

Society honors 'Mr. Nice Guy' in November

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David E. Caballero/The News

Tom Blaylock, who does not know how to say "no," delivers Meals on Wheels as he has for the past 13 years.

The world needs more like him, his friends say

By Cheryl Walker
The News

Just call him Mr. Nice Guy. That's the way Third Mutual President Bob Ring and many others characterize the Leisure World Historical Society's November honoree, Third Director Tom Blaylock.

Ring says that Blaylock, a 22-year resident of the community, "does his work quietly, gets things done and you can't find a person who doesn't think he's a great guy - whether he's selling fruitcakes for the Saddleback Kiwanis or sitting at traffic ticket hearings; it's an amazing talent."

Former Saddleback Kiwanis President Tom Beckwith agrees. "It's a thrill to work with him: he's a cooperative, energetic, sincere man and a pleasure to be with."

Current President Ed Watson adds the life member of his organization is well respected for his myriad community contributions.

Outside Leisure World these include delivering Meals on Wheels for more than 13 years and active involvement in all

major Kiwanis programs such as the pancake breakfast, holiday cake sales, eye glass collections and anti-drug campaigns and fundraising efforts for the Saddleback Kiwanis Foundation's youth and outreach programs.

He's also on the ushering committee at Geneva Presbyterian Church and a member of the Saddleback Hospital Associates where, according to Director of Development Janet de Wolfe, he's been an "invaluable volunteer." "We respect his service and appreciate all he's done for us."

At Leisure World, he's participated as a member or served as an officer of the World on Film Club, the Historical Society and numerous bridge clubs (a passion he shares with his wife Florence).

In addition, he's served on the Third Mutual Board and many mutual and Golden Rain committees.

Although his supporters are quick to praise, Blaylock modestly says doing service work is its own reward since "helping people in need" has always been one of his top priorities.

Background: The Santa Ana native and world traveller credits "a pair of caring parents" for instilling in him solid work and study habits and points out that in his 60 year work history he's only had three jobs (all in Los Angeles) - as a gas station associate, sales manager at Colson Equipment Co. and finally president and CEO of Trojan Metal Products.

Blaylock says he had little spare time for service work before retirement, although he was actively involved as a member of the business community with the University of Southern California's Cardinal and Gold Athletic Department Scholarship Program.

But he made up for that fact

after moving to Leisure World in 1974 and getting involved in various activities.

"I enjoyed them all - and found I don't know how to say 'no' when asked to do something."

He credits former Third Director Ted Martin, another Kiwanian, with getting him involved in governance. "He told me to run." His bid for a board seat was successful.

"Being a director is a thankless job, but I'm glad, really glad, I've been able to do it and contribute to the community that's been so good to me."

Fellow Kiwanis member Wally Bjornson says that there are contributors to the community and CONTRIBUTORS and Blaylock falls into the latter category.

"He has one of the most delightfully friendly personalities . . . always concerned with the common good, . . . always ready to help other people: the world needs more people like Tom."

Ceremony facts

Who: Tom Blaylock
What: Leisure Worlder of the Month
When: 10 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 6.
Where: Clubhouse 6
Sponsor: Leisure World Historical Society.