

Diablo Honors.....

Dolph & Nona Senasac

By Tony & Dee Geisler

Honoring Nona and Dolph Senasac is bittersweet as these 53-year Diablo fixtures are planning to move to San Mateo to be nearer to two of their children. Nona Roesner was born in St Joseph's Hospital in San Francisco in 1938 and lived there until age eleven when her parents, she and her two siblings moved to San Mateo. Her grandmother stayed behind in a San Francisco hotel. Nona attended Mercy High School in Burlingame and graduated in 1955. She majored in art at Notre Dame College in Belmont graduating in 1959 and subsequently worked as an art teacher at Holy Cross High School in Mountain View.



Although Dolph's family were residents of San Mateo, he was born in 1937 at St. Mary's Hospital in San Francisco because there were no good Catholic hospitals in the mid-Peninsula. Nona was a fourth generation San Franciscan, and Dolph's family were fifth generation San Franciscans having settled there around 1845 before the Gold Rush. Both Nona and Dolph are the quintessential native Californians.

Dolph's boyhood dream was to become a stockbroker. He graduated from Serra High School in San Mateo in 1954 and went on to attend Santa Clara University where he planned to major in economics. After two years in economics, which he found far too dry, he switched to Philosophy graduating in 1958. After college, he walked the streets of the Financial District in San Francisco eventually landing a job with E. F. Hutton. Having been a Philosophy major, he started in the mail room at Hutton. After a year, he worked in the Statistics Department, and at four years went to Corporate for four months in New York City to become a fully licensed registered stock broker. These were the beginnings of a distinguished fifty-five-year career at Hutton retiring in 2013.



Dolph & Nona's 1961 wedding

Dolph and Nona met in high school at a social function in San Mateo and eventually married in 1961 where they took up their first apartment in—where else, San Mateo.

Nona commuted to Mountain View, and Dolph took the train to the City for his work. A son Marc was born in 1963 beginning the tradition in the Senasac family of being given a French name. When Therese arrived in 1965, they moved across the Bay to a larger apartment in Dublin. Nona's goal became having and raising their children.

After two years Andre and Nicole arrived, and they needed a larger place to live. Nona liked the hills of San Francisco and their two apartments that required climbing stairs, so she wanted a two-story house. On a Sunday drive that led them to Mount Diablo Scenic in Diablo, they saw a

lovely recently completed spec two story house on a half-acre that would meet the needs of their growing family. At the time, the neighborhood was empty with only three homes nearby. They bought the home in 1969 from a realtor turned developer, Phil Burns, who lived at the end of their street in one of the "Diablo Treasures". After moving, and with a gap of eight years between "the first four" and the "little three" they completed their family, adding Suzanne, Danielle and Ginette. Yes, seven children!

Both Nona and Dolph thought everything about Diablo was unique and special. At that time, there wasn't much traffic on Diablo Road and Mount Diablo Scenic. Nona stated, "There is no one in Diablo I don't like." They enjoyed their neighbors Alan and Connie Wadsworth, who rented a home nearby and subsequently built a home across the street, and their next-door neighbors Gil and Cindy Fryer. Since their property had no trees, they soon added some. Dolph was active civically in Diablo having served on the DPOA Board and as President in 1975.



The Senasac children

Their children rode their bicycles or walked almost any direction from their house on a path over private property at the end of their street to go to the Club or the Post Office or visit friends. A friend Sue May convinced them to join the Club where they held a tennis membership for tennis, swimming and dining and could play golf if they chose to by paying greens fees. The family dressed up for Club events and wouldn't miss the Annual DPOA Dinner, Ice Cream Social and other activities. "Living in Diablo was like living in a private club."

Nicole kept a horse at a stable across the street which is now the Athenian Soccer Field paying \$25 a month. She rode her horse in Diablo and on Mount Diablo Scenic. She also rode her horse to the old Post Office in the Milk Barn to pick up the family mail. The children would walk from the end of their

street to Alameda Diablo to Diablo's bus shelter where they would be picked up by a carpool made up of four families for St. Isidore's School, Carondelet or De La Salle High Schools.

Their children and 13 grandchildren now live in San Mateo, Foster City, Los Angeles, San Diego, Virginia and New Zealand. The family started a tradition of gathering for Thanksgiving in Carmel at La Playa Inn but now go to a hotel near Old Town in Monterey. For their 2021 Christmas, the twenty-eight members of the family had dinner at the Senasac home in Diablo.



Dolph & Nona with their children and grandchildren

When asked what were their favorite and least favorite things about their house, they said both answers are "two story." When they and their children were young, having a two-story house fit their family needs well. Now that they are older and have difficulty navigating the stairs, they no longer like having a two-story home.

It has been Diablo's privilege to have Dolph and Nona live here for fifty-three years, and we wish them all the best in their new home across the Bay.

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