

# Leisure Worlder

OF THE MONTH

## ROBERT L. PRICE

As Administrator of Leisure World, it was natural for Robert L. Price to be consulted for advice when the Leisure Worlder of the Month program was started in 1976.

"I advised that it be restricted to residents," he recalls.

Throughout the six years of the program's implementation, the selection committees have waived that rule only three times in order to honor the community contributions of non-residents.

The latest exception is Bob Price himself, who admits to being "surprised and happy" with his selection as Leisure Worlder of the Month for July, 1982.

The retired community administrator is a native of Toledo, Ohio. He was graduated from high school at age 15, earned a civil engineering degree from the University of Michigan and received management training from the International City Management Association.

His arrival in Leisure World in 1964 followed 11 years as a civil engineer in the midwest, a two-year stint as an Army medical department officer, 12 years as city manager for increasingly larger municipalities in the east and midwest, and a final six years spent as a management advisor in Afghanistan and as a logistics support engineer at the Pacific Missile Range Facility in the Marshall Islands.

Snapped up by the Leisure World Foundation management firm upon his return, Price first served as physical properties director at Leisure World in Walnut Creek. He was sent to observe the first move-ins at the Laguna Hills community on September 10, 1964, and was assigned there permanently two months later.

Price recalls the scenario of 20 moving vans unloading belongings that first day and the sentiments of the areas's newcomers. "They were eager, expectant, patient and cooperative. It was that attitude that laid the groundwork of Leisure World today. Also, they were pioneering, and so they knew there were changes ahead and they looked forward to them."

Although the valley was sparsely populated, those pioneer residents were far from lonely. The common areas they shared for laundry and parking facilities gave an unexpected impetus to their early socializing, according to Price. The administration's initial fear that the clubhouses might be under-utilized proved groundless, and Leisure World's activity schedule soon was in full swing.

Price continued as administrator for 13 years, first in the employ of Leisure World Foundation and then Professional Community Management (PCM). He was restricted from residing in the community by the FHA, which required independent management and a non-resident administrator to insure full impartiality.

Operating on the principle that management "must not only be responsible, but responsive as well," the administrator kept communication lines open by writing a weekly newspaper column and appearing each week on a question-and-answer program on the community's closed-circuit TV channel.

Price's duties included serving as president of all mutual corporation boards at their resident beginnings. He also was first president of the Golden Rain Foundation of Laguna Hills following its organization by residents and was re-elected several terms, serving in this position from 1966 to 1971 and on the board for an additional four years.

With an eye to preserving the history of the community, he and Mrs. Marjorie Jones founded the Historical Records Committee. This was the predecessor of the Leisure World Historical Society, with which Price has continued his active involvement.

Other historical roles included acting as an incorporating director of Saddleback Community Hospital and as a founder of the Saddleback Area Coordinating Council (SAAC), which he served as president and a board member for several years. He also has been a stockholder in PCM since its inception.

Following his retirement in 1978, Price continued an association with the Saddleback Community College District that began with his appointment to a Select Citizens Advisory Committee for studying the northern campus site. He was first elected to the District Board of Trustees in 1977, was president in 1979-80 and currently is board clerk.

A charter member and past president of the Laguna Hills Rotary Club, Price is also involved in Masonic organizations including the current presidency of Saddleback High Twelve Club. He is a past president on the board of the Willows Foundation and active in the First Church of Christ Scientist of Mission Viejo.

He and his wife Eleanor are both founders and former presidents of the homeowners association of South Laguna Hills, where they have resided for 17 years. They have four married children and ten grandchildren.