

NEWS

UP CLOSE: J. PAUL DENNEY

An intimate look at one of south Orange County's interesting personalities.

On Wednesday, J. Paul Denney, one of the community's oldest residents, will be inaugurated as "Leisure Worlder of the Month" for October.

Denney, who describes moving to Leisure World as his proudest moment, said he was completely surprised by the honor. But there are many people who will not be.

During the last 25 years, Denney has worked as a service officer for the American Legion and has helped hundreds of war veterans and their families. He has worked closely with Saddleback Hospital and was a founding member of the Associates of Saddleback Hospital, which raised funds for new equipment and remodeling projects.

He helped to found the Laguna Hills post of the American Legion, which recently was visited by Sen. Dan Quayle, Republican vice-presidential candidate. Denney presented Quayle with a lifetime membership to the legion.

Denney was legion post commander from 1968 to 1969 in Laguna Hills, and in 1945, he was commander of the Hollywood post, one

of whose members was President Ronald Reagan.

"I just like to help people," said Denney of his work with war veterans. He joined the legion 38 years ago, a few years after his discharge from the service and began to realize how many ex-servicemen there were in need of support.

Denney will be honored with a ceremony and a roast dinner in Clubhouse 6 on Wednesday and his portrait will hang in the Laguna Hills branch of Home Federal Savings for the month of October.

■ **Born:** Guimon, Okla.

■ **Reared:** Guimon, Okla.

■ **Time in Leisure World:** 22 years.

■ **Previous residence:** West Los Angeles.

■ **Marital status:** His wife, Blanche, died two years ago. They had been married for 43 years.



Leland Holder/The Register
J. Paul Denney has been a member of the American Legion for 25 years.

■ **Children:** None.

■ **Religion:** Catholic.

■ **Political affiliation:** Republican.

■ **Work experience:** "I started out working in the First National Bank in Boys City, Okla. On the weekends, I would fly passengers in a two-seater plane to make extra money — we were called 'barnstormers' in those days. In 1939, I came to California and began work for The B.F. Goodrich Tire Co. Shortly afterward, I was drafted into the service and was attached to the 8th Air Force Finance Department for almost four years. Then, after the Second World War, I went to work for Barker Brothers furniture store in Los Angeles as a credit manager and stayed with them for 23 years until my retirement 22 years ago."

■ **Clubs and affiliations:** "I helped form the Associates of Saddleback Hospital 10 years ago. We now have a membership of over 1,000 people and have raised more than \$5 million in that time to buy equipment for the X-ray department as well as financing the remodeling of the emergency department. I served as treasurer for the associates for several years, too. I've been a member of the American Legion for 38 years and a service officer for 25. I'm also a member of the Aerospace Club."

■ **Favorite comic strip:** "Gumby."

■ **Favorite television show:** "MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour."

■ **Favorite food:** "A steak dinner with all the trimmings."

■ **Favorite restaurant:** Reuben's.

■ **Hero:** Charles Lindbergh.

■ **Hobbies:** "Lapidary — working with gemstones. I find it very rewarding."

■ **Last book read:** A biography of Dwight D. Eisenhower.

■ **Favorite president:** "Reagan. He gets the job done."

■ **In the morning:** "I like to walk and I used to enjoy a game of golf, too, but I can't anymore because of arthritis in my hands."

■ **Magazine subscriptions:** National Geographic.

■ **Last vacation:** "Las Vegas a couple of weeks ago, but don't ask me how much I won or lost."

■ **Proudest moment:** "Moving to Leisure World, into a new home, and getting out of the smoggy Los Angeles atmosphere."

■ **Most embarrassing moment:** "When I worked for The B.F. Goodrich Co., the regional manager called me up one day and asked me if I would take his sister out for the evening. I agreed, went home to change and took her to a nightclub. At the end of the evening, I reached for my billfold and it wasn't there. I had left it at home. That was pretty embarrassing."

■ **Secret to happiness:** "Helping my fellow men."

■ **Secret to success:** "Hard work and being honest with your fellow men."

— Compiled by Sarah Salkeld