

Meet Your Neighbors

Tom Jones



“Really, really smart.” “Such a nice guy.” “Always willing to help.” “Unassuming.” If you ask around, these are the types of descriptions that Tom Jones has earned during his more than 20 years living in Diamond A.

Tom is a product of the Midwest, having been born in Ohio, raised in Ohio and Michigan and graduating from college

in Illinois, though his MD was from Stanford.. His dad became a banker when the family farm failed as a result of a livestock epidemic, while his mom worked in health care when not tending to the family. After finishing the intern/resident/fellow drill, Tom spent 21 more years in the Department of Medicine at the University of Chicago, practicing internal medicine with a specialty in reproductive endocrinology and, to manage his weight, running laps around the field above the site where the world's first artificial nuclear reactor was created. By 1979 he became responsible for the entire University Health Service without giving up his clinical practice in endocrinology. While at Chicago, Tom really enjoyed teaching mammalian endocrinology to undergraduates, and one of his proudest achievements was winning the student-nominated Quantrell Award in 1992 for excellence in teaching—Tom wept when he was told that he'd won the award. However, Tom had another interest, which would change his life path—he helped establish an early electronic medical records program at Chicago, which ultimately led to his leaving medical practice and, through multiple companies, becoming an entrepreneur in the electronic medical records field, ultimately retiring in 2016 after having logged more miles than he wants to try to count.

By the '90s, Tom was based in the Bay Area, and, after a whirlwind weekend of house hunting in Marin and Sonoma, he knew when he opened the front door that he had found his little bit of heaven right here in Diamond A on a site with foundations that had been built on multiple times. After substantial renovations/additions, the house, which he owns with two long-time friends from the Chicago days, can now accommodate their many friends who come to visit from all over the world. With

200 vines and a long row of olive trees, much of what's eaten and drunk in the house is grown on the property.

Tom's days are full of both domesticity and intellectual stimulation. No longer a runner, he walks our hills, loves the farmers' markets, cooks [*editor's note: as I walked in at 3:30 on a weekday, he'd just finished making mushroom soup*], plays bridge and reads—mostly very serious non-fiction. He is very active as the Secretary of the Board of DANA and a member of the Emergency Preparedness Committee. And he loves his three playful Cairn terriers.

Tom has two sons nearing 50, and both are in the artificial intelligence arm of the tech world—one lives in Brooklyn and the other in Seattle. Tom is a proud dad and grandfather of three.

I asked him some questions:

Famous people you've met: Half a dozen Nobel Prize winners and Olympic athletes.

Greatest athletic achievement: Running a 4:26 mile, in 1978.

Where would you live if you didn't live in Sonoma: Victoria, B.C.

Favorite Restaurant: Arzak in San Sebastian, Spain, where he's eaten twice.

Favorite Sonoma restaurants: Sante and Café LaHaye.

Restaurant most frequently visited: Juanita Juanita, about once a week.

Bliss moments: Reading a newspaper in the living room with his dogs, playing bridge with friends on a weekend afternoon, attending events at Joseph Phelps Winery.

Worries: Rising income inequality and the failure of our society to support education, research and our infrastructure.

Favorite Diamond A event: Summer Picnic.

Big disappointment: When the 1980 Moscow Olympics were cancelled; he was to have been on the medical team.

Athletic interests as a spectator: Not a baseball or football fan, but loves track meets.

Words of advice: Keep your mind open, explore opportunities; there are no bad questions, only bad answers.

Favorite news source: New York Times

Books on the bedside table right now: Catastrophe 1914;
Europe Goes to War – Max Hastings and Kinder than Solitude – Yiyun Li

Favorite Sonoma charities: La Luz and Pets Lifeline

Favorite Dessert: Crème Brule.

Top of bucket list: Not being a burden to family and friends.