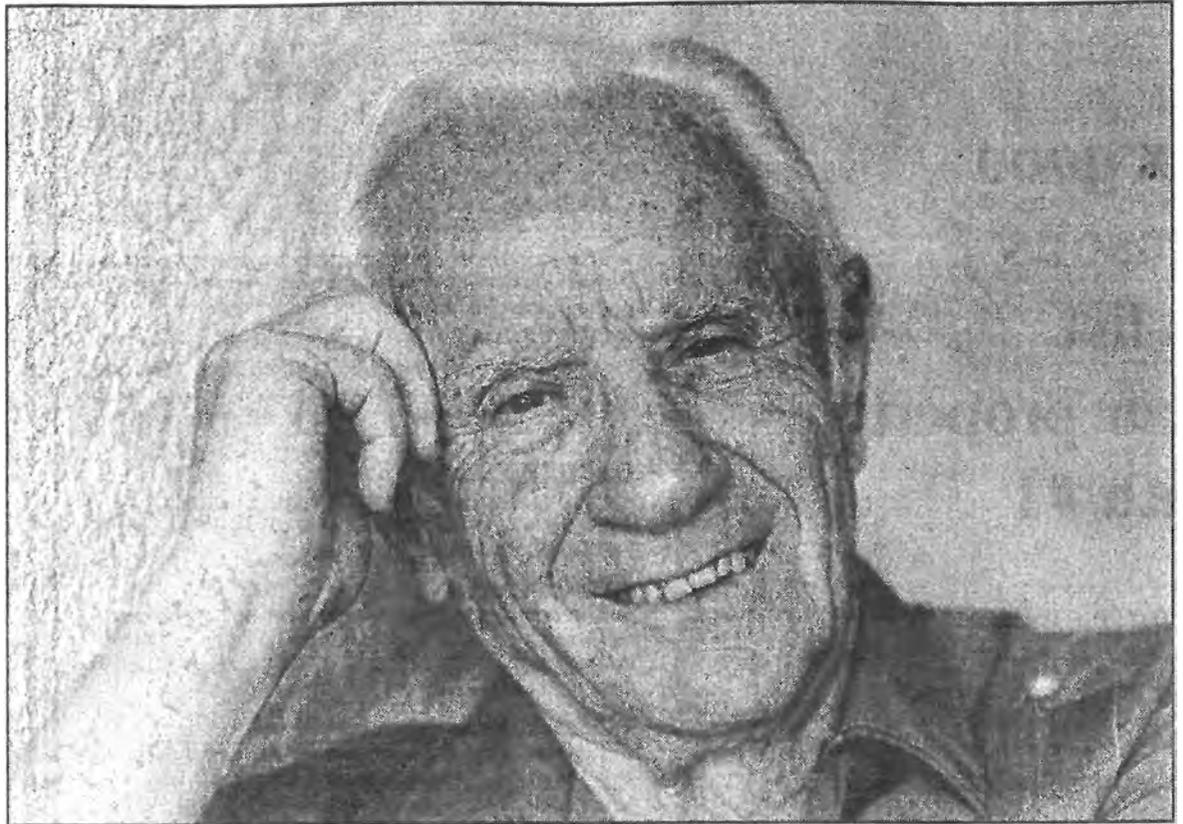


Society rules in judge's favor for October



Sarah Reingewirtz/*The News*

Retired Judge Sam Kirbens will be lecturing tonight in Clubhouse 3 on Constitutional Law.

Honoree credited with building UCI/Leisure World series

By Cheryl Walker
The News

Ever since the death of John Feltman in 1990, retired judge Samuel Kirbens has continued the annual 10-lecture series his predecessor started in coordination with the University of California, Irvine's Speaker's Bureau and Leisure World's Recreation Department.

Thanks to his efforts, in 1997 "Frontiers of Knowledge" will celebrate its 11th anniversary with UCI professors giving the community the insider's edge on a plethora of topics as diverse as medicine, international politics, history, literature and the arts.

The Historical Society of

Leisure World decided to recognize Kirben's role in continuing the lecture series by naming him Leisure Worlder of the Month for October.

The recognition, says Recreation Director Debby Lamb, is well deserved.

"It's been a real pleasure working with Judge Kirbens, he's done a magnificent job coordinating the series; his dedication to the project has been untiring and Recreation is most appreciative of the hours he's spent working with UCI to make it happen: we couldn't have done it without him."

Although Kirbens admits hosting the series is a lot of work, he says he enjoys every minute of it.

"I want to challenge people's minds and get them involved, painlessly," he says.

The society also notes that its honoree, a resident since 1986, has played an active part in other activities important to

See **HONOREE**, page 20

Ceremony information

Who: Sam Kirbens

What: Leisure Worlder of the Month

When: Wednesday, Oct. 1, 10 a.m.

Where: Clubhouse 6

Sponsor: Leisure World Historical Society



Honoree Sam Kirbens is proud of having met Golda Meir.

HONOREE

From page 1

fellow residents as vice president of the Foreign Policy Association, a volunteer for Tax-

payers for Responsible Planning and editor of the Audubon Society's "Borrowing Owl."

The world traveller and fundraiser for charities like the United Jewish Appeal also has been an active member of the

hiking group, Historical Society, Academians, Writer's Club and the Saddleback Kiwanis.

In addition, Kirbens, who's practiced law in California, Colorado and Nebraska and is listed in Who's Who in the West, has contributed his expertise to the Community Association Board and the Golden Rain legal committee and cityhood task force.

Mary Fegraus, executive director of the Laguna Canyon Foundation, says she and the other members of her organization are "delighted" Kirbens is being honored.

She says he's been a "long-time supporter of the preservation of Laguna Canyon as parkland" and has been an active member of the Golden Rain Laguna Laurel task force and vice president of Leisure World Residents to Save the Canyon.

Kirbens, who has penned more than 70 judicial writings over 30 years, including the winning entry, "Chronic Alcohol Addiction and Criminal Responsibility," in the 1968

American Bar Association 35th Annual Judge Erskine M. Ross Essay Contest, says he has a thoughtful side too.

"I'm an introvert and an extrovert," he says pointing out that striking a balance between the two has been a lifelong endeavor.

Background Born on the campus of the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, the merchant's son says he revelled in college town life.

He graduated from his hometown university, with both a bachelor's and juris doctor degree and, proudly notes, he attended every Cornhusker home game from 1929-42 and is still a big fan (with a collection of tomato red school color garb to prove it).

Kirbens says he was born to be a lawyer and even as a boy his favorite subjects were public speaking, debating, emceeing and studying government, political science and civics.

After graduating and service in the Army during World War II, he decided to go west.

He settled in Los Angeles where he got a job in Columbia

Pictures' legal department and had by his own admission "a lot of fun" rubbing shoulders with Tinsel Town elite like Harry Cohn (the studio's big boss) and entertainer Al Jolson.

After seven years, though, Kirbens felt the need to chart his own path.

But a year before he bid adieu to Hollywood, he decided to give his self-confidence a boost by taking a Dale Carnegie's "How to Win Friends and Influence People" course and liked the experience so much he became an instructor for the next 21 years.

He didn't give up his private practice dreams, however, and found the perfect place to thrive in Denver, a city he first encountered during his military service.

In 1965 Kirbens was selected by the governor of Colorado to serve as a trial judge where his calendar filled with cases concerning civil, criminal, probate and family relations issues.

"In my 21 years on the Denver trial bench I heard thousands of cases . . . (and) enjoyed the intellectual challenge of the civil cases but frequently despaired from the necessary chastening of so many defendants; I did not relish criminal court assignments," recalls the judge.

Although retired now for 11 years, Kirbens is anything but retiring.

Whether its mountain climbing with his wife Gloria or serving as a judge pro tempore in Orange County, arbitrating and mediating cases, he likes to live life to the fullest.

Tonight, for example, he plans to break precedent with the Feltman series (at 7:30 p.m. in the Clubhouse 3 Auditorium) and deliver a talk himself, the first by someone not from UCI.

And he hopes to encourage other residents with a unique area of expertise to give future lectures.

His topic, a one-hour course in American constitutional law, will include a brief history of the constitution and key Supreme Court rulings on abortion, slavery, racial segregation and affirmative action.

Kirbens says he chose the topic for its historical value, timeliness and complexity.

And he hopes his subject will stimulate his audience's little grey cells and encourage them to learn and do more. "I want to keep people here from dying on the vine." #

← And he hopes to encourage