

Diablo Honors.....

Doug & Barbara Bradley

By Tony and Dee Geisler

We had the privilege of visiting Brigadier General U. S. Army (retired) Douglas and Barbara Bradley at their beautiful home of 54 years on Ranchitos Del Sol.

We entered their home to find a very large Victorian doll house in their living room. In 1974, it was commissioned by the family as a gift for Barbara who loves collecting and making miniatures. Doug saw the Haas-Lilienthal house on a magazine cover and took a picture of it to a builder from Concord who completed it in time for Christmas. Though it is still unfinished, many rooms are furnished including a waiting room, exam room and office for Dr. Douglas Bradley. Christmas is celebrated "all the time in this house," as decorations in it stay up year-round. A friend made a sign for it, "Bradley, M.D., Walk-Ins Welcome." Doug is also an avid train collector.



Doll house with Doug in background

Barbara was born in Grand Rapids, MI, but grew up in Saginaw. She is a 1953 graduate of Michigan State and taught school for a short time in Grand Rapids before she left for the University of Wisconsin to get a Master's Degree.

Doug was born in Milwaukee in 1932 and lived in a rural area west of the city where he attended a one room country school house. In 1943 when his family was affected by war rationing, they moved back to Milwaukee.



Wedding day

Doug and Barbara met at the University of Wisconsin in December, 1956, and were engaged the following February. They graduated on June 21st and then drove to Grand Rapids to get married on June 23, 1957. They knew a good thing when they saw it and didn't waste time. Barbara's parents didn't attend her graduation because they were busy preparing for the wedding two days later. The newly married couple went to Ogden, Utah, where Doug served an internship at St. Benedict's Hospital.

Since Doug's last year in medical school was courtesy of the U.S. Army, he then embarked on a 10-1/2 year medical career in the military. During these 10-1/2 years, the couple moved to Kansas, Texas, Pennsylvania, Colorado and six other assignments including Okinawa, where Barbara taught French for two years at the American Dependents High School.

Their first daughter Kristin was born in Ogden in 1958, and second daughter Karin was born in 1959 at Fort Riley, Kansas. The youngest daughter Sandra was born in 1964 in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. Doug says, "Join the Army and see the world," but eventually they felt they had enough of "Gullivers Travels" and decided it was time to settle down. Doug was hired by Kaiser in Walnut Creek, and he and Barbara looked for a good place to raise their 4th and 5th graders and a pre-schooler. On a very hot day, their realtor took them to see Orinda, Moraga, Danville and then Diablo. When they visited Diablo, they saw it as an oasis with everything in it green and inviting. They found their present home and bought it the next day. Kaiser was insightful enough to let Doug serve in the National Guard for 24 years before retiring as a Brigadier General.

A strong impression of Diablo in 1967 was that there were horses everywhere. When they drove the streets they often had to go around riders. They bought two horses which they had shipped from Colorado and boarded on Mount Diablo Scenic. They replaced them with a pinto which was boarded at the Osmers and two other horses which moved all over Diablo including the Stones, Corteses and others. Their daughters were all riders and enjoyed the Double D Diablo Horsemen's Organization which had events across from Monte Vista. Many Diablo residents at that time had a horse and stable. The Bradleys remember wonderful friendships their daughters formed with Lowrey Jones. Whenever Sandra comes to visit from Wisconsin, she visits Lowrey.

Barbara says of Diablo that it has the "best zip code there is around here." Barbara was an active tennis player when Dick Overstreet ran a great program for children and adults. They enjoyed the other couples they met and often followed tennis with dinners at places like the Osmers. They enjoyed taking their children to events like the Easter Egg Roll and the Ice Cream Social.



Medical exam room in the doll house

The Diablo Post Office resident cat, Cher, took a particular liking to Doug. Once when he opened his large P. O. Box, to his unforgettable surprise, he was greeted by a cat's paw "handshake" from the other side.

After having few children in their area for years, they are delighted that several families with children have moved into their neighborhood. The Bradleys meet new residents at the swimming pool jointly owned by five families. They enjoy Diablo's kid-friendly Halloween on Alameda Diablo.

The Bradley daughters attended local public schools from Green Valley through Monte Vista and then went to U.C. Santa Cruz, St. Mary's College and Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. Sandra majored in agricultural journalism and worked for the California Cattlemen's Association. When she sought a higher degree, a professor told her the best school in her field is the University of Wisconsin. Thus, mother,

father and daughter were all educated at the University of Wisconsin. To their delight, their granddaughter is now attending Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Badgers are in the Bradley blood.

Barbara was a French major and continues to learn and practice French in a class held in Walnut Creek. Doug and Barbara have made five extended trips to France, studying French language, history, geography and culture. The couple spends much time at a family home which Barbara inherited in Frankfort, MI, on Crystal Lake bordering Lake Michigan.

Celebrating 64 years of wedded bliss, the Bradleys are the epitome of role models. Diablo residents are privileged to have them as neighbors.



3 generations of Wisconsin Badgers!

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