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Devoted nurse is October honoree

For more than 50 years, Marian L. Fox devoted herself to the nursing profession.

Her early experiences ran the gamut from working 14-hour hospital shifts during the understaffed wartime years to being caught up in the pandemonium surrounding Rudolph Valentino's demise.

As the film idol lay dying at New York's Polyclinic Hospital in 1926, movie fans and press members congregated outside. "The streets were jammed and we were virtual prisoners," said Miss Fox, an assistant operating room supervisor at that time.

She recalls how one telephone caller was appeased by an exasperated doctor who grabbed the phone and said, "Ma'am, this is Rudolph Valentino. I'm a very sick man, so please don't call me."

"To this day," adds Miss Fox, "there's probably some grandma still telling that story of her call to Rudy."

The young woman who worked with the Mayo Clinic's first neurosurgeon during her student nurse days went on to become a top nursing administrator. "But when I retired, and came to Lei-

sure World in 1969, I forgot I was a nurse and learned a new way of life," she remarks.

That new lifestyle focusing on tireless contributions to community activities has resulted in Miss Fox's selection as Leisure Worlder of the Month in the program sponsored by Home Federal Savings and Loan and the Leisure World Historical Society.

Community residents are invited to an informal ceremony at 10 a.m., Oct. 4 in Clubhouse 6 when Miss Fox's color portrait will be unveiled.

The picture will be on public view for a month at the Home Federal office in Laguna Hills before being presented to Miss Fox at a similar ceremony in November.

Miss Fox grew up near Lake Erie in the picturesque grape country of Westfield, N.Y. A favorite childhood game was called "hospital" in which she always played the patient. "I thought that was more important," she smiles.

An indifferent student, she dropped out of high school at 16 and went to live with relatives. She returned home to find her determined mother

(Cont. on page A9)



Marian L. Fox

Leisure World: Her first real home

(Cont. from page A3)

armed with a freshly sewn wardrobe of nursing student uniforms.

So, it was off to Batavia Hospital School of Nursing for the young miss, who continued after graduation with advanced courses in operating room techniques at Bellevue and Harlem hospitals in New York and St. Mary's in Rochester, Minn.

Miss Fox had been an operating room supervisor in New York for several years when she began work on a college degree. "I took night supervisor positions in order to attend New York University and did most of my studying while riding the subway to school," she recalls. She first earned the missing high school diploma and then received a B.S. degree in nursing education from NYU.

"I call myself a late bloomer," Miss Fox says. "At first I was so scared that I sat in the back of the class. Then I moved slowly forward bit by bit."

In 1946, she became nursing director of Parkland Hospital in Dallas, followed by four years as nursing chief at the New Orleans Veterans Administration Hospital. Next came an appointment as assistant nursing division director of the American Hospital Association.

After two more years as a hospital nursing administrator in Houston, Miss Fox finally was ready to welcome retirement in Leisure World. "It was my first real home after spending most my life in nurses residences and hotels," she explains.

Switching allegiance from the numerous professional organizations in which she held key posts during her career, she became known as a dedicated worker in local activities.

She was a director of the First Laguna Hills Mutual and is on United Mutual's nominating committee. An inspector and former registrar for the Orange County Election Board, she has presented local Channel 6 programs on voting procedures and other topics.

A favorite activity is the DAR, which she served as regent and as bicentennial chairman for the production of a "Great Women of the American Revolution," program presented to more than 3,000 persons in the area.

She is also active in AAUW, Travel Club I, Leisure World Woman's Club and the Historical Society of which she was an original committee member.

At first she shied away from local hospital work. "I was afraid I'd want to run the place," she wryly explains.

Miss Fox finally relented and now serves as co-chairman of volunteers for Saddleback Hospital's Intensive Care Unit, where she donates service each week.

In typical fashion, the veteran nursing administrator chose Sunday as her day at the hospital because, she says, "that was always the hardest day to staff."