

Diablo Honors.....

Jerry & Frances Davis

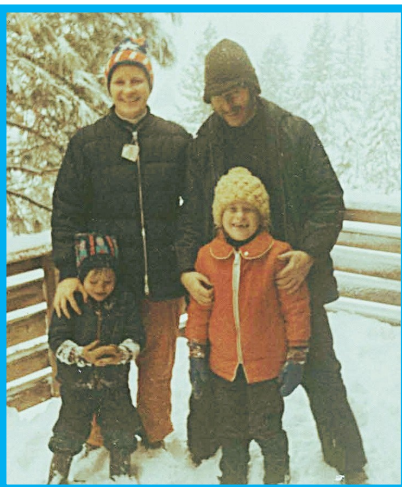
By Dee and Tony Geisler

Frances and Jerry Davis are celebrating fifty years of living in Diablo. Jerry graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1960 and returned to his hometown of Memphis, Tennessee to attend the University of Tennessee Medical School. Through mutual friends, he met Frances, a Nashville native. She had graduated from Vanderbilt and then earned a Masters Degree in speech and hearing therapy. They were friends for a year before their first date. With blessings from both families, Jerry (Jewish) and Frances (Catholic) got married in 1963 on a ten-day road trip to Florida during a school break. With the best man and maid of honor in tow, they finally found a judge in Florence, Alabama, who met them at the courthouse and married them at 10:00 p.m. On March 19th, they celebrated 62 years of marriage.



Frances worked as a speech therapist at a rehabilitation hospital and, in Jerry's last year of medical school, he joined the U.S. Navy as an Ensign drawing \$375 a month. Upon graduation, he interned at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Philadelphia and became a Lieutenant Regular Navy, General Medical Officer. Daughter Julie was born the following year just before Jerry received orders to join Fleet Marines in Danang, Vietnam. At the last minute, he was instead ordered to Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard for three years for which Frances and Jerry were grateful.

During Jerry's internship, Frances' sister had returned to Nashville after some years working in Guatemala with the CIA. So, Frances, at full term—against airline policy—flew to Nashville for a reunion with her sister. Instead, an unplanned delivery took place. Julie was born in the same hospital in which Frances had been born. Son Geoff was born in 1967 at Tripler Army Hospital. In Hawaii, Jerry met fellow Navy medical officer John Wilhelmy. They became lifelong friends and ultimately long time orthopedic partners. Jerry completed his naval service with a fortunate transfer to the orthopedic service at Oakland Naval Hospital for specialty training.



Jerry then began a four year Orthopedic Residency at UC San Francisco after which he, Frances and the children moved to London for a fellowship at the London Hospital, Whitechapel, an orthopedic "mecca" at the time. They moved back to Danville to join John Wilhelmy's medical practice. Because there was no office space at the time, he and John co-directed an orthopedic resident rotation at Martinez Veterans Administration during the day. A few years later,

he and John founded the San Ramon Valley Orthopedic Group. Several years later they became founding members of Muir Orthopedic Specialists, a 24-doctor group.

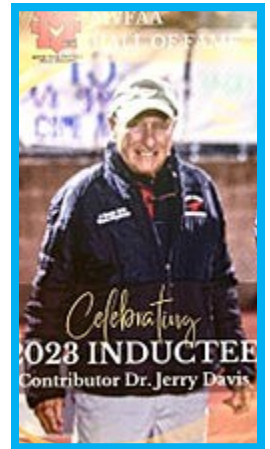
They failed to qualify for home loans in Greenbrook and other attractive neighborhoods but thought \$100,000 would buy an Elvis Presley type luxury home. The Lord and the realtor were good as they found a lot in Diablo. Diablo looked like Tennessee where they both grew up. The seller farmer had tax problems, and the Davises had money problems. They purchased the lot for \$28,000 but were given two years to pay for it. In 1975, they were able to build a not-quite Elvis house for \$100,000 and raise Julie and Geoff in Diablo. Their family ultimately grew to include five grandchildren.



In those days, very few Diablo residents landscaped. They rototilled in the springtime. There were many horses and Sunday breakfast rides to Rock City. Diablo was the first place that Jerry had older friends—all in the tennis group. Great guys he misses are Jack and Mel Toney, Bob Miller, Harry Conger, Frank Pigeon, Bill McFarland and Jim Stone.

The Toneys, McFarlands, Sorensens, Davises, Hares and several other couples all took their children before they left for college on a horse pack trip in the Eastern Sierras. For a practice run, all of them put on heavy back packs and canteens and trudged the streets of Diablo to the Toney's front yard off La Cadena. Two visits to the Toney's bathroom were allowed for each person. Tents were erected, and the outdoor experience was well fueled with strong spirits.

Jerry and Frances both played tennis together and in men's and women's groups. Diablo Country Club was a "lovable dump" symbolized by a mean waitress, Norma. The Saturday morning men's tennis group would convene in the Members Grill. Captains of industry like Harry Conger who was the president of Homestake Mines would say to Norma, "Norma, can I have a cuppa coffee?" She'd growl back, "GET IT YOURSELF." Jerry and Frances enjoyed the Ice Cream Socials at the Club where Jerry met at the bar with the men next to the big oak tree in the patio. They gathered at the Club Friday nights after tennis and once even heard the Woody Herman Band perform at Diablo. Jerry's hobbies were tennis, fly fishing, skiing and, later, golf. Frances played tennis and golf and became a Bible study facilitator at Community Presbyterian in 1995 and Big Wood Presbyterian in Ketchum, Idaho in 2010. Jerry was the team physician of the Monte Vista football team from 1981 to 2006.



The Davises consider themselves blessed to have lived in Diablo for so many years. They have a view of Las Trampas Ridge and a magnificent Heritage Oak tree. When asked to name three Diablo residents who helped to make their many years of living in Diablo happy, they mentioned Jack Toney, John and M'Lu Wilhelmy and Shirley Griffey.



Congratulations, Jerry and Frances, for choosing Diablo as your home and for being great examples of the friendly, outgoing, considerate, energetic, responsible Diablo residents who help to make our community strong.

Sponsored by the Diablo Property Owners' Association