committee of Leisure World residents selects the people chosen.

Being educators, the Thedingas especially savored the prospect of fellowship in the clubs. "Clubs are responsible for much of the warmth and cohesiveness of our neighborhood that sets Leisure World apart and makes it superior to all other adult communities."

In addition to being president of Evening Forum II and vice president of Keyboard Club, as well as a director of the Theater Guild, Dr. Thedinga is past president of Former Rotarians and, of course, the Wisconsin Club. He and Ella also belong to Adventures in Travel, Travel Club II and the Latin American Club. He is also a member of the Thursday Club (Jolly Boys), a men's group that meets weekly at the Irvine Country Club in Corona del Mar.

Dr. Thedinga's leadership qualifications were quickly recognized. He was tapped for president of Mutual 37 shortly after he moved here in 1971. Consolidation into Third Mutual took him along as a director. From there he was chosen to be a director of the Golden Rain Foundation.

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It was after serving in these governance capacities that Ted decided to direct his attention to club work. It was sort of second nature to him. In Wisconsin he had belonged to Rotarians, Boy Scouts of America, National Council of Christians and Jews and of course many educational associations.

Dr. Thedinga was born in South Haven, Michigan. Later the family moved to Wisconsin where Ted worked his way through Ripon College and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree, cum laude. He was a tackle and guard on the football team that twice held powerful Marquette scoreless.

Ted met and married Ella in 1925 while he was teaching and coaching at Wausau. After paying college debts he went to Chicago University to earn his Masters and then on to the University of Wisconsin to obtain his doctorate.

A history and political science major, Dr. Thedinga was teaching at the University's Oshkosh branch when World War II broke out. Ted volunteered.

As an Air Force intelligence officer he was sent to the European Theater. Because of a background of studies in Munich, Germany in 1934 for his doctorate, he was selected on a team that surveyed Germany to study its surviving resources after the armistice.

Major Thedinga was sent to Santa Ana Air Base on leave. "It was wintertime and our first chance to taste the sweet fruits of

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California. You know the contrast between here and Wisconsin in December," he recalls. There never was any question about retiring to Southern California after that.

The only problem Ted had was whether to accept the Air Force's request to go to Japan and conduct a postwar survey similar to the one his team had made in Germany, or go back to his university. He chose Wisconsin, first becoming dean of students and later accepting the vice presidency of student affairs.

Two oil paintings on the walls of their home remind the Thedingas of Wisconsin. A large one shows birch trees reflected in a lazy Wisconsin stream. Many of the decorations in their home are things acquired during world travels. The walls of the den are prominently decorated with commemorative plaques and awards befitting Ted's educational and military background.

The Thedingas favorite plaque is one presented to Ted by the Governor of Wisconsin. This is the Distinguished Citizen award given to him for his outstanding work in student affairs. "This," says Ella mischievously, "is our brag room."

"The greatest decision we ever made was coming to Leisure World," says Dr. Thedinga. "Here we found friends, fellowship and all the good things one could wish in life. We can never repay the community for what it has done for us."

Oh! Yes! That other Wisconsin scene. It is of flaming fall

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foliage. But it soon will lose its place in the living room.  
"That's where I'm going to hang Ted's portrait." says Ella.

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August 23, 1979