

LEISURE WORLDER OF THE MONTH

SHIRLEY O'CONNOR

MAY 1993

The Leisure World Historical Society is pleased to announce the selection of Shirley O'Connor as Leisure Worlder of the Month for May 1993. The event is funded through the Ross Cortese Commemorative Fund.

Born in Cleveland, Shirley came to California in 1934. She graduated from Hollywood High, attended L.A. City College and UCLA. She worked in retailing, then accepted a position as Ass't. Dir. of British War Relief. In 1945, she married Norman Carroll O'Connor, an outstanding circus ringmaster and sideshow talker. He was just launching another career in the field of public relations.

At 5'9", Shirley wasn't material for the trapeze acts -- but if one traveled with the circus, it was necessary to be a productive member of the team. So Shirley went into Public Relations, and for 25 years, she lived and breathed the exciting air of the circus, continuing for three years after her husband's death in 1967. Her life was adventure, excitement; friendships with clowns, midgets, side show performers, stars.

After resigning from the circus, The Carroll Agency, with Shirley as President, handled public relations for entertainment accounts, for Magic Castle, Trade Shows and many Broadway hit shows, including "Jesus Christ Superstar" and "Grease." She served as Director of Publicity for Universal Studios Tour and Amphitheatre for seven years.

Recipient of many awards from civic, professional and service groups in the City and County of Los Angeles, she was also listed in World's Who's of Women and in Who's Who of Women in America. She was active in many organizations including Women in Communications, Academy of Magic Arts, Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters, American Women in Radio and TV, and National Press Women.

Shirley moved to Leisure World in 1980, and immediately became active in Orange County affairs and in the affairs of this community. She is an active member of SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives); past president of The Angels, the support group for the Performing Arts at Saddleback College; member of Laguna Canyon Foundation Board, and active with the UCI Child Guidance Center Auxiliary Board.

Within Leisure World, she is involved with the Slipcaster's Club, Gray Panthers, Sunday Discussion Club, Community Association, Sr. Aux. for Planned Parenthood, Leisure World Historical Society, and the Sunday Discussion Club. Elected to the United Board in 1984, she served as 1st and 2nd vice-pres.; Chr. of the Public Relations Committee; GRF nominating committee; member several United and GRF committees. Elected to the Golden Rain Foundation Bd. in 1990, she served as secretary 1992-93; Chairman of the Health and Social Services Committee, and Vice-Chairman of the Government and Public Relations Committees.

Shirley has one son, Kevin, and two grandchildren.

The Historical Society salutes this active, talented, service oriented lady who so well deserves to be Leisure Worlder of the Month, May 1993.