

Meet Your Neighbors

Whitney Evans, Volunteer



Whitney Evans' email signature tells it all—Whitney Evans, Volunteer. Because he has volunteered so often and so effectively, Whit was the 2012 alcalde—honorary mayor of Sonoma.

Whit, 78, and Jeanette, his wife and friend of 56 years, live at 4480 Grove Street in a lovely tree-shaded home with a killer view which can be enjoyed both from the small putting green and the pool that adorn the deck.

Whit grew up in Cleveland, went to prep school and college in the East, and, at age 50, decided it was time to repot. So Whit and Jeanette, who had visited the Sonoma area as a guest of his brother who was a grape grower, relocated to the bustling Santa Clara Valley, where he established a business helping people live healthy lives, generally on doctors' orders. When it came time to gear down after four years in the not-very-friendly Santa Clara Valley, they followed their dream to Sonoma where, for a time, Whit provided fund raising services to non-profits and then finally hung it up to become....a volunteer. He particularly remembers the warm welcome to Diamond A from our unofficial mayors, Wayne and Celia Schake. He has helped many local non-profits in many ways; among those are the Boys & Girls Club, the Ed Fund and Rotary. In his spare time, when not on the golf course, Whit has started to write a book about the pioneering venture capitalists in the early years of this country.

We sat in the shade one summer morning recently and I asked Whit a bunch of questions, which are set forth below with his answers:

What do you like about Sonoma: The people, definitely the people...and, of course, the views. (Ed. Note: I think he means the phenomenal view from his house.)

Favorite Sonoma Events: Fourth of July Parade, theater at the Community Center, Transcendence and the Red and White Ball.

What would make Sonoma even better: An improved relationship between the Anglo and Hispanic communities.

Winter or Summer: Autumn (Ed. Note: Whit marches to the beat of his own drummer)

Role Models: His mom (who Whit remembers driving around in her Red Cross uniform during WW II) for community service and his dad for perseverance and loyalty to family

Favorite teacher: Jack Pigeon, high school swimming coach who taught Whit about leadership and perseverance and Whit's dad

Pet Peeve: People who take from society and don't give back

Biggest Disappointment: When some venture capital investments failed.

Giants or Warriors: The Cleveland Cavaliers, his hometown team. (Ed. Note: again, Whit is his own man)

Safeway, Sonoma Market or Whole Foods: Sonoma Market

Favorite Service Vendor: There are so many, but Diana Booker Spry is especially patient and helpful on computer matters

Happiest Decade: This one. (Ed. Note: Very recently Whit shot his age at the golf course—that's a big deal in certain circles.)

Book on the Bedside Table: The War Years, about how close the British came to losing during World War II.

Red or White: It used to be red, now it's white.

Toughest Decision: Uprooting the family to move to California

Proudest Accomplishment: Being happily married for 56 years and raising three sons who are wonderful dads themselves. (Ed. Note: There are seven grandchildren living in three states, three of whom graduated with honors from high school this spring.)

