



# LEISURE WORLD NEWS

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David E. Caballero

Merlin Sant, Leisure Worlder of the Month for July, has dedicated his life to service of his family, church and community.

## It's a wonderful life

Historical Society  
honors Merlin Sant

By Cheryl Walker  
The News

**L**eisure Worlder Merlin Sant is no stranger to honors.

Last month, he and his wife Edna were among the guests of honor at the Kick-Off Party for the new Laguna Hills Senior Center. Their sizeable donation which will help make the construction of that facility possible.

In April, the couple received a Presidential Citation from Brigham Young University not just for their generosity to the educational institution and its students but for being exemplary role models for followers of the Mormon faith through their "persistence, achievement and service."

Both have served the church in the United States and

foreign lands. And Merlin has had various positions of responsibility as well; among them, bishop, stake president and mission president. Currently, he is a church patriarch and sealer of marriage unions that are meant to last for eternity.

Around the den of his manor are also several awards for his contributions as an officer and member of various committees of the Saddleback Kiwanis Club.

And now, the Historical Society has decided to add another honor to the list — by naming Merlin Sant its Leisure Worlder of the Month for July.

Fellow Kiwanian and former Third Mutual President Ted Martin said the recognition is well deserved.

"He's a very fine gentleman, a hard worker and very dedicated."

Mary Arine Beer,  
Saddleback Kiwanis president,

### Ceremony facts

**Who:** Merlin Sant

**What:** Leisure Worlder of the Month for July

**Where:** Clubhouse 6

**When:** 10 a.m., Wednesday, July 1

**Sponsor:** Leisure World Historical Society

said that his contributions to the club have been legion including serving as club president, director of the Saddleback Kiwanis Foundation, delivering Meals on Wheels and contributing tirelessly to committees in particular the human and spiritual values committee.

"I can't say enough good things about him: he is a good man, a wonderful man, very giving of himself, very active in the club and in the community.

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# MERLIN

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Modestly, Sant says he wants to share the Society's recognition with his wife of 72 years noting, "She's the real stalwart of my life."

**Background:** Sant and his brother and long-time business partner George were born in Franklin, Idaho but moved with their family to California in 1920.

Merlin graduated from Long Beach Polytechnic High School then, instead of going to college, answered the call of his church by going on a

mission to Holland.

Home again, the Sant brothers decided to join their dad in the construction business.

But it wasn't until 1933, in the wake of a major earthquake, that the company took a turn into remodeling and new home building that was to be their forte for more than the next three decades.

Although World War II briefly separated the brothers, after VJ day the siblings reteamed and by the time they sold their firm in 1966 they had built more than 5,000 homes.

A fourth generation Mormon, Sant has always given religion a top priority in his life

— even taking on more responsibilities since his retirement in 1972 such as serving on a mission in New Zealand and in the Los Angeles and San Diego Mormon Temples.

Family is also a top priority. Says the 22-year resident of Leisure World: "Family is the basis of a good society."

Sant, who says he uses Jesus Christ as a role model, explains he feels his life has been blessed and, although he feels honored by the various recognitions he's received, he doesn't seek them out.

"Life is so meaningful for us," explains Sant. "We just want to help other people."



Merlin Sant and Marilyn Ditty, left, greet a guest at the opening of the Laguna Hills Senior Center. The Sants made a generous donation to the center.