



Sarah Reingewirtz/The News

Tom Jorde, Leisure Worlder of the month for December, sits by the historical sycamore in Aliso Park, a place he finds enjoyable when in need of solitude.

## Tom Jorde speaks softly but sticks to his beliefs

By Cheryl Walker  
The News

**F**or former Golden Rain Director Tom Jorde, 1996 has been a very good year.

Thanks to the generosity of his six children, he and his wife Marie have been able to celebrate their 50th anniversary every month, with a Mississippi River Cruise and Christmas trip to the Scandinavian countries still to come.

And now the Historical Society has singled him out for its Leisure Worlder of the Month honors in December for his years of service to the community he's called home since 1983 and the larger one outside Leisure World's gates.

An admitted "people person," Jorde, a Lutheran minister associated with the Community Lutheran Church in Rancho Santa Margarita and the Lutheran Church of the Cross in Laguna Hills, says he particularly enjoyed serving as chairman of the Golden Rain

health and social services committee and working with the staff of Leisure World's social service department "where so many, many people are helped in such a wide variety of ways."

And, he adds, though his official term is over he plans to "devote some time to this very important ministry."

Social Services Manager Gemma Heffernan says Jorde is "most deserving" of the society's honor and she looks forward to his support in the future as she has in the past.

"He added strength and stature to the health and social services committee," she explains.

"He chaired the . . . committee during a time when consideration was given to dissolving the home care program (but), because of his forward-looking policies, this program remains intact and has proven so vital to the community that the number of Leisure Worlders served has doubled since then."

Committee member, Third Director Bert Black, says there

were a number of times when Jorde was at loggerheads with the powers that be for their tendency "to deny our mortality."

But, says Black, although Jorde "exudes kindness" he can be a strong champion of what is he believes is right."

**Background** Jorde says his upbringing made him aware of what was really important in life.

The Thief River Falls, MN, native says he grew up in humble surroundings with his parents, four brothers and a sister but "we didn't know we were poor."

### Ceremony facts

**Who:** Tom Jorde  
**What:** Leisure Worlder of the month for December  
**When:** 10 a.m., Wednesday, Dec. 4  
**Where:** Clubhouse 6  
**Sponsor:** Leisure World Historical Society

A US Navy veteran, it was thanks to GI benefits that he was able to go to the Wharton School of Finance, Harvard University and, subsequently, the University of Minnesota, where he got his degree in business administration.

But although he was a success as a sales manager in the business world, he felt he was called to a different career.

And, at the age of 36, he decided to get his master's in theology at the Pacific Lutheran Seminary in Berkeley.

He was ordained four years later with the cooperation of his own support team: his wife and children who made do on a drastically reduced budget while he followed his dream.

"My kids found out the difference between needs and wants during those four years; that is, do we really need this or that or do we just want it - we asked that question of ourselves many times."

The sacrifices paid off as Jorde's pastoral career flourished in churches in the Castro Valley, Fresno, San Jose, Lake Forest and most recently in South Orange County.

Jorde says he learned about Leisure World visiting friends and parishoners in the community.

When the time came to make the move it seemed a natural thing to do - especially since golf has been his most important avocation since childhood.

Not surprisingly, the former member of the University of Minnesota Golf Squad and champion of two golf clubs became a member of the Laguna Hills Men's Golf Club.

Friends there encouraged him to try out for the Golden Rain Board, advice he followed successfully.

Jorde says the experience was enlightening and one which tested his adherence to the adage "If you lose your cool, you lose."

Says Jorde, "We have to learn how to disagree without being disagreeable."

And, he says it's important that community leaders not get into a rut; but admitted even in his own profession getting the establishment to consider a new way of doing something is difficult. "Do you know what the seven last words of the church are? 'We never did it this way before'."

Jorde adds that the best part of his job as a director was the satisfaction of helping fellow residents, "We are our brother's keeper."