

LAGUNA WOODS

GLOBE



September Honoree of the Month Mary Stone sits on a bench outside of her Laguna Woods home.

› JEFFREY ANTENORE, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

SEPTEMBER HONOREE

MARY STONE NAMED HISTORICAL
SOCIETY'S HONOREE OF THE MONTH **PAGE 21**

Mary Stone named Honoree of the Month

BY AMELIA RUSHBROOK
LAGUNA WOODS GLOBE

Mary Stone thinks her tenacity and persistence have something to do with being named the Historical Society's Honoree of the Month for September.

She demonstrated those qualities when she was removed from her post as President of the United Mutual Board of Directors in 2005. Instead of resigning in protest at her treatment, she decided to serve out her term, which ended in October 2008, on the board.

"I could've taken the easy way out, but ethically, I felt like I had to stick it out ... I felt it was my duty to finish the job people elected me to do," Stone said.

Through her involvement with the Community Civic Association --- she was President from 2002 to 2005 --- Stone saw that governance of the community could be improved, but didn't aspire to board membership herself. She ended up as a reluctant board member after being on a nominating committee to fill a one year vacancy on the United Mutual Board. When no candidates were nominated, her fellow committee members nominated her and she served the year-long term. Subsequently, Stone ran and was elected for a three-year term on the board.

With the "hell and high water" days of her time on the United Board behind her, Stone is now more involved in the social aspect of Village life than the political one. She is, among other things, the Director of Decorations for the California Club, and a member of the American Ballroom Dance Club.

Stone also enjoys designing and making "wild and wonderful" Halloween costumes for herself and partner Dick Sharp, whom she met in Laguna Woods in 2000. Pumpkin-headed straw people, gargoyles, mummies, vampires and robots are some of the characters Mary and Dick have appeared as on past Halloweens. Seeing people's delight in the decorations and costumes she creates is what motivates her efforts, Stone says.

"What makes me happy is making people happy. I really like making people smile," Stone said.

BACKGROUND

Stone was born in China, where her father was serving in the Navy. The family left China after the Japanese invasion, but returned when her father got a job as vice-consul general in Shanghai. When communist riots made it unsafe for foreigners to be in the country, the family moved back to the U.S. and settled in Seattle. There, Stone went to school and college, married and raised two children. Her children and four grandchildren all live in Washington State.

Stone's career list is an eclectic mixture of ordinary and extraordinary job titles. Her degree is in business administration, but along with various administration and business development jobs, she has had stints as an Industrial Chemical Specialist, Medical Statistician at a hospital in American Samoa, Student of Ministerial Studies in the Church of Religious Science, Aerobic Dance Instructor, Travel Agent, and

Professional Clown.

Stone says she loves to learn new things, and doesn't see a reason to limit herself to one profession or field of expertise.

"The world is my field. Why do we put limits on things?" she said.

Stone moved to Southern California from Seattle in 1985 to help her mother care for her father, and then moved to Laguna Woods Village in 1995.

She says that life in Laguna Woods is "fantastic" and proudly advertises the benefits of the community to anyone interested.

She also says she is "kind of uncomfortable" about being honored by the Historical Society, because she doesn't feel she belongs in the spotlight.

"I'd rather see other people get the accolades. I'd be the one pushing them up on stage to get them," she said.

Mary Stone will be honored by the Historical Society in a ceremony at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 2 in Clubhouse 6.



Laguna Woods Globe Honoree of the Month Mary Stone stands in the living room of her home next to a jade tree from China, one of her prized possessions. > JEFFREY ANTENORE, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER