
Leisure Worlder of the Month

Rodney Burns

LAGUNA HILLS—Join us on Wednesday, October 7 as Rodney Burns is named “Leisure Worlder of the Month,” for October. The ceremony, which begins at 10:00 a.m. in Clubhouse Six, is sponsored by Home Federal Savings and the Leisure World Historical Society. The public is invited to attend.

Rod was born in Moundsville, West Virginia, the second son of Harry Earle and Helen Barrett Burns. At age three the family moved to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma when his father was in the oil business. Rod attended the University of Oklahoma to study Mechanical Engineering and Business Administration. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration.

While at the University he was member of the Acacia Fraternity, Blue Key Honorary Society, and Scabbard & Blade, a military honor society. In his senior year he was appointed Commandant of the Reserve Officers Training Corps.

Shortly after graduation he and Margaret Linn were married. They moved to Gary, Indiana where Rod joined United States Steel Corp. After working in the mill for a year he was transferred to the Sales Department and spent the next year in their training course studying steel making from the blast furnace to the finished products. Upon completion of the course he was assigned to the District Sales Office in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where they lived until World War II.

During these years he was active in the Episcopal Church, Little League, and many other community activities.

Rod was called to active army duty as a First Lieutenant in December 1940, and went to Fort Benning, Georgia. Here he was assigned to General Patton’s Second Armored Division and continued with the formation of the Third and Fifth Armored Divisions. During this period he and “Maggie” lived in a number of states including Camp Cooke, now the Vandenburg Air Force Base, in Lompoc, Ca. In 1943 Rod attended the Command and General Staff School in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas where he graduated with honors.

Rod was ordered to England in January, 1944, and joined the VIII Corps as Anti-Tank Officer in the Artillery Section. He was responsible for coordinating anti-tank defense between divisions under the command of VIII Corps. When crossing the English Channel on D-Day plus six the ship was hit by a mine and suffered many casualties.

The survivors were transferred to ship taking German prisoners to England. Following an all-unit, re-outfitting, they were sent to France a second time and joined in the assault on the German Submarine Pens in Breast. Then on to Germany with a little delay in Bastogne during the German breakthrough in December 1944.

After V-E Day, Rod was on his way home to be re-assigned the Pacific Theater when the Japanese surrendered. Later, as a Lt. Colonel, he was transferred to the Army Reserve Corps and resumed his business career in Pittsburgh with the Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel. He retired in 1974.

Rod says the decision to move to California was an easy one. Not only did they remember California from their army days but Rod, Jr., his wife and baby daughter lived in Irvine.

After visiting several retirement areas they selected Leisure World and both still believe it was a good decision.

Shortly after moving into Leisure World Rod, was elected to the Board of Mutual Fifty-six and became President. When Mutual Fifty-six was merged with Third Mutual, Rod took some time off and he and Maggie returned to their summer home in Vinalhaven, Maine. That year a decision was made to sell this property and call California “Home.”

The following year Rod was elected a director of Third Mutual. The first year he served as Chairman of the Grounds Committee and later as Vice-President and then President. Following his term on Third Mutual he was elected to the board of the Golden Rain Foundation serving as Secretary the second year and Chairman of the Capital Improvements Committee the third year.

He was either a director member or advisory member of this committee for ten years, and he says that he feels that this was a most rewarding experience. Ideas were discussed, recommended to the full board of directors, and, if approved, developed for benefit of the residents. He is a firm believer in trying to improve the facilities we have to make Leisure World a more enjoyable and a better place to live.

Rod keeps busy playing tennis (he was President of the Laguna Hills Tennis Club two years), golfing, bowling, and bridge. He is a member of the Historical Society, Masonic Club, Shrine Club, Associates of the Saddleback Community Hospital, American Ballroom Dance Club, Washington Club, Petroleum Club, and the Republican Club, and has a little vegetable garden on the side.

Rod says that he is convinced that Leisure World is the greatest place on earth to live.