



# Alive!

## Dodger Mania! Club Event Tix On Sale for \$15

Fan Appreciation Day,  
all you can eat, for \$15! *Whoa!*

**THE CLUB** — You went crazy for the first Club Special Event last spring at Magic Mountain. And now – here comes another incredible Club Special Event!

Get ready for Club Day at the Dodgers game Sunday, Oct. 4. Check this out:

- It's the last game of the season.
- The Dodgers are headed to the playoffs.
- It's Fan Appreciation Day!
- The Club Special Event tickets are in the right field pavilion – that's right, the *all-you-can eat section!* Oh yeah!
- Hang onto something – the tickets are just \$15! That's less than half price. (Limit of six tickets at that price per Club Member Number. Tickets seven and above are \$30 each.)

"When we sponsored our first Club Special Event at Magic Mountain, you shouted your approval!" says Club Director of Operations (aka: Sports Dude) Robert Larios. "We heard you. We're back with another great Club Special Event – a Dodgers game, at an unbeatable price. "Don't wait! It's gonna be great!"

Tickets are on sale as soon as you read this. They are available online and at the Club Store and Service Center, 120 W. Second St. 90012. Normal business hours only.

**See all the details on page 56.**

## Club Sports Page: That's A Winner!

New Club sports page  
debuts in this issue.

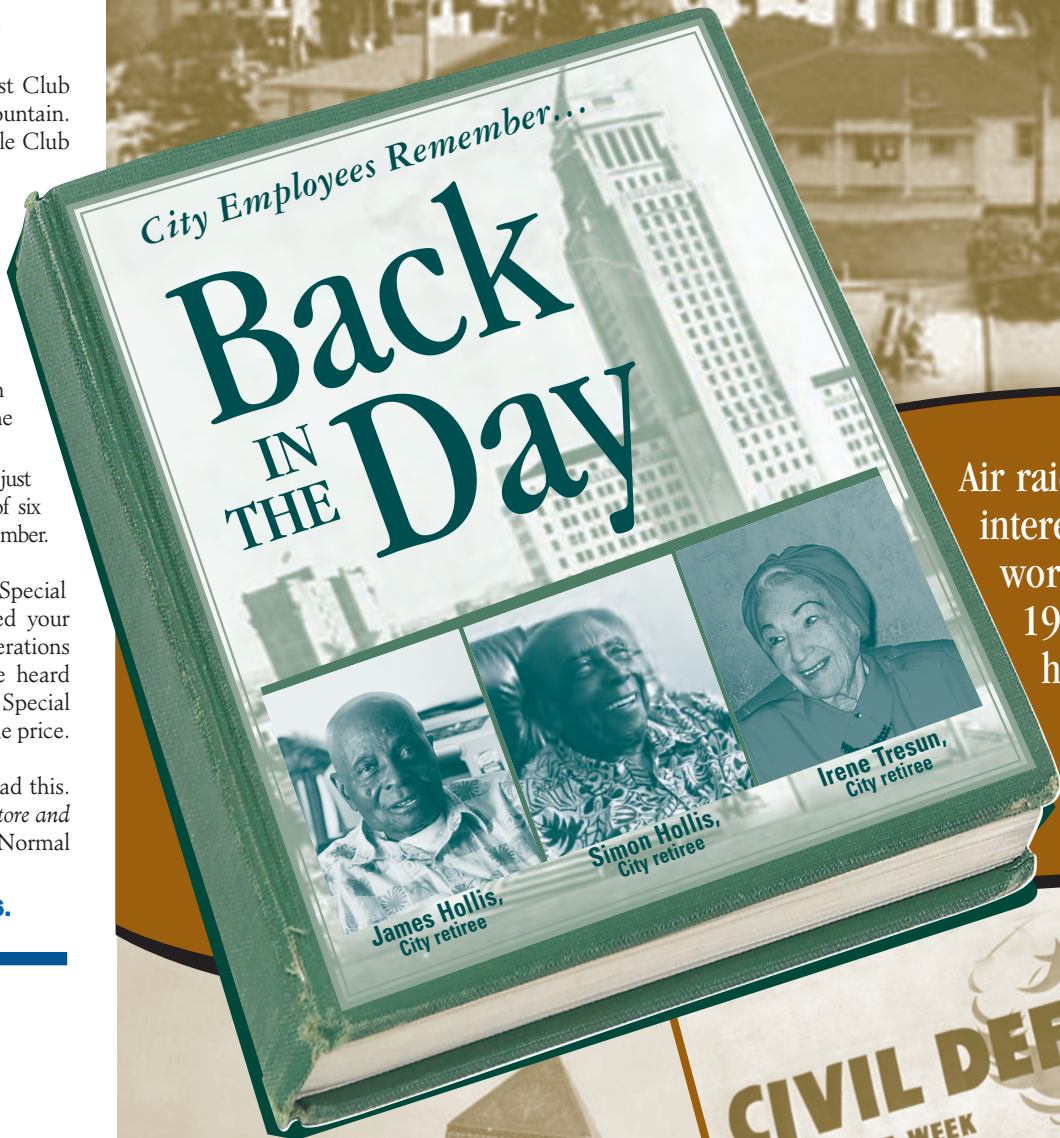
**THE CLUB** — Two issues ago, *Alive!* brought news of the latest way the Club serves you – the inauguration of the Club Softball League. Eleven teams of City Employees and Club Members, sponsored by the Club, kicked off the season Wednesday, July 8 at Downey Park near downtown.

So it was time to create a page for this great new Club feature. The Club Sports Page debuts with this issue.

"We're very proud of the great games we've had already," said the Sports Dude (the Club's Director of Operations, Robert Larios). "We're going to be updating the scores on the Club Website – but we're going to be printing game photos here in *Alive!*"

"So check it out! And come on out and watch a game!"

**Pour another cup of coffee,  
turn to page 16, and check out  
the Club Sports Page!**



Air raids ... low pay ... and interesting times: Three who worked for the City in the 1940s and '50s remember how it was, and remind current City Employees to be proud.

**SEE PAGE 6**



*Alive!* photo by Tom Hawkins; archival photo courtesy: Los Angeles Public Library



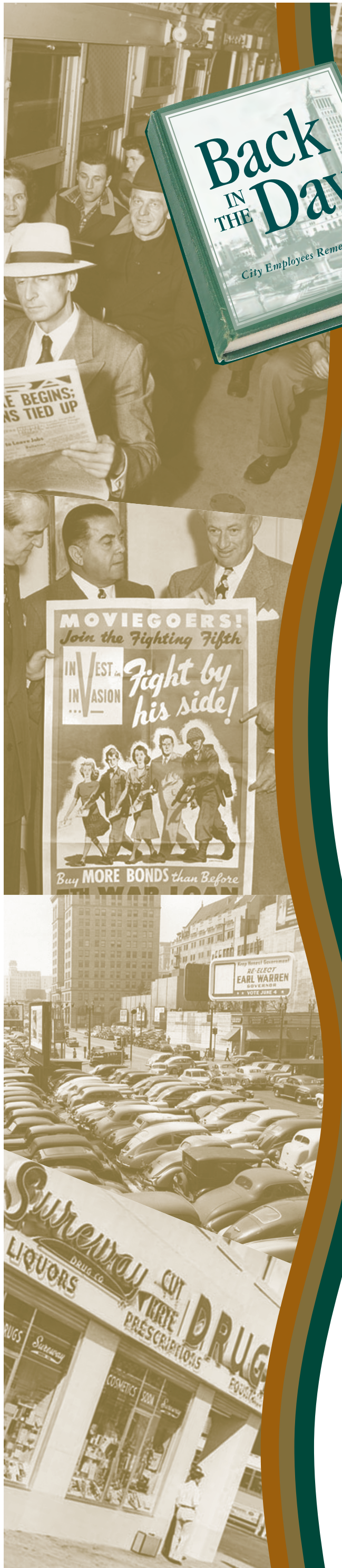
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## GRADUATION GALORE!

TONS OF PHOTOS OF CLUB MEMBER FAMILY  
GRADUATIONS ON PAGE 38.



## The *Alive!* Interviews

# Back

Three retired City employees with more than three-quarters of a century of experience, recall the good times and the hard times – and remind current City Employees to be proud of what they do.

*Alive!* photos by Tom Hawkins and John Burnes; archival photos courtesy Security Pacific Collection, Los Angeles Public Library Photo Archive

### The *Alive!* Interviews

## Irene Tresun

Irene Tresun started working at City Hall the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 1941.



### Irene Tresun, 90

**BORN:** Ukraine, Russia

**GREW UP IN:** Vienna, Austria; Brussels, Belgium; and Berlin, Germany

**MOVED TO NEW YORK:** 1933

**MOVED TO LOS ANGELES:** 1935

**GRADUATED, UCLA:** 1939

#### CITY CAREER: 1941-49

Controlling Division (Controller's Office); Public Works/Sewer Maintenance (now Sanitation); the Civil Service Dept. (now Personnel).

#### Job Interviews and LAPD Holiday Parties

***Alive!*** Tell us about your first days working for the City.

**Irene Tresun:** Okay. I was hired as clerk steno. Stenographer?

**Irene:** Yes, the week right after Pearl Harbor. My first assignment was in the Controlling Division.

The controlling division is now the Controller's Office.

**Irene:** That's right. My first day I arrived at 8 o'clock, of course, and the Deputy Controller by the name of Alexander, said that [the Controller] will be here about ten o'clock. And at ten o'clock he rolled in, drunk. He was famous for that, actually. I don't think he tried to even hide it. And Alexander did all the work.

I was there for only about a month and then I got some kind of lateral promotion to the Bureau of Assessments, which at that time was a very important department. And then I went to Public Works. I was there almost a year. When they discovered that I went to college and that I could write and talk, they said I could handle the in-service training, which I knew nothing about of course.

They wanted you to be a trainer.

**Irene:** I didn't do the training. I set everything up.

I had an invitation to go through the North Outfall sewer in a boat, which I declined.

In a boat *inside* the sewer?

**Irene:** Right! Inside the sewer, which is why I declined. I said, "I really don't think that's anything I would enjoy." He said, "It's fabulous. It's beautiful." I said, "It may be beautiful to you, I don't think it would be beautiful to me." And so I never had that pleasure.

So, you were in Public Works and you were the secretary to the director?

**Irene:** Yes, to the Maintenance Director.

# IN THE Day



Irene Tresun shares her memories with Club CEO John Hawkins.

But they asked you to work out of...

**Irene:** Out of class.

To do more than that.

**Irene:** Right. And I was dating somebody in the Bureau of Budget and Efficiency, which is now the Office of the CAO. He said, "Look, there's an exam coming up for Personnel Aid, and you should take it." And I said, "No, I don't want that." I had met two or three people [from that department], and they were all brains with no personality. And I said, "Besides, I can't pass that exam. It's written for all these brains. I can't pass it." So he bet me a dollar that I could, and lo and behold I passed the written exam.

*[The job interview came at an unexpected time, and she was not prepared for it.—Ed.]*

And the first question they asked is that stupid question, "Why do you want this job?" And I said, "I don't know that I want it." "Then why take the exam?" I said, "Because I didn't want to lose a bet." Later on they told me they'd never had anybody give them that kind of answer, and they were so stunned that they gave me the highest score.

But I don't recommend those kinds of answers!

And then ...

**Irene:** Then I started working in the Civil Service Dept., and I took some extension courses in public administration. I stayed there, was promoted eventually to personnel technician — it's called personnel analyst now. And then I got an offer to go [outside of the City] to work for a management consultant, one of the first in the country. And that was an opportunity I couldn't turn down and so I worked for him.

That's when you left the City.

**Irene:** Yes. December 31, 1949.

Most of your time was...

**Irene:** Writing exams.

What kind?

**Irene:** Every kind. A lot of police promotional exams, and that was probably my most important assignment.

I learned how to drink in the police department at Christmastime. They had the best Christmas parties. Police Department headquarters, by the way, were on the Temple Street floor then. It's now called second floor of City Hall. At

Christmastime, all the doors between all of the offices were open, and you'd start at one and you went all the way down. By the time you got through, you hoped you could still walk.

How were you treated as a woman professional?

**Irene:** From the time I became a Personnel Aide, I was treated like a professional. And that was very rare in those days for a woman.

I never intended to be a secretary. Women had a hard time getting into the professions and being treated as professionals until way after World War II. The man sitting next to me and I were equals, not just in money but in respect. We talked as equals.

The City treated you fairly.

**Irene:** Yes. It was very unusual. I got promotions.

Mayor Fletcher Bowron

Who was the mayor when you were working for the City?

**Irene:** Fletcher Bowron, the entire time that I was there. We all adored him. He's another one who liked to imbibe a bit. The last day before the Christmas break, everybody in City Hall was invited to come to the mayor's office for a drink. The civil service department personnel always decided we would go in the afternoon, but by that time he'd had quite a bit [to drink]. He would be in such a good mood then. He was such a nice person. He didn't know any of us, but he'd always say hello when he'd meet you in the hallways, and always very friendly.

The man had a fabulous background, too. He reformed L.A. after [Mayor] George Shaw was impeached in L.A. Fletcher Bowron was appointed to head the commission that investigated the corruption and got rid of Shaw. So the man was very capable.

When City Hall Was Young

Do you remember where your offices were, in City Hall?

**Irene:** Yes, when I first started, it was Room 11, which is 211 now. Then police examining moved onto what was then the 22nd floor, which is now the 24th floor. Scoring and examining moved up there. It was an unfinished floor, by the way, with naked bulbs hanging. They hadn't finished City Hall from the 22nd floor up.

The first to move into City Hall in 1928 was seven floors of Superior Courts. The county and the City were working together and were housed together, really, until 1957, when the Superior Courts Building was built. We had elevator operators in those days. That disappeared in the 1960s, when all the floors were renumbered. That's the reason it was renumbered — the elevators became self-service rather than operator serviced.

What were your hours working at City Hall?

**Irene:** They had staggered hours throughout the City. We worked from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and others worked from 8 to 5. That was done for transportation as much as anything. Most of us used public transportation at that time. Most of us didn't have a car. There were streetcars on Hill Street, on Broadway, on First Street, and on Temple, or we had buses.

What did you wear?

**Irene:** Strictly professional. Most of us women wore high heels and suits or something like that. We would've been fired probably if we showed up in anything such as what they wear today. It just wasn't done.

Where did everyone eat?

**Irene:** I can't say everybody. There was no cafeteria, not even a snack bar, in City Hall at that time. Most people brought their lunch and ate wherever they could. Some of us ate across the street, in a place called Simon's. Or Wimpy's, which served hot dogs and burgers.

What was up on the 27th floor when you were working there? Where the Tom Bradley Room is now?

**Irene:** It was supposed to be the art gallery. But when I was there, they had a huge plan of the civic center, the way that they had hoped that the civic center would be. Sometimes, during lunch, when we had time, we'd go up there and admire it because it just looked so fabulous. And that plan still exists somewhere. Last I heard it was with the Natural History Museum, but it's not with the city. It should be with the city really.

But they didn't have receptions up there.

**Irene:** No, they were held off the mayor's office, if they had any.

Fears of an Air Raid

So, you started working the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor. What was that like?

**Irene:** We were expecting to be attacked any time. Those of us who worked for the Air Defense Command [Irene worked there at night. — Ed.] were particularly aware of protecting the coast against air attack. The Air Corps was somewhat prepared — the Air Defense Command had its headquarters at Eighth and Flower — and was to have a dry run Dec. 11, to see whether or not they could make air defense work. Dec. 7, of course, came ahead of that.

What did the City do? Did the City have war efforts?

**Irene:** On the eighth floor, there



Irene Tresun, as she appeared during the period when she worked for the City of Los Angeles.

was a huge open room, and that was the center of the City's war effort. The L.A. Police Department had five deputy chiefs; and one was put in charge of some sort of war effort. And what they did, we never learned. And Water and Power was probably involved, too, and Public Works. The various air raid wardens fell under Public Works.

Do you remember any air raids? I know that there were some famous air raids that happened where the City got blacked out; do you remember City Hall blacking out at night or anything like that?

**Irene:** It wasn't just City Hall. Any kind of sign at the rooftop level had to be extinguished or taken down. And there were several buildings, in Los Angeles, that had stained glass ceilings, actually, at the top. Those had to be painted over. And the Lindbergh Beacon on top of City Hall [the blinking beacon at the top of City Hall] had to be extinguished, too. It's back up now, very ceremoniously.

[All the City's beacons] had to be taken down because planes flew much lower than they do today. From 5,000 feet, a pilot could actually

— See "Irene", page 10



Irene Tresun in her Hancock Park home.



## The *Alive!* Interviews

# Simon Hollis

Simon was one of the first black security officers at Public Works.

**Alive!** How did you start working for the City?

**Simon Hollis:** I came from private industry, Revere Brass and Copper. We started to see a lot of guys get sick there. They discovered that they were getting what they call a copper itch.

That doesn't sound good.

**Simon:** You swell up, and when I left, three of them had passed [died], so I thought I'd better get out of there. So I took the exam for a security guard at the City of L.A. And I passed, and I decided to work for the Water and Power Board for vacation relief. But then there weren't a lot of openings, but they decided I couldn't stay. I was three days short of having my probation period. And City Hall made me do the whole probation over. I wasn't too happy about that; it didn't make sense, but I survived.

So your first job at the DWP was part-time. When you became full-time that was with ...

**Simon:** Public Works.

Did you choose Public Works, or did it choose you?

**Simon:** It was a mixture of both. It wasn't hard, and it wasn't easy; this was the first time they'd had black officers over there. They hired 13 black officers, and they put them all on graveyard shift.

I worked graveyard three mornings, and then I worked Saturday and Sunday daytime. I was a relief officer. Now that was beautiful on the weekend because you met a lot of people every walk of life, from every country.

How much were you making when you were working for the City, do you remember?

**Simon:** It was \$227 I think ...

A week?

**Simon:** A month. \$227 a month. When I started I believe it was \$160, \$170, something like that. It took you five years to reach the top.

What did you like most about working as a security officer? Did you ever think of leaving that job and doing something else in the City?

**Simon:** Well, I had nine kids so little money didn't do me no good. I had to have big money. So my brother James and I had trucks together. Dump trucks. I helped build every freeway in L.A. I'd work as a security officer at night, and drove trucks in daytime.

And then sleep whenever you could. What did you like about being a security officer?

**Simon:** I enjoyed it especially on weekends because we did a lot of tours, and you met a lot of people from all walks of life, all countries, and that was beautiful. You got a chance to talk to a lot of different people. And then they had all the shows and things going on down there.

Was *Dragnet* filming during?

**Simon:** Yes.

Did you ever see Jack Webb?

**Simon:** Yes. I saw a lot of guys. See, where City Hall South is, all that was dives, you know. Bars.

I'll give you a secret; maybe you know it. Did you know that a tunnel runs from City Hall to the

police station [Parker Center]?

No I didn't know that.

**Simon:** I knew you didn't know it.

Is it still there?

**Simon:** Yeah it's still there.

### Scary Moment

What was the scariest moment when you were a security officer?



### Simon Hollis, 82

BORN: Yazoo City, Miss.

MOVED TO LOS ANGELES: 1954

CITY CAREER: 1954-82

Security guard, DWP (temporary); Security guard, Public Works at City Hall, and then at Barnsdall Art Park.

**Simon:** Do you know where Barnsdall Park is? Barnsdall Art Park?

**Simon:** Yes. We had a bombing up there one night.

A what?

**Simon:** A bombing.

We had a Russian exhibit, and the Jewish people weren't too sold on that. We had been threatened for about two months that they were going to do it. And that last night they did it. Fortunately, nobody got hurt.

Now you weren't working at City Hall anymore.

**Simon:** Right. I worked at City Hall for 13 years. The rest of the time was up at Barnsdall Park. I supervised up there. Public Works.

When was the bombing?

**Simon:** It must have been 1974 or '75.

And no one was hurt?

— See "Simon", page 10



Simon Hollis in his youth.



Club CEO John Hawkins (left) chats with Simon on the steps of Simon's front porch.

## The *Alive!* Interviews

# James Hollis

The Central Library's first  
black security guard.

**Alive!** When you got out of the service, what made you work for the City?

**James Hollis:** I went home first, to Mississippi. My grandfather bought a farm out there out in the country after slavery [*James' grandparents were former slaves – Ed.*] and we still own it.

Anyway, so I went home to Mississippi. I stayed two weeks to visit my dad and mother; they were still living. Then I came here and I was here four days and I got a job. It wasn't what I wanted, but I got a job in construction. It paid good. But when you finish this building or whatever, then you move on to the next building. I didn't want that. So then after that I had an army buddy, and he said, "Let's try working for the City, but the pay is less," which it was much less. And then we started working for the City. I worked first at Water and Power.

What was your first job in the DWP?

**James:** I'll never forget. It was terrible.

It was terrible?

**James:** Yes.

What did you do?

**James:** Everything.

How many years were you at Water and Power?

**James:** Right about three years, four years.

Do you remember what you got paid then?

**James:** Yes, I remember what I got paid at Water and Power. I got \$125 per month.

Were you a security officer at the DWP, or were you an office person?

**James:** They had you doing everything. But they didn't have assignments where you could advance to power lines and other things. That's what I wanted to do for them. No, no.

So you weren't a security officer.

**James:** I did everything. They just called you for anything, whatever they need.

I see. But you weren't able to get to what you wanted to do?

**James:** Nothing, no. That's the reason I quit. I got away and started looking for something else.

Why did they not have ...

**James:** Back at that time, they didn't hire black people, and I'm telling you just like it was.

Back at that time, see, I was there when Councilman Lindsay passed the exam for a clerk. [*Gilbert Lindsay served the City Council for more than 30 years. He was the first black Councilman in the modern era. —Ed.*]

For a clerk?

**James:** For clerk. And they bypassed him for a long time. Finally somebody, some of his friends, some of my own, some of the white guys, said, "No, we're going to stop this." Others said, "Look it here, he can't sit up here with white people in the white place." I'm just telling you like it was. But he managed eventually to come from the basement all the way to the Council room and chairman of the board. He didn't ever forget it, though, but he didn't use it against them, God love him.

And then what?

**James:** I resigned from Water and Power and went into the trucking business with my brother, Simon. And then after that I thought about

the time I had and I could use that time to transfer over to the City.

The military time or the DWP time?

**James:** DWP time. So then I went back to the City, and I kept my trucking business. And then I said well, they're going to hire guys to work in the Library. And I thought this is what I've been waiting for. Then I took the exam for that. To work security in the Library.

How many years were you at the library?

**James:** How many years was it? It was in the 1950s.

### Bomb Threats

What was the scariest moment at the Library?

**James:** We had bomb scares for a while, every other day, particularly at night. But you get hardened to it. And being an ex-GI, it was kind of hard to scare me. We'd have to clear the Library, whenever they said that they received a call of a bomb going off.

One night, somebody called. That's when the police started getting those calls. You've

got all of these people in the library, and you have to clear the library, store rooms, etc.

And you didn't know if it was going to go off at any moment.

**James:** They didn't tell us exactly where. They said it was in the library. And then you can't leave. We're supposed to be the last people to leave.

So the first time it was the scariest.

**James:** Right. After that ...

You kind of got ...

**James:** It's similar to being in the military where you can get hardened to it.

Why did they have bomb threats at the library? What was the reason?

**James:** We were told later that somebody wanted to go home early that night, so they would have somebody from the outside call in.

That's the oldest one in the book.

**James:** Yes. That's why we stopped eventually — when we had bomb threats, we wouldn't clear the library, and we stopped getting the calls.

That was risky.

**James:** But they put fear in your heart. All of that was scary.

### Second Jobs

At the library, how much were making?

**James:** I forgot now, but it was pretty good. It wasn't enough to qualify to buy a house like this.

That's why you had to do the trucking.

**James:** Yes. I was making \$200 on the outside.

Did you like working for the City?

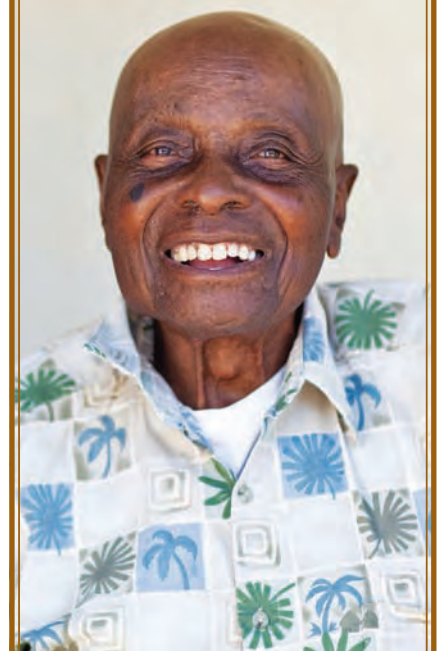
**James:** Yes. But all of the guys that I know always had something else going, particularly if they could do any thinking.

Were there any rules against working a second job?

**James:** No. Everybody was doing it. Even the guy who was the head of the library — he taught one class at USC.

Really?

**James:** Yes. And the guy who was second in command, he taught one class at USC, too. You looked the other way because that money just wasn't enough to qualify you to take a loan. It wouldn't qualify me for this house. I wanted some of the finer things in life.



### James Hollis, 95

BORN: Yazoo City, Miss.

MOVED TO LOS ANGELES: 1946

CITY CAREER: 1946-79

Staff employee, DWP; Security guard, Central Library

### Advice

What advice would you give a City Employee today?

**James:** Do your job. Stay with it. You might have to go back to school, and then if your job call for a Master's or a Ph.D. and you're young enough, go on back to school. I found that, every time I would take a class, it would help me.

Absolutely.

**James:** Even in the military. That's why I continued to go to school, because every time I complete a class or complete some particular requirement, I'd advance. So, even if you're in civil service, go back to school. At least it helped me and it helped a lot of fellows I know.

It's good advice. Thank you so much, James. I had a great time talking to you today.

**James:** Okay, great. ■



James Hollis, in the service during World War II.



James Hollis explains a point to Club CEO John Hawkins.



## Irene

— continued from page 7

see a match being lit. So nothing like that was allowed.

And we had to have our drapes drawn. But if that wasn't enough, then special blackout curtains had to be put up. Air raid wardens went up and down the streets. If you could see light, they'd ring your doorbell and say, "You've got to do something about this because this is dangerous."

Was that every single night?

**Irene:** Oh yes.

Oh, wow.

**Irene:** We went into war mode almost overnight.

Do you remember any air raids?

**Irene:** I remember the famous one we called the War Over L.A. in February 1942. It was on a Monday. Around 2 a.m., all hell broke loose. We could hear what's called *ack-ack*, the anti-aircraft guns. And the sky was lit up with just everything. It went on for about an hour.

### Impersonating an Officer

What other stories do you remember?

**Irene:** Well, here's one story. Because I was so involved with the LAPD through these exams, I got to be friends with a captain. And he called me one time. This was in the spring of '45. And he said, "Would you and one of your friends like to be policewomen for tonight?" "Policewomen?" And then I said, "What's the assignment?" He said, "Well, as you know, George Patton and Jimmy Doolittle are in town each with about 100 or 200 of their men." It was a morale-boosting trip but mainly selling war bonds. "And they're going to have a dinner for them, the whole lot of them, tonight at the Coconut Grove. And we're sending two policemen and two policewomen as security." Can you imagine having just four people as security with 200 people, high-ranking?

And I said, "You've got policewomen." He said, "No, they don't want them to look like policewomen." So I said, "Sure. My friend, Bunny, and I will be there." Her nickname was Bunny. She was also working on the police exams. I said, "We'll be there."

So we got there. A sergeant came out. He looked around, and he came towards Bunny and me. And he said, "Would you like to be my guests for this evening? I've got these tickets, and I'd like to take you two in." When we came in, they announced his name, "and his two wives."

## Simon

— continued from page 8

**Simon:** No, no one was hurt.

Were you there when the bomb went off?

**Simon:** We had four S.W.A.T. officers from the LAPD, and four of us. We all got along good, but with the experience I had with bombs [in the military], I started to get shaky about it.

After midnight and everybody left, we would sit down and play cards. For some reason, that started to bother me. I said, "You know, this is bad, all of us sitting in the [same] building. We could get wiped out here real easy." So that particular night I decided not to. I said, "I'm going to take a break." I didn't want to sit there together; we were sitting ducks, because we'd been threatened constantly back then. So I went outside, and I walked around. When I came back to go inside, I stuck the key in the door. It didn't sit at all. When I set the key in the door and turned it — boom! All I saw was that art gallery — it blew the end of it off.

Wow!

*[A news report from the era details the incident, which occurred April 5, 1972. The explosion during an exhibit of Soviet art, damaged an approachway to the museum. Evidently, no one was hurt. The exhibit had been picketed in the weeks leading up to the incident. —Ed.]*

### A Haunted Co-Worker

Was the City a good place to work?

**Simon:** Yes, I enjoyed it. I had a lot of fun.

Remember any interesting characters?

**Simon:** Working graveyard, you just didn't run into many, because most of the time it was just four or five of you or whoever worked.



Irene Tresun and Club CEO John Hawkins, in front of her Hancock Park home.

### The Wrong Restroom

**Irene:**

There was another thing that I remember. Most of the people, prior to the war, who worked at City Hall were men. So they had two restrooms for men on every floor. And the alternate floors had one for men and one for women. Well, most of the clerical positions were taken over by women during the war. We complained about the restrooms. Why should we have to go up or down, when the men can just walk on the same floor?

So one summer they decided to change it so that there'd be one of each on each floor. They changed it during vacation time, and I walked into what now was a women's restroom. There was a man there. He said, "You're in the wrong restroom." And I said, "No, I'm not. You're in the wrong restroom." He said, "Well, have you ever seen equipment like this in a women's restroom?" I said, "No, but that's going to be changed. Look at what the door says." So it was a very embarrassing moment for both of us.

And another thing — and this was disgusting. There were spittoons all through City Hall, in those days. They were just everywhere.

### City Pride

Was there a lot of pride working for the City?

**Irene:** Oh, yes, there was a lot of pride. Government service held a lot of pride in those days.

What would you have to say to current City Employees about pride in what they do?

**Irene:** They should have a lot of pride, because we made history. We had a Japanese American police officer in the 19th century, the only one in the United States. We had a policewoman back in the 19th century. We've been ahead of most of the country for most of the time that the City has existed.

In 200 years, there just is no other city like us. We're the only large city in the world that didn't have a natural harbor. And we've got the number one harbor in the country now. We were totally disconnected from the rest of the country, by 3,000 miles, until the railroads came in. But everybody knows Los Angeles. We've been in the forefront of so many things.

Employees of the City help make Los Angeles what it is, on a daily basis. And from a selfish point of view, they get better pay than most places. When they make salary studies, we always come out well on top. And City Employees have benefits that are so much greater than what the average person has.

I guess you made friends working for the City.

**Irene:** Oh yes, very much so. They were most of my best friends to the day that they died. I'm the last one left.

Thank you, Irene.

**Irene:** You're welcome. ■



James (left) and Simon Hollis, brothers who remain very close after more than eight decades of life together.