

Honoree not only joins clubs but takes active role

By Cheryl Walker
The News

Dorothy McClellan says she didn't have time for clubs during her career as a teacher.

But when she moved to Leisure World 22 years ago, she made up for lost opportunities and now the Historical So-

ciety has singled her out as its honoree for April in recognition of her contributions to a number of community organizations.

The list includes the Philharmonic Society, Leisure World Orchestra, String Ensemble, Melody Men, Saddleback Kiwanis and Ebell, Aliso, Travlogue and Shuffleboard clubs.

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Sarah Reingewirtz / The News

Dorothy McClellan practices for her regular weekly performances for groups such as the Saddleback Kiwanis Club.

CEREMONY FACTS

Who: Dorothy McClelland
Where: Clubhouse 6
When: 10 a.m. Wednesday, April 3.
Sponsor: Leisure World Historical Society

And, the society notes, she's a life member of the Parent/Teachers Association, member of the Arlington High School Educational Foundation's (of Nebraska's) Hall of Fame and pianist/accompanist for Lomarena Elementary School's Christmas Program.

"She's always a delight," says Ebell President Olive Greenman.

She points out that McClellan served her organization as past president and vice president in charge of cultural

guilds and is now an asset on the club's board. "And everyone enjoys her humor."

Aliso Club President Jackie Roden agrees with Greenman's estimation and notes that McClellan has aptly handled a number of important posts at her organization from public relations and programming chairperson to first and third vice president and president.

"She just makes you feel better and when she gives the thought for the day it's always hysterical . . . she's always available, always a doll."

Saddleback Kiwanis President Ed Watson says the program of songs she plays every Monday at his group's meetings give the gatherings a special lift. "She does a very fine job of it - excellent - the quality of what she does is really amazing: people like her are hard to find."

McClellan credits her father for the gift of humor and her mother with persuading her to become a teacher instead of a musician alone. "Now I'm glad I listened to her, I probably would have starved."

McClellan, a native of Omaha and graduate of Wayne State College, says, however, that she always put her musical talents to good stead playing at revival meetings and other gatherings.

With her degree in elementary education (with music and Spanish minors), she taught in the primary grades in her home state ("I have no rapport with older children") before coming to the Golden State in 1947 where, she notes, "The minute I came out here my life got better."

After several temporary teaching jobs, she found her niche at Fernangeles Elementary in the San Fernando Valley where she started the music program and, eventually, completed her teaching career - after 27 years.

While teaching full time and playing piano for her church and athletic programs she found time to earn a master's degree in education from the University of Southern California and, whenever her schedule permitted it, wore out her passport travelling around the world.

"I love languages, history, geography and travel," McClellan explains. And it was while travelling locally, that she saw Leisure World's familiar landmark globe and decided to make the community her retirement home.

The decision, says McClellan, was fortuitous, "I like people and there's so much to do here."

Although mobility problems have forced McClellan to cut back on her activities, she notes that at one time her schedule blocked out virtually every day of the week with activities morning and evening or both.

"I have always been busy and I like to keep busy, it's what I'm used to," explains McClellan. "In fact, when I'm not busy I wonder what I'm not doing that I should be."

Still, spending more time at home does have its compensations, now that an impish black stray cat named Katie has taken up residence in her manor. "I love to watch her and she follows me everywhere I go . . . sometimes I think I'll wear her out."