

Brock wins friends, honors for volunteer service

A natural-born "tinkerer," he built his first radio at the age of 11.

Although Joe H. Brock went on to become a leading insurance broker, those early skills were utilized upon retirement when he began a volunteer career assisting the handicapped and visually impaired.

His first role was making, installing and servicing

pillow radios for patients at Hollywood Presbyterian Hospital. The mishaps dealt with were numerous, according to Brock. "Those radios got dropped, run over and even immersed in buckets," he recalls.

He serviced 400 units before becoming a volunteer in 1968 for the Braille Institute's "Talking Books" program which provides free records and tapes of narrated book readings as well as the special phonographs and cassette tape players required.

Brock visits southern Orange County handicapped in their homes to deliver, install, repair and service the machines. More than two-thirds of his current 300 customers reside within the walls of Leisure World.

Brock's time (2,234 hours to date) and driving (over 14,500 miles) are his own contribution.

He admits that he is rewarded by the satisfaction received in doing service for others, without remuneration and usually with little recognition.

But community acknowledgement has arrived unbidden with Brock's unanimous selection as Home Federal Savings' Leisure Worlder of the Month for October. On Thursday, Oct. 1, his color portrait will be hung at the Rossmoor New Sales Pavilion in a 10 a.m. ceremony conducted by the Leisure World Historical Society, which serves Home Federal as consultant in the selection of recipients. A light continental breakfast will be served beginning at 9:30 a.m.

The portrait will be presented to Brock at another informal ceremony on Monday, Nov. 2. His friends and associates are invited to both events.

A native of Anderson, Ind., Brock moved to Los Angeles with his family as a teenager. He became a crewman on the first rowing team at Oregon State College and also attended Southwestern Law School.

After college he joined the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Co. as special agent in fidelity and surety bonds. During the next 16 years he became recognized as one of the most knowledgeable men in his field in Los Angeles.

He left the Hartford in 1945 to start his own insurance brokerage business, Joe H. Brock & Co., which he expanded to include all types of insurance coverage.

Brock and his wife Marian are active in the Presbyterian Church for which he has been a trustee, deacon and ruling elder at several locations, including the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood and currently at St. Andrew's in Newport Beach.

When Brock & Co. was sold to a national brokerage firm in 1962, Joe became an early retiree who soon was enmeshed in new activities. Church deacon work led to his first involvement with Hollywood Presbyterian Hospital patients and eventually to his 13 years as a Braille Institute volunteer on the Palos Verdes Peninsula and later in Orange County.

After moving to Leisure World in 1973, he continued perfecting his trophy winning abilities with both the Laguna Hills and Newport Harbor lawn bowling clubs. He also served as secretary on the 1980 Third Laguna Mutual nominating committee.

He and his wife enjoy a long-term rivalry with private games of backgammon, which he always wins, and gin rummy, where she is the clan champion.

On one wall of their Leisure World home hangs a framed resolution of commendation awarded by the Orange County Board of Supervisors for Brock's volunteer work.

Glancing at it briefly, he softly comments. "I've made so many wonderful friends through this work."



Joe Brock