

Wilson Kline honored for his contributions



Wilson Kline

He once spent some time in San Quentin and quite a few years prior to that snarled traffic on Chicago's Michigan Avenue by using it as a golf fairway.

Despite these seemingly untoward incidents in the life of Wilson Kline, the Rossmoor Corporation has boldly named him Leisure Worlder of the Month for November.

"Willie," as his many friends affectionately call this slender, gray-haired man with a whisper of a narrow mustache and a twinkle in his gray eyes, has earned the accolades of his peers by doing something none of his 46 predecessors for the honor can claim. He saves Leisure Worlders money.

Kline's many innovations, including the ongoing program of using solar energy to heat the water in an increasing number of United Mutual's laundries, have resulted in the saving of thousands of dollars since he moved into Leisure World two days before Christmas that first year it opened 15 years ago.

Before anyone gets the idea Kline is trying to make restitution to society for a misspent youth, it should be said with haste that his time in San Quentin was spent correcting errors in the penitentiary's power and heating system as supervising mechanical engineer for the California Division of Architecture.

As for hitting a golf ball down Michigan Avenue, this was one of Delta Tau Delta fraternity's hazing week assignments when Kline was attending Armour Institute of Technology. "Of course Michigan Avenue wasn't quite as busy back in the early 20's as it is today," says Kline with a smile, "but even then some motorists drove up on the sidewalks to avoid getting hit by a golf ball."

As the Leisure Worlder for the Month of November, Kline's framed color photograph will be hung in a place of honor in the Rossmoor New Sales rotunda at 10 a.m., Friday, Nov. 2 during an informal ceremony to which his many friends are invited. There it will remain until Monday, Dec. 3 when the portrait will be presented to him as a new Leisure Worlder takes the place of honor.

Kline's application of his engineering skills to save money are almost to numerous to mention. It all started when he was elected a director of First Mutual. In all, he spent 10 years as a director in United Mutual during which time he effected many energy-saving projects.

"Spending money to save money," is what Kline called these projects which Glenn Wineman, current president of United says has already resulted in savings of more than \$36,000.

First he reduced the maintenance cost and wattage of walk lights without decreasing their illumination. He made further energy savings in the laundry drying-yard lights; had fluorescent fixtures installed in carports which has effected a savings of around \$10,000 a year. The proposed fluorescent streetlight fixtures if installed will save \$11,329 more.

"It was during the previous energy crunch that I started studying the possibility of use of solar energy in our laundries," said Kline. After a year of monitoring that indicated a possible saving of up to 60 percent, Kline induced United Mutual to install his pilot plan in Laundry No. 223. Monitoring this and another test installation over a period of 18 months has led to the decision of the United board to install solar systems in 40 more laundries this year, with an additional 50 in prospect in 1980.

Kline has applied the vast knowledge he accumulated in engineering, with Delco and Frigidaire divisions of General Motors before World War II, as design engineer for the Army Corps of Engineers and then 21 years with the State of California.

It was Kline who came to the rescue when sound systems proved faulty in the main dining room of Clubhouse 1 and later in the auditorium in Clubhouse 3, recommending and supervising corrective measures.

Kline organized the Camera Club and when it came time to set up the dark room and developing facilities for Clubhouse 4 he was called on again.

"When I was in junior high school in Chicago I used to develop pictures for the neighbors," said Kline, who says he progressed from a brownie box camera to a Graflex like the news photographers then used.

While stationed at Sacramento he wrote the Manual of Operations covering state mechanical work that still is in use. He conducted camera classes for the Recreation Department for three years, so designing and layout of facilities for Clubhouse 4 was right down his alley.

It was Kline who put his knowledge to work to supply all the sound effects for the Production Guild. He even went to Irvine Ranch to tape cattle mooing and pigs squealing. In his office in his Leisure World residence, which he calls "The Think Tank," is a maze of sound equipment and an electric organ. "I used to play the piano in the band for fraternity dances in college," says Kline, "but the organ is so much better for solo with its many different 'voices'."

When Kline's first wife Alice died several years ago he contributed four clocks in her memory to Leisure World's Clubhouse 1 tower. A plaque has been placed there.

Kline was born in the little Mississippi River town of Keithsburg, Ill. which he revisited several years ago. "It was a mistake," he says, "one should never go back to childhood scenes. Even the button-making factory was gone." Willie and his present wife, Viola, now reside at 110-G Via Estrada.

His club activities here in Leisure World include the Leisure World High Twelve Club, the Kiwanis Club, the Masonic Club and the Geneva Presbyterian Church.

"I think I've worked harder here than I ever did before," says Kline. "The only difference is I haven't been paid for it. Not money, that is, but I've been paid in so many other ways, especially friendship and appreciation."