
Leisure Worlder of the Month

Merle Trail

An energetic teacher, traveller, leader and coach, Merle Trail still makes his way through life with a twinkle in his eye and a song on his lips.

As a way to say "thanks" for the outstanding example he's set, Merle will be named "Leisure Worlder of the Month," for October. His special ceremony will be held Wednesday, October 1, at 10:00 a.m., in Clubhouse Six. The public is invited to attend the program, which is jointly sponsored by Home Federal Savings and the Leisure World Historical Society.

Even if we haven't experienced it, we've all heard stories of trudging several miles to a one room schoolhouse. When Merle Trail was growing up on a farm in Nebraska, he did just that, in fact, in high school, he rode a horse four miles each way to attend class. That experience must have toughened him up. While attending Nebraska State University, he played tackle on the football team and was named "All Conference" three years running. He was also the team's co-captain and named a Collegiate All-American in 1931. He was also one of five original members inducted into the Nebraska State Athletic Hall of Fame.

Although Merle says that playing professional football was "not too exciting in those days," he was invited to try out for the Green Bay Packers. He was enjoying his coaching job at the local high school thoroughly, however, and decided not to go. Merle coached in Nebraska until 1941, when the Trail family moved to Eagle Rock. The Los Angeles suburb would be their home until moving to Leisure World in 1973.

During those years, Merle followed his son through Boy Scouts, serving first as a Cubmaster, then as Scoutmaster, through Explorer Advisor and finally as District Representative for the Verdugo Hills Council.

Merle taught electronic and civil engineering drafting for 30 years in the Glendale Unified School District. He also served as President of the Glendale Teachers' Association, and Chairman of the Glendale Audio Visual Board and of the Glendale Industrial Arts Board.

Merle was also active with the First United Methodist Church in Glendale, where he led numerous financial drives to build a new church sanctuary. Additionally, Merle was Chairman of the adult Sunday School classes and President of the Builders Class. He was also a charter member and President of the Jewel City Camera Club.

According to Merle, even with all the activities that kept him occupied in those days, since retiring, he's "never enjoyed life more."

Since coming to Leisure World, he's been a member of Mutual 46, 3rd Laguna and of the nominating committee of 3rd Laguna. He's a former President of the Club 40 Dance Club, the Nebraska Club, the Glendale Club, the Laguna Hills Kiwanis Club, Travel Club Two, the Melody Men and the Methodist Men's Club. He's currently also involved with the Saddleback Senior Center, where he delivers meals each Monday to 15 housebound seniors within Leisure World and has just completed three years as Lay Leader at the United Methodist Church. He's the Chairman of Youth Services and Sponsored Youth for division 41 of Kiwanis International.

If that isn't enough, Merle is on the board of the Leisure World Historical Society, sings with two barber-shop quartets, the "Melody Men" and the "Lost Chords," the American Ballroom Dance Club, Tennis Club, Evening Forum, the Republican Club, the California Retired Teachers Association, the Nebraska Alumnae Association and Travel Club II.

Merle and his wife of 51 years, Vaughn, are avid travellers. In fact, Merle says, he's taken pictures in "every State except North Dakota." In the mid-sixties, the family took a six-month trip through Europe, passing through England, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, and as winter came, all the countries of western Europe.

The Trails have two children and seven grandchildren.