

Leisure Worlder

OF THE MONTH

LEON A. BOSCH

A wartime appointment as meat rationing director of the nation's Office of Price Administration pushed Leon Bosch into the headlines of his hometown newspaper in a typical "former resident makes good" story. He became more widely known, however, for varied accomplishments during his 45-year tenure on the business and management faculty of Northwestern University.

The inspirational teaching of Bosch, a task-master in the classroom, led many of his former students from all over the country to send their children to him to seek advice on academic career planning. Those instructional and advisory skills which earned him numerous government and business consultant positions were tapped again when Bosch moved to Leisure World, where he serves as vice president of the Golden Rain Foundation and chairman of the policy-making Architectural Control Committee.

Bosch grew up near the shores of Lake Michigan in Holland, Mich., then a heavily ethnic community founded by Netherlands-born members of the Dutch Reformed Church.

In strict observance of the church Sabbath, his mother did most of her weekend cooking on Saturdays. "And if we wanted to play ball on Sunday, we had to do it on the other side of the barn" he reminisces.

Bosch received his early education at church-related schools before entering Holland's Hope College, where he studied history. Inspired by a teacher who had once kicked him out of the classroom for bringing in a stray dog and who later recommended him for graduate school, he went on to receive an M.A. in economics from the University of Illinois. A subsequent Depression-era teaching assistantship at Northwestern enabled him to earn a Ph.D. in marketing.

It was during a summer management job at the Chicago World's Fair of 1933-34 that he met an attractive strawberry-blonde food exhibit hostess named Virginia French, a Northwestern student who soon became his wife. The couple has a daughter, Patricia, residing in Chicago.

Bosch's faculty appointments at Northwestern included terms as associate dean of the Graduate School of Business, department chairman for the Graduate School of Management and as a member of various university academic and administration committees and boards. He also was the university's faculty representative to the National Collegiate Athletic Association and to the Big Ten Conference, which he served as finance chairman for six years.

In 1950 he co-founded a pioneer advanced management development program at Northwestern called the Institute for Management. Later this successful one-month concentrated session was transported to Switzerland as the International Institute for Management. Bosch served as a faculty staff member in these programs for 25 years.

In addition to his wartime role as an OPA rationing official, Bosch has been a consultant to the Office of Economic Stabilization and in 1955 was sent by the U.S. State Department on an assignment with the French Ministry of Education in an effort which later led to the introduction of management study in the French university system.

A joint government-corporation-university assignment took him briefly to Caracas, Venezuela, as a key figure in that country's first executive management program. His work was conducted amidst the violent 1958 uprising leading to the ouster of Venezuelan President Perez Jimenez.

More tranquil assignments in the business world included part-time management consultant jobs with Oscar Mayer, Swift, General Electric, Sunbeam and Wisconsin Power and Light.

Upon his retirement from the Northwestern faculty in 1976, Bosch was named professor emeritus of management. Because one of his deepest joys is the challenge of "working with young minds," he has continued as a lecturer for the Graduate School of Management at the University of California at Irvine, where he currently conducts a weekly class.

A reflective man, he remembers with regret the early-day ban on admitting women to some university graduate schools such as Northwestern and Harvard. "We thought we were shielding them from preparing for a field where there were no worthy and challenging jobs available to them. It was an act of presumptuous paternalism," he notes.

Bosch returns to his hometown three times a year in his role as a Hope College trustee. He also is a former Illinois Presbyterian Church elder, served on the Third Laguna Hills Mutual board and co-founded the local Academians Club with his old friend Tracy E. Strevey.

Favorite leisure activities include golf and gardening. He has temporarily abandoned the former due to his current work load but still allots time to cultivate vegetables in the quietude of his Leisure World garden plot, where he relishes "getting dirty and physically tired while benefiting from both the produce and the therapy."