

HISTORICAL SOCIETY
LEISURE WORLDER OF THE MONTH
SEPTEMBER 1997
MURIEL SIMON

The Leisure World Historical Society is pleased to present Muriel Simon as its honoree for September 1997.

There is but one word in the English language that best describes this special lady: **EMPATHY!** Her life's experience, intellectual development, and quality of character is exemplary. The vicarious influence, the aura she radiates, is far reaching. Born in an affluent environment, not wanting for material things that makes life comfortable, her mind dwelled upon the less fortunate children of impoverishment and depravation. Early on Muriel learned the meaning of compassion; a characteristic that continues to abide within her.

As a teen in Brooklyn, New York, her father a successful businessman, and mother, a sophisticated lady, understood Muriel's motivation. She volunteered her time and talents serving as a counselor at Youth Camps in the New York countryside.

That experience made a lasting impression. To quote her now: "I was a misplaced Social Worker." A student at New York University, she earned a degree in Fine Arts. She has thought she may have missed her calling; only she knows.

Later in life she sought a career and quickly rose to executive management. Her strength was working with others, coordinating and implementing policies with her peers and subordinates.

Muriel arrived in Southern California in 1980, and she commenced working with abused children in Orangewood, another inspiring period in her life. Her experience and knowledge of working with unfortunate children took her to Northern California where she instituted programs that are still in use today. She met and married Leslie in 1982.

It is befitting to emphasize that Muriel "resisted" retirement. Young in mind and temperament, she refused to contemplate she had reached that stage in life. Too much energy was in storage, too many thoughts filled her mind, too much to accomplish before taking to the proverbial rocking chair. The ambiance of the community captured her, as it has so many other residents. She was home, she realized, but not to retire.

Next, a stroke of genius: she visualized and organized the Leisure World Newcomers Club! Why? There was need to provide warmth, friendliness, acceptance to those coming into the community. Her organization started in 1991, she was drafted as its president, and continues to hold that office. Has the Newcomers Club been successful? Immeasurably!

It is fitting to quote her when she is in a nostalgic mood: "Looking at my life, I received abundant satisfaction from helping unfortunate children that needed my help; hopefully, I influenced a positive difference in their lives." She continues as she relates the past with the present: "I associate that with helping newcomers to Leisure World assimilate into the community by offering them warmth and friendship through our club."

The spirit and aura of Muriel Simon will long live in Leisure World!