

# Diablo Honors.....

## Michael & Ute Medford

By Jan Novak

Michael Medford's father was a wise man. When Michael was 22 years old, his father told him to stop frittering away his savings and to buy a house. His father then found a 900 square foot house in Diablo, and Michael bought that home on El Centro 54 years ago. Michael was familiar with Diablo as he grew up in Lafayette and had friends who lived in Diablo. He remembers a more rural Diablo, with horses everywhere, including in a corral behind his house.

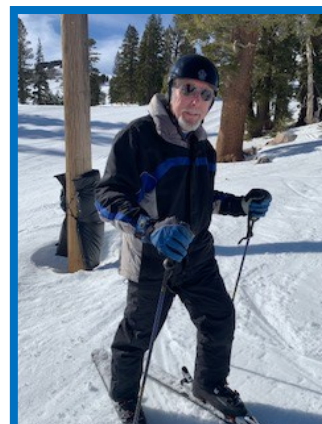


*Ute in Tahoe*

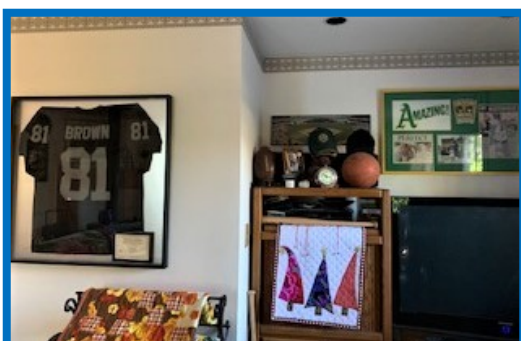
Michael met Ute at a Ski Club picnic and they married 38 years ago at Lake Tahoe. Ute was born and raised in very urban Berlin, Germany and was working in Oakland when they met. Her first impression of Diablo? "It was really rural, out in the 'boonies!'". Together, they raised their son Erik, almost tripled the size of their home and passionately pursued their hobbies.

Michael and Ute's home is on one of the most secluded and tree-filled lots in Diablo. There is so much shade that they live comfortably with no air conditioning. El Centro was originally developed as cottages for those that worked at Diablo Country Club. The lot on which the Medford home stands was vacant

until 1955 and may have been used as a maintenance yard prior to that as Michael has found horse-drawn wagon parts and wheels while digging in the yard. He has also uncovered railroad spikes from the train track that once ran from Oakland to the original Red Horse Tavern, now the Red Horse apartments.



*Michael on the slopes*



*Two loves: sports and quilting on display*

Once you step inside, the home tells the story of their lives. There is a "sports room" off of the kitchen filled with Raiders and Oakland A's and auto racing memorabilia. The focal point is a large framed set of mementos from their Mother's Day 2010 trip to see Oakland A's pitcher Dallas Braden pitch a perfect game against the Tampa Bay Rays. On the other side of the kitchen, in what used to be the living room, you'll find a quilting and sewing room with some beautiful antiques. Photos of Erik and ski trips abound.

Michael's career primarily focused on cars. He owned a machine shop that built both packaging machines and racecars. The cars he built competed in the Trans Am Series of road racing. He sold that business and then worked on cars as a mechanic and body man. The third chapter of his career was as a shop manager in heavy equipment shops. As a side business, he was an antiques dealer and restorer and he kept a few of the best pieces for his home.

Ute was a banker her entire career, managing branch banks for several large banks, including locations in Blackhawk, Lafayette and Walnut Creek. She managed branches for Bank of America, West America, Mt. Diablo Bank and Heritage Bank over the course of her career. She took up quilting with a vengeance upon her retirement and her quilts are works of art.



*The young Medford family*

Their son, Erik, is now 35. He grew up in Diablo, attending Larson's preschool, Vista Grande Elementary, Los Cerros Middle School and Monte Vista. His favorite Diablo events were the annual fishing derby and the Christmas parties at the club. He took up golf as a child and is now a 10-handicap golfer. He played in the Little League that David Birka-White coordinated. Michael was a coach. As a toddler, he and Ryan Hilton became friends and that friendship continues to this day. Ute met Shelley Hilton, Ryan's mother, when they both



*Michael with Bill & Shelley Hilton*

attended new mother classes. Bill and Shelley Hilton and Ute and Michael remain close friends.

Erik followed in his father's footsteps, becoming an ASE-certified auto mechanic in Denver. He met his future wife, Peyton, in Denver and they married three years ago on the 18<sup>th</sup> green of Pebble Beach. They now live in Chicago and are both executives and part owners of D&M Plastics.



*Erik and Peyton*

The Medfords are an active couple. They love snow skiing and hiking and are often seen walking the streets of Diablo, particularly Calle Arroyo. They love to travel. They take their hobbies seriously. They are devoted parents and friends. During our conversations, they spoke fondly of their Diablo friends--the Hiltons, Barry & Lori Nudelman, Laura & John Fulton, Patrick Fanning, Jay & Karen St. John, Dorothy Peterson and Bill Clarkson.

We thank Michael and Ute for sharing their stories and for being our great neighbors and friends for 54 years.

***Sponsored by the Diablo Property Owners' Association***