



LEISURE WORLD NEWS

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A man of many talents

By Cheryl Walker
The News

Poet, playwright, singer/actor, dancer, linguist, musician, humorologist, professor, business consultant, collector, published author, and avid Lakers' fan.

Meet the multi-faceted Henry Eilbirt, tapped by the Historical Society as Leisure Worlder of the Month for July.

Tall, always upbeat, with a ready smile and quick wit, Eilbirt merited the honor by sharing his plethora of talents with Leisure World.

The former Community Association president was secretary of the community-wide Project 21's internal governance committee and is a captain in the Earthquake Task Force. He is a pillar of the Society of Humanistic Judaism and an active member of the Historical Society, the Theater Guild and the Computer, Great Books and Writers Clubs (where his poetry recently took a prize).

George Ratner, the current Community Association president, says his predecessor is a born leader and truly deserving of the the Historical Society's honor: "Henry Eilbirt is one of those rare people who connect intellect with realism - he can be counted on to get a job done."

Jacqueline Beaver, president of Humanistic Judaism Society, adds that it is hard to encapsulate in a few words a man of Eilbirt's many "extraordinary" accomplishments which he's generously shared with her organization from leading intellectual discussions, to presenting programs and original plays, to adding his voice to the choir. "We're so very happy he



Rod Veal/The News
Leisure Worlder of the month for July is Henry Eilbirt, economics professor, humorologist, musician, dancer and avid Lakers fan.

was selected, he really deserves this recognition."

The Paris-born Eilbirt grew up in New York City in a family in which music and education were rigorously promoted.

In fact, says Eilbirt, every male in his family earned a doctorate and he was no exception earning his PhD., after maritime service in World War 2, from New York University.

He went on to become professor, administrator and dean of the Baruch College School of Business at City University of New York, with which he was associated for 30 years.

He also became a business consultant, authored several books on business and lectured

and wrote a non-fiction book on humor called "What Is a Jewish Joke?"

After moving to the West Coast in the late 1970s, Eilbirt taught at California State Long Beach and the University of California, Irvine before retiring.

Although he quit teaching, he still lectures on humor and even has a series of seminars on humor planned at UCI this fall.

Eilbirt's eclectic collection include the witicisms of Woody Allen, Alan King, Myron Cohen, Mark Twain and as well as fine ivories, bronzes, sculpture and lacquer boxes from around the world.

Eilbirt, says he's attracted to humor because it offers people a relief "even at their most tragic times."

He explains, by way of example, that he's never ruffled by the politics of Leisure World, even when the criticism is unfairly aimed at him.

"You must remember I had a lot of practice dealing with such situations - chairing faculty meetings."

And, he adds, he's been blessed with an optimistic outlook, an insatiable curiosity so he's never bored and a store of energy that just won't quit.

In lectures for the American Association of Retired Persons to people on the verge of retiring, he warns them the two killers of retirement are lack of occupation, and loneliness. He advises them to get involved, do something that makes them happy and go someplace, like a senior center, and meet people.

Eilbirt says, though, his involvements in the community and many interests have made his retirement a dream come true, particularly in this "excellent place" called Leisure World.

"My best qualities are a good memory, my high energy level (I do things all through the day and night) and there's so much I want to learn and do - I know I'll never do it all but I'm just going to say it's a wonderful life."

CEREMONY FACTS

Who: Henry Eilbirt
What: Leisure Worlder of the Month for July
Where: Clubhouse 6
When: 10 a.m., Wednesday, July 5
Sponsor: Leisure World Historical Society.