

Diablo Honors.....

John & Shirley Osmer

By Elizabeth Leftik

When John and Shirley moved to Diablo in 1967, it was a very different place. There was very little traffic and most homes were modest. Few people had gardeners or housekeepers. There were far fewer residents so **everyone** in Diablo knew each other. Since air conditioning was a rarity, people—and especially kids—spent all of their time outside in the summer. Children would leave in the morning, go to swim practice, then “pool hopping” and grabbing lunch at someone’s house and return home for dinner. El Nido was open space and their daughter, Susan, rode her horse where dozens of homes now stand.



John & Shirley in 1975



Cycling Virginia in 2014

John, now 88, grew up in Louisville, KY and graduated from DePauw University in Greencastle, IN and Northwestern School of Medicine in Chicago. Shirley, now 86, grew up on a farm near Edgar, NE and graduated from the University of Nebraska. She moved to Chicago to work for United airlines as a flight attendant back in the days when it was a very glamorous job. They met while in Chicago and married in 1958. Shirley had to quit her job as one had to be single to be a flight attendant. John then spent seven years in the Army as part of his medical training before joining the Radiology faculty at UCLA Medical Center. He decided the academic life was not for him and they relocated to the Bay Area where he spent the next 30 years practicing Radiology at Eden Hospital in Castro Valley. After renting a home in Danville, they moved to Diablo in 1967. They loved the rural atmosphere, the proximity to all that the club offers and so Susan could have a horse.

Diablo introduced them to the world of tennis and the joys of cycling up Mt. Diablo. Everyone played tennis in those days, including John and Shirley and their three children, Susan, Mark and Tom. Of course, it helped that the Osmer's have a tennis court in their backyard! Susan continued to play in high school while Mark and Tom moved on to football and baseball. John's favorite event at the club was the annual Silver Racquet Tennis Tournament. The competition and comradery were a perfect combination. John and Shirley were members of the American Medical Tennis Association for many years. They attended their meetings and played in their tournaments in both the US and Europe. John is a past president of the Association. Shirley continues to play a couple of times a week.

She also just completed her latest Mt. Diablo Challenge cycling race in October with the fastest time for any woman over the age of 70 and she was the oldest finisher. She and John have both been avid cyclists and enjoyed many organized cycling trips.



2021 Mt. Diablo Challenge



Catching a beauty in Canada

In addition to cycling and tennis and family time, John is a fly fisherman, golfer and gifted artist. His beautiful pen and pencil drawings focus on two loves—his family and nature. He was on the Board of Directors of the Lindsay Wildlife Experience for 11 years and also served on the Board of the Diablo Country Club.

In addition to cycling and tennis and raising their family, Shirley volunteered for every possible school activity and continues to volunteer at the One Room School, a program sponsored by the Museum of the San Ramon Valley. She also served on the Diablo Property Owners' Association and had a hand in starting the ice cream social tradition, which she loves. She loves to garden, sew, play bridge and has also beautifully refinished several pieces of family heirloom furniture.

John and Shirley feel blessed to have had their four grandchildren, Lindsey and Jack Osmer, Paige and Ryan Burroughs, grow up in the area. Being able to see them often, share holidays and birthdays and attend school and sporting events has been a Grandparents' dream.

When asked why they have chosen to stay in Diablo for 55 years, the answer was simple. "We love the open space and rural feeling that still exists despite all of the changes over the years. And the people that live here. Always the people. We love our friends and neighbors." They also have clearly enjoyed golf and tennis, the mountain for cycling and the rich history of our community. It's enough to make them put up with the deer eating their plants, the raccoons tearing up the lawn, the turkeys devouring their impatiens, the squirrels chewing the irrigation drip lines and the coyotes stealing their newspaper.



Tom, Susan, John, Shirley & Mark in 1988

We thank and honor John and Shirley for their contributions and commitment to Diablo and for being wonderful friends and neighbors for 55 years.



John & Shirley in 2018