



Jim Max/The News

A little rain wasn't enough to keep Historical Society honoree Rex Perkins from taking his signature golf cart out of storage at Saddleback Memorial Medical Center. Perkins has been active in fundraising activities at the hospital.

Rex Perkins, the man with the smile

Enthusiasm has been the key to this workaholic's success

By Cheryl Walker
The News

Call him the man of many names. Rex Perkins has been called "Mr. Laguna Hills," a people person, a workaholic, a tireless fundraiser and civic booster, a Saddleback Hospital angel and the Glendale Federal bank manager in the candy-striped Golf Cart who never said no to a good cause.

But after March 3, he'll have one to top the lot.

That's the date the Leisure World Historical Society will honor its former member with its highest accolade for community involvement: "Leisure Worlder of the Month" for March 1993.

The distinction commemorates a host of services Perkins, who lives in Mission Viejo, performed for Leisure World, chief among them providing gifts, trophies, support services and assistance with special event/project fundraising for community clubs and organizations.

MARCH HONOREE

Who: Rex Perkins
Where: Clubhouse 6
When: Wednesday, March 3
Time: 10 to 11 a.m.
Sponsor: Leisure World Historical Society

Perkins' persuasive memo to his Glendale Federal superiors also was the key to the savings and loan deciding to grant the Historical Society \$30,000 to publish the 1989 edition of the official history of Leisure World, "Fulfilling Retirement Dreams."

Leisure World's first elected Golden Rain President Tracy Strevey recalls that Perkins was always ready "to do what was necessary to advance Leisure World, (he's) a splendid, enthusiastic man with a forward-looking positive attitude."

Even though Perkins retired from Glendale Federal in 1989, he still remains active in community affairs, as members of the B'nai B'rith Mens Lodge No. 2933 testify.

Past President Art Freedman

points out Perkins has been the lodge's program coordinator for its annual show for the past 14 years. "I don't know what we'd do without him . . . Rex is one of the finest men you could possibly think of. We've given him several awards, but this one is long overdue."

Echoing those sentiments, former Golden Rain President Al Hanson adds "It's a good thing Rex is being honored, he always was one of the great supporters of Leisure World, always contributing something."

Hanson, who served with Perkins on the board of directors of the Andrus Associates of the University of Southern California's Gerontology Center, says Perkins helped Leisure World financially as well, making sure the surplus funds deposited at his branch got the best interest yields available. Notes Hanson: "He made money for Leisure World!"

Although Perkins ability to participate in activities has been curtailed because of his wife Carol's illness, he tries to maintain strong ties to the community

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using his position as a Clifton's Cafeteria greeter to spread his distinctive brand of sunshine.

"I love people," explains Perkins. "I overlook any controversy or shortcomings in other people, my character is to get along."

The former Iowa farmboy, University of Nebraska graduate and U.S. Navy lieutenant says he doesn't let negative situations get in his way either.

Recalling the words of his father, he says overcoming a problem is simply a matter of getting up a little earlier, working a little harder and staying a little later to find a solution.

Enthusiasm does make a difference, says Perkins pointing out that the quality is something he always strives to maintain.

That enthusiasm and his penchant for hard work and community involvement made him a bright star in the California banking community for 43 years.

Although a success wherever he was positioned, Perkins admits his decade with Glendale Federal was platinum--on wheels.

"My golf cart was a moving ad for the bank, but it also helped me to stay close to people and give them a lift, to the post office, to the hospital, to lunch, . . . you know, I never had a great desire to make money but I've always had a burning desire to please people, and I really do take an individual personal interest in the people I meet.

"You might say I give my heart in a handshake and my love in a smile."