

# Tracy Strevey; USC Historian, Vice President

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Tracy E. Strevey, who was a USC historian, dean and vice president and an expert on the cultural history of the United States, and who lived on to become an expert on active retirement, has died at 97.

Strevey, among the original residents of Orange County's Leisure World, now the city of Laguna Woods, died there Jan. 15.

The history professor and administrator often joked that he purchased his home in the then-innovative enclave for senior citizens when it was merely a stake in the ground. That was 1966.

He had just retired from USC, and was off to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for an 18-month appointment as executive director of Haile Selassie University for the Ford Foundation, followed by an assignment evaluating university programs in Nigeria and Ghana for the U.S. Agency for International Development.

While they were packing, Strevey and his wife sold their West Los Angeles home. But Margaret Strevey demanded that they have a residence to come back to. So they bought the stake in the ground in what is now Laguna Woods and moved into a completed home on their return from Africa.

There Strevey served as the first elected president of Leisure World's Golden Rain Foundation board, founding president of the Leisure World Historical Society and founding president of its Academician Society.

He wrote the history of Leisure World's initial 25 years, which he published in 1989.

Outside the senior citizen complex, he served on the board of USC's Ethel Percy Andrus Gerontology Center and on the board of Saddleback Memorial Hospital.

"Keep active, busy," Strevey said in explaining his formula for vigorous longevity to *The Times* in 1989. "Use your mind. Become involved."

Strevey over the years appeared 20 years younger than his age, and proudly told anybody who wanted to know that he customarily shot his age in golf.

Before he became a successful retiree, Strevey was a highly successful academic, capping his career with nearly two decades at USC—as a history professor from 1948 until his retirement in 1966, dean of its College of Letters, Arts and Sciences from 1948 to 1960 and vice president of academic affairs from 1960 to 1966.

As an administrator, he worked to include faculty in university decisions on appointments, promotions, budget and tenure determination. He oversaw formation of the USC School of Religion in 1966 and fostered development of student honors programs and study-abroad programs in Cambridge, England.

When Strevey chaired Northwestern University's history department in 1943, he was among the first to urge schools to drop historical dates from the curriculum and instead teach students

historical trends and developments.

In 1950, when USC decided that female students needed college training for running homes and families, Strevey dutifully explained to *The Times*: "Because three out of every four women who graduate from California universities marry, each to become the center of a home and family, SC has sensed the need for the new program to train better homemakers, parents and community leaders. The lack of training for this most vital and complex of professions has come to be felt as a defect in the curricula of American colleges."

Born in Westfield, Ill., Strevey grew up in Spokane, Wash., and earned his bachelor's degree in history at Willamette University in Salem, Ore., his master's from the University of Washington in Seattle and, after teaching high school in Seattle, his doctorate from the University of Chicago.

Strevey taught at the universities of Chicago and Wisconsin and joined the Northwestern faculty in 1935, remaining there until he came to USC in 1948.

He was named in 1955 to the National Historical Publications Commission by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and in 1957 toured India on behalf of the State Department to speak at various educational institutions.

He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Margaret; a daughter, Elizabeth Anne Terrell; a son, Tracy Jr.; eight grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.