

Great World

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Congratulations to Leisure Worlder of September, Dr. Ernest O. Thedinga, an eight-year neighbor and a man with a most interesting background. He served in World War II as an intelligence officer in the European theater of operations, and a principle reason for that assignment was that he had studied for his doctorate in Munich, Germany in 1934. He was later selected for a team which surveyed Germany to study its surviving resources after the war ended. He was asked to do a similar study in Japan but chose instead to return to the University of Wisconsin where he had been teaching in the Oshkosh branch when military service beckoned. Dr. Thedinga was a political science major. When he left the University of Wisconsin, he was vice president in charge of student affairs. At least two events made Dr. Thedinga and his wife Ella enthusiastic neighbors of Leisure World. The first occurred when he was sent to Santa Ana Air Base on military leave. "When you contrast December in Wisconsin and December in Southern California, there is no doubt about where you want to retire," he said. That memory stayed with the Thedingas, and in 1971 they moved to Leisure World. The other event that made our community a special place for Dr. Thedinga was the shock of learning that the clubs he was interested in joining were closed because of sheer numbers. So it was a challenge. He joined with officers of the filled-up organizations in which he was interested and formed second units. These included such groups as the Forum and Keyboard Club. These new organizations developed into successful groups, and Dr. Thedinga is currently president of Forum II, a director of another club and past president of three other Leisure World groups. He credits the clubs for much of the cohesiveness of Leisure World, which he says sets the community apart and makes it superior to all other adult communities.

One has to marvel at the stamina and enthusiasm of such a neighbor. In addition to being president of the Evening Fourm 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 the Wisconsin Club. He and wife Ella also belong to Adventures in Travel, Travel Club II and the Latin American Club.

He also is a member of the Thursday Club, a men's group that meets weekly at the Irvine Country Club.