

Leisure Worlder

OF THE MONTH

PAUL ZIMMERMAN

Retire but don't quit!

Paul Zimmerman sits in the "office" of his Leisure World manor beside a business-like desk topped with numerous papers, mementos, a phone and a small American flag. Nearby are a well-worn typewriter, and the full, unabridged version of Webster's dictionary, tools of the journalist's trade which he practiced for a half century, thirty of those years as Sports Editor of the *Los Angeles Times*. On the walls hang framed citations and plaques commemorating services to the City of Los Angeles, to journalism and to the world of sports.

"Retire but don't quit," he replies when asked his philosophy about spending the years of retirement. "After you stop doing the things you did to earn a living, don't just stop doing everything. Keep active, keep interested, keep the muscles of your body and mind juiced up.

"Personally, I don't like the idea of enforced retirement," he says. "I loved my job on *The Times* and I would be there yet if they let me. Some people get old quite early. Others don't."

Paul is obviously one of the latter type. One of Leisure World's most popular citizens, he bounces around the community making numerous speeches before most of the clubs, plays golf less often than he would like, is active in the Laguna Hills and Saddleback Valley High Twelve Clubs and is especially interested in his work as Vice President of the Leisure World Historical Society. He has served as Chairman of the Publicity Committee for the Saddleback Valley Hospital, initiated the golf tournaments to raise funds for the hospital, for three years wrote "Hooks and Slices" for the *Leisure World News* and his sparkling letters to the Editor appear frequently.

Born on an Iowa farm, Paul studied journalism at the University of Nebraska and while attending that college got his start as a news reporter on the *Nebraska State Journal*. That was in 1925 and with the exception of three years in the Army during World War II, he continued to pound typewriters until his retirement in 1968. And he still writes with magazine articles published in *Esquire*, *True*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Olympian*, *Peristyle*, *Westways*, *Orange County Illustrated*, and others. His book, "*Los Angeles Dodgers*," was published by Coward-McCann.

After serving as an infantry officer in China, Burma and India for two years during World War II, he was transferred to the European theatre where he was put in charge of all army soldier publications including five editions of *Stars and Stripes* and three editions of *Yankee* magazine.

At the peak their combined circulation of almost three million in 1945, an Army News Service story described Lt. Col. Zimmerman as "director of the world's largest publishing business."

Out of the Army Paul covered such stories as a West Plains, Missouri dance hall explosion that killed 51; the 1932 Olympics; the 1933 Long Beach earthquake; Olympic games at London, Helsinki, Melbourne, Rome, Tokyo, Mexico City; many World Series, Super Bowl football games, Rose Bowl games, championship boxing matches, major golf tournaments and the like.

For the last 30 years of that long and colorful career, Paul served as Sports Editor for the *Los Angeles Times*, and along the way he received many honors. He was Director of Times Charities, Inc. and originated the annual Charities football game which in 32 years raised \$2.5 million for youth betterment. He played a leading role in establishing the Pro Bowl charity all-star football game which has been played annually for 32 years. He helped inaugurate the Times Charities Grand Prix sports car events which have raised funds for charity for 28 years.

He originated the Times Charities Indoor Track and Field Championships in 1960 and it is still running. And in 1964 he helped stage the USA-USSR dual track and field meet. In all, more than \$5 million net went to charities as a result of these efforts.

He was Director of the Helms Athletic Foundation, a member of the Honors Court, National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame, President of the Football Writers Association of America.

Some honors received included a unanimous L.A. City Council resolution for the role he played in bringing the Dodgers baseball team to Los Angeles; the Jake Wade Memorial Award from the Collegiate Sports Information Directors of America; the William May Garland Award from the Southern California Committee for Olympic games for his contribution to the Olympics including two years as Executive Secretary for the Los Angeles 1976 Olympic Committee in its quest to hold the 1976 Summer games; the Robert C. Woodward Award by the Big Ten Athletic Conference; the Burt McGrane Award for distinguished service to the Football Writers Association of America.

Paul feels his work with the Leisure World Historical Society will be his greatest contribution to the community.

"To live here is a privilege," he declares. "One must admire the remarkable thing Mr. Cortese and his people did when they planned Leisure World and set the stage for its unique success.

"The book we in the Historical Society plan to have published will embrace all the brilliant facets of Leisure World—from its beginnings through its growing pleasures and pains—a story of vibrant people far younger than their years. Although that's not its purpose, I am sure it will become a textbook for students of gerontology for years to come."

Perhaps a good title for the book will be Paul Zimmerman's simple philosophy: "Retire but don't quit."