

Doctor honored by Rossmoor

To this day Dr. J. Edward Berk is unable to say what attracted him to medicine.

"When I enrolled in medical school the only thing I knew about anatomy was 'the hip bone connects with the thigh bone' as the song says." He chuckles and his dark eyes sparkle. "I had expected to be an economist or something like that when I graduated from Wharton, the University of Pennsylvania's business school," says Berk. The next fall he was a medical student at Jefferson Medical College.

On of the world's most eminent physicians who has devoted more than a quarter century to the study of gastrointestinal diseases, Berk has been chosen Rossmoor Corporation's Leisure Worlder of the Month for August.

His many friends both in Leisure World and the medical profession are invited to be present for the informal ceremony at the Rossmoor New Sales pavilion, Monday, August 4 at 10 a.m., when his color portrait will be hung in a place of honor. In another brief ceremony it will be presented to him on Tuesday, Sept. 2.

Of his many honors and awards, Berk particularly relishes two. One is his election in 1975 to "Master" by the American College of Physicians, the highest honor bestowed by this organization. The other is the designation "Distinguished Professor" conferred on him last June by the faculty of the College of Medicine at the University of California, Irvine.

Berk joined UCI College of Medicine in 1963 as chairman of the Department of Medicine and head of the Division of Gastroenterology. Now he confines his academic activities to teaching and research and, as assistant dean, is involved with the Alumni Association and certain special faculty events.

The physician who most influenced his professional life is Dr. Henry L. Bockus of the University of Pennsylvania. Berk takes pride in the fact that he has collaborated with his mentor in the publication of the multi-volume "Gastroenterology," generally regarded as the "Bible" in this field of medicine. Berk has also authored three books on his own, the latest about to be published.

In passing, it might be noted that there is a "Berk Society" in Japan, organized at Okayama University by a group of physicians who had worked with the doctor at various times as research fellows.

Berk has made many lecture trips abroad, especially in South America, including one as a member of the Cultural Exchange Program for the State Department in 1961. His many foreign medical alliances lead him to feel physicians have the qualifications to help heal international ills.

"It is remarkable how many presidents and high officials in Latin American governments are physicians by background," he says.

After serving as a major in the Army in World War II, he began a career in academic medicine. Along the way he was elected to distinguished societies in the United States and abroad, serving as president of a number of them. No wonder



Dr. J. Edward Berk

then that the Southern California chapters of the National Foundation for Ileitis and Colitis have just named Dr. Berk "1980 Distinguished Physician."

Jack, as his friends call him and his wife Adeline were enroute to look at a home in Corona del Mar when they stopped by Leisure World.

"Adeline was determined to sit in the car while I looked at the models," said Jack. "I induced her to take a look around, however, and after she did she commented, 'Why, it's like an adult camp. That was a happy nostalgic note, for our romance started at a summer camp in 1936 when we both had vacation jobs as counselors.'"

Like her husband, Adeline still teaches, having returned to her profession after their two sons were grown. Although only on a substitute basis since last September, she devotes her time to retarded children in the Capistrano Unified Schools.

Jack did compete in a Leisure World swim championship at Clubhouse 2 in 1975 and has the blue ribbons to prove he won the freestyle and breaststroke races.

"Since the races were never held again, I guess I'm still the champion," says Jack and he laughs. The prestigious Dr. J. Edward Berk laughs readily.