

Diablo Honors.....

Arlene Reed

By Jan Novak

Ralph and Arlene Reed purchased their beautiful lot on Casa Nuestra in 1974 for \$32,000. They were drawn by the rural feel of Diablo, the privacy, the views. And Ralph was looking forward to some golf. After building their dream home, they moved in with their three young children—Michael, Matthew and Laura.

Arlene Leberherz was born in San Francisco almost 87 years ago to immigrant parents who owned a small neighborhood grocery store. After two years at City College, she was awarded a scholarship and transferred to UC Berkeley, where she earned her degree in American Civilization. Ralph was also a native San Franciscan. At age 19, he enlisted in the Navy and served on a destroyer escort. The GI bill sent him to San Francisco State where he earned his degree. Arlene and Ralph met at a dance in the city, married in 1962 and celebrated their 59th wedding anniversary before his passing in 2021. Their first home was in Castro Valley, where they lived for 15 years before moving to Diablo. Arlene taught elementary school and earned her Master's degree in Education with a specialty in Reading Instruction. She later became a reading specialist in elementary schools and tutored reading privately. Ralph worked for a specialty steel company and dabbled in real estate development on the side. He also was the general contractor on a family vacation home at Lakemont Pines in the Sierras. The family enjoyed long summers there as well as winter vacations skiing at Bear Valley.

Diablo was a much quieter place in 1974—fewer and smaller homes, more casual. Arlene tells a story that illustrates that. They had a Malamute/Shepherd mix dog, Sonja, who was good at escaping the yard to wander down to Diablo Country Club. She would hang out in the kitchen enjoying the petting and attention until the staff enticed her to leave with a hot dog. That, of course, meant she would be back the next day!



Matthew, Laura, Michael, Ralph & Arlene



Celebrating Arlene's 80th birthday

Ralph and Arlene raised their three children in Diablo. All three attended UC Santa Barbara and moved to the Pacific Northwest. Michael and his wife Rochelle live outside of Seattle. Their daughter, Brighton (21), will graduate from the University of Washington in June. Matthew lives in Bend, Oregon. His son, Rowan (23) graduated from Western Washington in Bellingham and daughter, Coral (19), just started college at Western. And Laura is in Ashland, Oregon, with husband Steve. They have two children - Cinna (24) and Al (22) who are now working in Portland after graduating from colleges there. They are a very close family, with annual family vacations. Plus, last summer, Arlene took her three adult children on a safari to Kenya and Tanzania. They all felt it was a trip of a lifetime! In 2022, Arlene hit the road on "Grandma's Trip", a solo drive to visit each of her five grandchildren individually.

During their long marriage, Ralph and Arlene loved to travel. Some of their favorites were visiting Arlene's relatives in Italy and Switzerland, various trips and cruises through different parts of the world, and seeing the sights in the United States. An especially memorable trip was their 13- day tour of China in 2005.

Ralph and Arlene also enjoyed hiking and the outdoors and loved being so close to Mt. Diablo where they not only hiked but also hosted gatherings with family and friends. One memorable event was in 2008 when they redeemed their certificate from a charity auction held at Diablo Country Club. They bid on and won a catered dinner and drinks for twelve at the Mount Diablo Lookout at the top of Mt. Diablo. The sunset was fantastic!



Arlene & Ralph hiking Mt. Diablo

Ralph wanted to enjoy the winters and golf where it was warmer so in 1999 they bought a home in Avondale in Palm Desert. It was great for ten years but then they decided to simplify life and return to being in Diablo full time.



Arlene with her Nicaraguan "family"

Arlene is one of the most engaging and engaged women you will ever meet. When she gets interested in something, she gets REALLY interested. In the past she played tennis, but for the last many years she has been active with the Niners at Diablo Country Club where she usually walks the first nine holes. She has been active in the Diablo Municipal Advisory Committee and the Diablo Property Owners' Association. She never misses a community event. She's an avid reader and lively book club participant. She's a traveler, an explorer. She is politically active and committed to peace and justice. She is active in her church, Peace Lutheran, where she has been involved in a partnership with a poor rural community in Nicaragua for 34 years. During her participation in nine delegations since 1990, she witnessed the increased poverty between 1990 and 2006, and in the last 18 years, the tremendous improvements in the lives of the people when President Ortega and the Sandinista Government were reelected. There is now

universal education and health care, electricity, potable water, improved roads, greater tourism and a stronger economy.

When asked what she most loves about Diablo, she highlighted the strong sense of community and the friendly people. That and the tree-lined roads, peaceful ambience and beautiful views from her home.

Thank you, Arlene, for sharing your story with us and for all that you have done to build our sense of community!



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