

# Money manager



**Mina Cunliff**

Mina Cunliff told her first lie, she recalls, when she applied for a job at Standard Oil Co.

"They wouldn't hire a married woman," Cunliff said in a recent interview. "So I said I wasn't married." She removed her wedding ring when she went to work, although it bothered her to do so: "I thought it should be on here (she gestured at her finger) forever."

The modern woman in business would find the hazards faced by the Leisure World woman some 50 years ago outrageous, or even illegal. But for a young married woman of that era, pursuing a career often

involved a little subterfuge.

Cunliff's first job, after college, was as secretary to the credit manager of Zellerback Paper Co. She worked there 4½ years, but left when she married her first husband.

"My mother and father felt that married women should not work," she explained.

Soon, however, the young bride found herself "climbing the walls" without work to do. So, removing her ring, she went to work for Standard. Four years later she had reason to quit—her two children kept her busy at home for some years.

But even with motherhood, Cunliff continued to expand her business experience. Working at home, she kept books and did the billing for her husband's expanding moving and storage business. "You learn as you go along," she says of her gradual acquisition of business knowledge. "The more you do, the more you learn."

After her husband's death, Cunliff's role in what was Westlake and is now known as Western Moving and Storage became a larger one. She served as secretary-treasurer of the corporation, and remains on the board of directors today (her son runs the business).

Women working today, she commented, don't really understand the way it was for their predecessors: "You could do the same kind of work, which they're complaining about today, and get much less salary than you do now. And when I started, it was just sort of unheard-of for women to want to work."

Although now more or less retired, Cunliff keeps busy. Her unceasing round of club work and philanthropic endeavor earned her "Leisure Worlder of the Month" honors this August.

"I always did club work," she said. "And my business skills have helped me in planning benefits for the cancer society and other big events."

In Leisure World, says Don Cunliff, her husband of 18 years, Mina has been "treasurer of everything."