

Elsie Parker named LWer of the month

From the day Elsie Parker became a resident of Leisure World 13 years ago, the community was destined to have a leader. Affectionately known as Mrs. Leisure World, she has earned the respect and admiration of all who know her and who have worked with her as she spearheaded committees which led to the establishment of most of our organizations and clubs.

Selected by Rossmoor Corporation as Leisure Worlder of the Month for November, a portrait of Mrs. Parker will hang in the rotunda of the Rossmoor sales office during this period. On Dec. 1, it will be presented to her in an informal ceremony to which her friends and neighbors are invited.

Born in West Virginia, Mrs. Parker grew up in Washington D.C. and nearby areas, where her father worked for the railroad. She participated in a community theatre group there and became a proficient violinist, entertaining for schools and hospitals.

Possessing diversified talents, she took courses in business administration and accounting and went to work as an auditor for the Army, teaching government auditing procedures to new finance officers and tracing lost or missing shipments of property on top secret movement of ships and trains.

These were the years of World War II and she additionally joined the Ambulance Corp of the Red Cross where she learned to shoot a rifle, clean a carburetor and covertly drive a canteen truck to all the secret gun emplacements set up within the capital.

In 1945 after the war's end, Mrs. Parker moved to Southern California

with a determination to accept whatever new and interesting challenges might be presented to her. Rather quickly and without any letters of recommendation, her previous experience landed her a job as a traveling auditor under the Western Region Controller General of the Army, where during the next eight years she traveled the states, making bi-annual audits of all sorts of Army, and later Air Force, properties.

Her career in government ended in 1953 when an injury to her spine required surgery and 18 months of rest. She moved to Pasadena and began looking for a new career that her health would permit.

Mrs. Parker recalls that her mother used to tell her that you can do anything you want to do if you want to do it badly enough. "Being very young and inexperienced, I believed those good thoughts and before I discovered that these things didn't always work for all people, I learned that with belief and determination one could do things that otherwise would never have been accomplished," she says.

Selling real estate seemed like an interesting challenge at the time, and she enrolled in Glendale Business College and found a position with a realtor in San Marino.

During this period she became extremely active in community affairs, assuming leadership positions in local chapters of the YWCA, American Cancer Society and many business and professional women's service clubs including Quota, International for which she spent two years as governor of the 25th District, comprising 28 clubs.



Elsie Parker

After 10 years of maintaining a very hectic pace, retirement loomed as an attractive way of life and she chose Leisure World as a place to settle down, play golf and enjoy the fruits of her labors.

But Elsie Parker is not one who can settle down for very long. Her belief that keeping busy keeps thoughts young, set her on a course that would enrich the lives of all residents of Leisure World in the years to come. Her contribution to our community cannot be measured in any terms.

It has been said that a monument to her will be the establishment of Las Solteras Club which she created as a medium where unattached women could get together in a common

bond. Later on this led to the formation of Amigos Nuevos, a club for newcomers and with which she continues to be actively associated.

One day at a meeting she expressed ideas about a subject under discussion and suddenly she was swept up into a whole new life of activity and endeavors. After that she was selected and nominated for the Golden Rain Board and served as its first woman member.

In addition to being the force behind the founding of many of the clubs we all enjoy here today, she is most proud of bringing a convalescent hospital here. Recognizing the pressing need for a permanent medical facility of that sort in 1965, she presented her

idea to the board and was immediately appointed to head a committee on the subject and soon after, Beverly Manor was built.

But even that accomplishment was not enough to satisfy Mrs. Parker's determined desire to serve and she went back to work as a member of the executive board of Royal Savings. When Home Savings took over the building two years ago, she accepted a position with them as public relations representative carrying on the tradition of Royal Savings of printing, without charge, membership rosters for the nearly 200 clubs in Leisure World and Saddleback Valley.

Currently Mrs. Parker is a member of the Production Guild, Ebell Club, Woman's Club, Latin American Club, Roadrunners Travel Club, Saddleback Area Coordinating Council, Women's Golf Club, Keyboard Concerts Club, Opera 100 and Saddleback Republican Women's Club Federated, having been a key figure in the shaping of policies and organization of many of these clubs.

On looking back, she reflects that she was not just about every nominating committee and by-laws committee of the many Leisure World clubs during their years of formations.

Elsie Parker's life has been one of service, dedication and active participation in the growth of Leisure World. To those who are just coming into the community, her advice is "become involved!"

In retrospection, she says a bit wistfully, "I have done everything I could to promote Leisure World and what it stands for," and she is still doing it. If something has to be done, one can be sure that Elsie Parker will be part of the team.