



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

SUMMER 2019 • ISSUE 143

An Official Publication of the Healdsburg Museum & Historical Society

History Lives Profiles



First Twenty Years

In This Issue

Our current issue of the *Russian River Recorder* celebrates two decades of the Museum's signature event, "History Lives," an annual dinner/fundraiser at which we present the Pioneer Award to a local individual or couple in recognition of their contributions to their respective fields and to the community.

This issue profiles all of the past History Lives Pioneer honorees, highlighting these remarkable people who have enriched and strengthened our community. It provides an overview of the award along with short articles about each of the honorees. The featured recipients include: Joe Vercelli, Louis J. Foppiano, Francis Passalacqua, Robert Young, F.M. "Milt" Brandt, Eugene Cuneo, Rose Ferrari Demostene Benson, John and James Pedroncelli, Clarence Ruonavaara, Rachel Ann and Ed Seghesio, Eugene Domenichelli, Joe Rochioli, Jr., Arnold Santucci, Edgar Deas, Helen and Charles Bacigalupi, Mary Lou and Jerry Eddinger, Karen and Harry Bosworth, Nancy and Karl Seppi and Meredith and Jim Dreisback.

This year, on September 21, we will present the History Lives Pioneer Award to Dr. Edward Neal

of Healdsburg. Dr. Neal retired in 2004 after 40 years of practicing medicine in Healdsburg and northern Sonoma County. Dr. Neal was one of the first Family Practice doctors, delivering babies, being on call many nights and weekends. He worked at the old Healdsburg Hospital on Johnson Street.

Among his many accomplishments, Dr. Neal helped mobilize efforts to build a new modern hospital. He also taught resident physicians at Community Hospital.

In the 1970s, Dr. Neal was one of the founders of Central Medical Familial to serve low income clients, particularly farmworkers. The clinic evolved into today's Alliance Medical Center.

Invitations to this year's History Lives tribute dinner will be mailed to Museum members in late July. We look forward to seeing you at the History Lives event at the Villa Chanticleer on September 21.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the *Russian River Recorder*.

Holly Hoods, Executive Director/Curator
Pamela Vana-Paxhia, Editor



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER
The Official Publication of the
HEALDSBURG MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Edwin Langhart, *Founder*

221 Matheson Street
P.O. Box 952
Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 431-3325

www.healdsburgmuseum.org

Officers

Eric Ziedrich, *President*
Jon Eisenberg, *Vice-President*
Phyllis Chiosso Liu, *Secretary*
Mark Decker, *Treasurer*
Jim Brush, *Asst. Treasurer*
Ronnie Devitt, *Past President*

Directors

Jerry Eddinger
Rawleigh Fjeld
Jeanne Leal Hartlaub
Bob Pennypacker
Carol Peterson
Kay Robinson
Susan Sheehy

Museum Staff

Holly Hoods, *Executive Director/Curator*
Lauren Carriere, *Research Curator*
Jane Bonham, *Office Manager*
Publication Staff
Pamela Vana-Paxhia, *Editor*
Eileen O'Farrell, *Copy Editor*
Healdsburg Printing Inc., *Printing*

Contents

- 5 **Joe Vercelli — 1999**
by Bo Simons
excerpt from Russian River Recorder, Summer 2010
- 6 **Louis J. Foppiano — 2000**
by Lauren Carriere
- 7 **Francis Passalacqua — 2001**
by Holly Hoods
- 8 **Robert Young — 2002**
by Lauren Carriere
- 9 **F.M. “Milt” Brandt — 2003**
by Jane Bonham
- 10 **Eugene Cuneo — 2004**
by Jane Bonham
- 11 **Rose Ferrari Demostene Benson — 2005**
by Jane Bonham
- 12 **John and James Pedroncelli — 2006**
by Jane Bonham
- 13 **Clarence Ruonavaara — 2007**
by Jane Bonham
- 14 **Rachel Ann and Ed Seghesio — 2008**
by Jane Bonham

Contents (cont'd)

Russian River Recorder

Summer 2019 • Issue 143

- 15 **Eugene Domenichelli — 2009**
excerpt from Press Democrat, May 13, 2014
- 16 **Joe Rochioli, Jr. — 2010**
by Jane Bonham
- 17 **Arnold Santucci — 2011**
excerpt from History Lives Event Press Release by Barbara Baxter
- 18 **Edgar Deas — 2012**
by Jane Bonham
- 19 **Helen and Charles Bacigalupi — 2013**
by Jane Bonham
- 20 **Mary Lou and Jerry Eddinger — 2014**
by Jane Bonham
- 21 **Karen and Harry Bosworth — 2015**
by Jane Bonham
- 22 **Nancy and Karl Seppi — 2016**
by Lauren Carriere
- 23 **Meredith and Jim Dreisback — 2017**
by Holly Hoods
- 24 **History Lives Pioneer Award**



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Livia and Joe Vercelli at Italian Swiss Colony, 1970s

Joe Vercelli — 1999

by Bo Simons

excerpt from Russian River Recorder, Summer 2010

Gracefully enduring hard times remains an important part of the history of Sonoma County wine making. We are passing some rough times now, and these strong, diligent people have some good lessons for all of us. During the hardest times, from Prohibition through the dry dusty years following repeal, through the spurt of good times afforded by World War II, when no European wine suddenly made American wine more saleable and on through the flat lackluster fifties, these folks grew grapes, made and sold wine in a world that was not glamorous, certainly not the idyllic vision that the words “wine country” conjure up today. These gallant men and women took their lumps and soldiered on until the 1960s when the wine revolution started, initiating the changes that would make California wine better, more desirable and more financially rewarding.

Over the years, the Healdsburg Museum has honored the giants among these tough wine families...and the steadfast virtues that the Italians, like the Vercelli family, brought to this area.

Joe Vercelli was born in San Francisco, near the Cow Palace and then moved to the Excelsior. He wanted to be a doctor, and attended Cal Berkeley, working and going to school, taking a streetcar, ferry and electric train to get to class and being tutored by Frederick Bioletti. But by May 1933, his older brother had lost his job and been out of work for a

year. Joe had to quit Cal in his senior year, give up the dream of becoming a doctor, and go to work at a winery. Life gave Joe lemons and he made limoncello.

Over the course of the next seventy years, Joe was active in the wine industry as a grape concentrate driver, chemist, assistant winemaker, winemaker, winery owner, winery manager. He was a small man with a sparkle and joy that were infectious. In his later years, he was kind of an elder statesman of the industry who was sought out when people wanted a perspective that stretched back to Prohibition.

He was honored by the Healdsburg Museum in its first annual Pioneer Award dinner in 1999.

His daughter Anne carries on the family tradition of pluck and endurance. Anne had a career as a chef ahead of her, having been the first female graduate of the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. But family duty called. Her beloved mother, Livia, became ill and required her to be the at-home caregiver for a number of years. Shortly after Livia passed, Joe, her “poppa,” required her attentions until his death in 2005.

Anne enjoys a full life as an instructor in Culinary Arts at the Santa Rosa Junior College and working a number of wine competitions, so you will not get any sour grapes from Anne, just delicious wine.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Louis J. Foppiano, 1961 and 2000

Louis J. Foppiano — 2000

by Lauren Carriere

Louis J. Foppiano was a pioneer who faced tremendous adversity, but achieved much throughout his life and career with his “gruff wisdom and tight-fisted business style.”

Louis’ father passed away suddenly when he was just 13 years old. Young Louis rose to the occasion and took over the family winery. Though he had little formal education in agriculture or viticulture, Louis had the drive to learn. He said that when he started, he “knew about as much about making wine as sending a spaceship to the moon.” Louis learned what he needed by turning to more experienced local winemakers like Bill Massoni.

Louis’ early success of keeping the business afloat was even more impressive considering that he inherited the winery during Prohibition. In 1926, the Foppiano estate was raided by federal agents. Louis watched as the agents opened the wine tanks and allowed 100,000+ gallons of wine to flow into the river. They survived Prohibition by planting other crops such as prunes, apples and pears and by taking advantage of a small loophole in the laws that allowed growers to sell grapes to home winemakers.

Louis rebuilt the winery in 1937, making it one of the first Sonoma County wineries to bottle wine under its own label.

In 1946, Louis helped found the Sonoma County Wine Growers Association. He also helped found the California Wine Institute where he served as a director for 45 years.

In the 1960s, the Central Valley was out-producing the coastal regions in grape output. Instead of trying to compete with these bulk wineries, wise winemakers like Louis converted their vineyards and wineries to make premium wines. This move helped establish Foppiano Vineyards as one of Sonoma County’s best-known vineyards.

Louis passed away in 2012 at the age of 101. Up until shortly before his death, he could still be found pruning in the vineyard or meeting with guests at the winery. Louis lived his entire life on the ranch where he was born. He often credited a daily glass of wine and a daily nap for his longevity.

Sources:

foppiano.com

Healdsburg Tribune: March 28, 2012.

Press Democrat: March 27, 2012.

Sebastiani, Sam, “Louis J. Foppiano: A Product of, and Pioneering Leader Within the Wine Industry,” History Lives Pioneer Award, Healdsburg Museum & Historical Society, Villa Chanticleer, Healdsburg, March 16, 2000.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
Francis Passalacqua, 1965

Francis M. Passalacqua — 2001

by Holly Hoods

Francis M. Passalacqua was born in Healdsburg in 1910, the youngest son of Italian immigrants who farmed and sold vegetables and later founded a winery in Healdsburg. He attended local schools before graduating from St. Mary's College, Moraga, in the early 1930s. In 1944, Francis was called to serve as a Lieutenant in the US Navy in World War II. He was stationed in the South Pacific for two years before returning home to Healdsburg.

Francis married Elsie Nardi with whom he raised four children: Frank, Tom, Diane and Michael.

The practice of law was one of Francis' great loves. His long career spanned many changes in the community and the law itself. Francis handled cases of all magnitude with discretion, and enjoyed representing numerous local clients. During the Depression, he often accepted produce or chickens from clients who had no other form of payment. Mild mannered in private life, Francis was recognized by his peers as a fierce advocate for his clients. He was particularly noted for his respectful legal services to the poor and minorities.

Francis was also an active contributor to shaping the Healdsburg of today. He was President of the Healdsburg Chamber of Commerce and the Healdsburg Kiwanis Club, President of the Sonoma County Bar Association, and a member of the

Healdsburg High School Board of Trustees. Francis was a member of The Italian Catholic Federation and a Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus. He was also awarded the prestigious award of the Knights of St. Gregory, bestowed by the Pope in 1969, and the recipient of numerous community honors, including induction into the Healdsburg Athletic Hall of Fame. Francis was instrumental in establishing the St. John Catholic School in 1950 and the establishment of the Healdsburg Boys and Girls Club. He also formed, *pro bono*, numerous non-profit corporations.

Francis served on the "Lighting Committee," which brought the first lights to Recreation Park, a large endeavor for its time. His love of baseball drove him to bring four AA baseball teams to conduct their spring training in Healdsburg. Francis was an avid outdoorsman, and enjoyed hiking at his ranch outside of Healdsburg. He was also a member of the Sonoma County Trailblazers, a group that organized trail rides on horseback.

Francis Passalacqua lived a full and remarkable life until his death at age 95 in 2005, a pillar of strength and inspiration to his family and community.

Sources:
Oral History Interview, 1999.
Press Democrat: April 20, 2005.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Robert Young, 1937 and 2001

Robert Young — 2002

by Lauren Carriere

Alexander Valley pioneer Robert Young, dedicated himself to his family, his ranch and his community. Born in Healdsburg to Silas and Florence Young on March 6, 1919, Robert grew up on the family's 260-acre ranch in Alexander Valley and, after the death of his father, became the third generation to farm the property.

The ranch's primary crop was prunes until the 1960s, when Robert planted their first vineyards. He started with 6,500 vines of cabernet sauvignon, an up-and-coming variety. Cabernet was particularly convenient, since this late-harvesting grape could be picked at the same time as the ranch's prunes.

A believer in the importance of research and experimentation, Robert made many contributions to the agriculture and viticulture worlds. For example, he pioneered the practice of trellising vines for higher quality fruit. He planted his first chardonnay vines in 1967.

Seeing the potential of the emerging industry, he gradually converted the prune orchards into vineyards. The last prune orchard was pulled out in 1977.

In 1994, Robert suffered a stroke that affected his speech and left him partially paralyzed in his right arm. No one would say this hindered him in any way, as he remained as active and outgoing as ever. It was

his indomitable spirit, generosity and involvement in his community that people remember most.

Robert was chairman and board member for the Alexander Valley and Healdsburg High School boards, chairman of the California Association of Wine Grape Growers and trustee to the Alexander Valley Community Church Association. He served on the Alexander Valley Community Hall Restoration Project and helped found the North Coast Community Bank.

He was president of the Healdsburg Kiwanis Club and a member since 1973. He was a Supreme Knight of the Knights of the Vine and a 32nd degree mason of the Scottish Rite Masonic Lodge.

Robert also served on a variety of federal, state and local agricultural advisory committees. He was a California delegate for the International Organization of Vine and Wine. Over the years, Robert hosted hundreds of South African farmers who began arriving in the late 1960s. Robert taught them innovative growing techniques that they took home for use in their own businesses.

Robert passed away in 2009.

Sources:

Press Democrat: June 19, 2009.

Russian River Recorder: Spring 2002.



Milt Brandt, 1960



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
Mary and Milt Brandt, 1966

F.M. “Milt” Brandt — 2003

by Jane Bonham

Frederick Milton Brandt was born in 1923. His mother was a member of the Charles Lambert family that had settled in Dry Creek Valley in 1852. His father’s family arrived in the late 1880s, when they established the F.O. Brandt Brewery and Bottling Works.

Milt’s father, Fred, was taken out of school after completing the third grade and put to work in the family business. Milt described being raised by “this iron-fisted German taskmaster who worked seven days a week, year-round.” He credited his Dad for teaching him that money wasn’t everything—what was important were life’s accomplishments.

Like many of his generation, Milt served during World War II. He was in the Navy with duty in the South Pacific. He was sent back to the States to recover from a coral infection, which Milt credited with setting the stage for him to marry Mary Wattles in 1944. By 1945, he had returned to the family ranch.

In July of 1953, all that changed. Returning from delivering cattle, Milt felt unwell. By the time he returned to Healdsburg, he was weak. The family doctor, concerned by his account, suggested that Milt remain isolated from his children. He was moved into the county hospital with other polio patients. Allowed to go home for Christmas, there were still future trips to the hospital for follow up treatment.

The crop failure of that year, along with the bottom dropping out of the livestock market, added to the financial impact of Milt’s polio diagnosis and brought about the forced sale of stock and equipment.

Later, Milt recalled the life-changing support of the community: “...unknown to me, a group of friends had organized a benefit dinner attended by some 200 local men...This was sort of a kick off for many other benefits for other local citizens throughout the years. It was one of many, and I chaired some, to help repay what I thought was one of the greatest contributions of friendship anyone could imagine.”

Brandt was a tireless and tenacious advocate for the community. He founded Citizens for Community Improvement, which spearheaded the effort to build Warm Springs Dam at Lake Sonoma. He was a charter member of the Russian River Riders, the Healdsburg Museum and the North Sonoma County Republican Club. He was a lifetime member of Healdsburg Rotary, county chairman for the March of Dimes, a member of the American Legion for 59 years and was active for 56 years in Masonic, Scottish Rite and Shriner organizations.

Milt died in 2003; Mary passed away in 2018.

Sources:

Healdsburg Tribune: June 25, 2003.

Russian River Recorder: Winter 2002.



Source: Eugene Cuneo



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Gene Cuneo, 1963 and 2001

Eugene Cuneo — 2004

by Jane Bonham

Eugene Cuneo was born in San Francisco on October 10, 1912. When he was four years old, his father and his uncle moved their families from the city to a Dry Creek Valley ranch where they farmed prunes, pears, apples, grapes and walnuts, part of a large extended Italian family.

After graduating from Healdsburg High School in 1930, Gene and his friend and cousin, Eugene "Si" Saini, helped replace prunes with grapes. Gene's father partnered with a cousin in growing grapes and, as the older men retired, their sons took up the partnership, working in business together for the next 56 years.

The young men weathered the post-World War II depression and grape market crash. In a 2006 interview, Gene joked, "Every Saturday night a neighbor with a nice barn had a dance and polenta feed. We had food, family and friends. We just didn't have any money."

In 1949 the families joined the Sonoma County Co-op which maintained contracts with wine distributors. Gene served as the co-op's secretary/treasurer from 1956 to the mid-1980s when the organization was disbanded.

Gene became a founding member of the California North Coast Grape Growers Association

in 1963, serving as its president and board member from 1972 to 1993. He is credited as the driving force behind getting the region named one of the first wine grape appellations in the United States. He also worked to improve wine quality and the economic climate for local growers.

Gene supported many other agricultural associations as well. He was a member of the Dry Creek Farm Bureau. He served on Sunsweet's board of directors from 1974 to 1984 as a member of their marketing policy committee and a representative of the Healdsburg Local representative.

Gene was a participant in the Healdsburg Heritage Project (HHP), formed in 2005 to explore Healdsburg's cultural heritage and honor industry founders. He was honored in 2006 as a wine industry pioneer at the opening of HHP's first event, "Enduring Spirit: Ten Lives of Healdsburg."

Gene passed away in 2007.

Sources:

Healdsburg Tribune: January 23, 1975; October 10, 1979; August 19, 1981.

Interview: Eugene Cuneo and Eugene Saini, by Carole Hicke, 1996.

Press Democrat: January 4, 2007.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Rose Ferrari Demostene Benson, 1965 and 2003

Rose Ferrari Demostene Benson — 2005

by Jane Bonham

Rose Ferrari was born in 1912 to Italian immigrants Abele and Mansvetta Ferrari who came to the Healdsburg area in 1904. While Rose was still in elementary school, her family moved to a house in town that her father relocated to West Street (now Healdsburg Avenue). From there, Rose would cross the Plaza as a shortcut to school.

When she first started school, she spoke only Italian, as did many of her fellow students who also came from first generation Italian homes and spoke “Italiano.” Learning English was just the beginning of Rose’s language acquisition. After graduation from high school, she became the first in her family to attend college, earning a teaching degree and a BA in foreign languages at UC Berkeley with fluency in Spanish, Latin, French and Italian.

The college graduate returned to Healdsburg where she was hired to teach at the one room Lafayette School on Westside Road. “Miss Ferrari” found that many of her students came from backgrounds similar to her own. Rose met the challenge with her multi-lingual capability, able to instruct and communicate in varied ways.

Her father, Abele Ferrari, was a founder of the Healdsburg Machine Shop, which made and serviced all manner of winemaking equipment. He and his partner, Frank Ferrero, bought the Soda Rock Ranch in 1925. By 1933, the winery was totally rebuilt and had its first crush in 1934.

When Rose married Leo Demostene in 1936, the couple initially lived on his family’s Bailhache Avenue ranch. Shortly afterward they moved to Alexander Valley where they helped Rose’s parents establish Soda Rock Winery and farm the 80 acres of grapes.

Leo and Rose moved into the Soda Rock house in 1943, took over the operation of the winery and lived on the property. Then, in 1958, they purchased the Sausal Ranch one mile north of Soda Rock on Highway 128. In 1973, David Demostene, the eldest son of Leo and Rose, became winemaker for the new Sausal Winery.

Besides working with the family in the vineyards and wineries, Rose managed to become very involved in the Healdsburg community. She was a member of the Soroptimist Club, Healdsburg Garden Club, Healdsburg Senior Center, Healdsburg Museum, Incontro Italian Conversation Club and many other service-oriented groups.

Rose passed away in 2010.

Sources:

“History Lives for the Seventh Time—and It’s a Woman This Year!” press release by Barbara Baxter, History Lives Committee, 2005.

Press Democrat: October 30, 2010.

Russian River Recorder: Spring 2005.



Source: Pedroncelli Winery

Jim and John Pedroncelli, c.2007

John and James Pedroncelli — 2006

by Jane Bonham

John Pedroncelli, Sr. came to northern Sonoma County in 1927, buying property on Canyon Road from G. Canata, a cousin of Louis Foppiano. When the family arrived, the ranch was planted primarily in zinfandel and carignane grapes.

For the next five years, until the Repeal in 1933, the family nurtured the vines and sold grapes to home winemakers, since each household was legally allowed to produce 200 gallons for personal use. Many of the old vineyards that are so highly prized today, including Petrocelli's famed "Mother Clone" vineyard, were saved because these home winemakers bought grapes. Like so many other hardworking and self-sufficient Italian farm families of this area, they lived reasonably well during the Depression.

Pedroncelli Winery didn't bottle under its own label until the 1940s. Grapes were still being sold to home winemakers. Stores had barrels of wine and customers could dispense their own gallons. Especially during the war, these were slow years.

John Jr. graduated from high school and was immediately drafted into the Coast Guard. Their sister, Marianne, enlisted in the Marines. Jim stayed home to help run the winery.

After WWII, John Jr. returned, graduated from Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC) and took over as winemaker in 1948. Jim finished high school and attended SRJC for one year. Still, as Jim

reflected, "The demand for wine remained depressed into the early fifties."

John began to enter their wines into competition during the 1950s. There were only two on the West Coast: the California State and the Los Angeles County Fairs. They entered their first judging in 1955 and sent in the zinfandel and zinfandel rosé to the California State Fair. The rosé won a gold medal, the zinfandel a silver medal.

Jim officially came on board in 1957 and immediately became the sales manager, including the entire Bay Area. He recognized the value of using a smaller appellation area on the bottle. The combination of varietally-labeled wines, along with the Sonoma County appellation, raised the profile of their wines.

John remembered, "By the mid-sixties, people had become aware, interested in wine and you could just feel it coming on."

Although John Pedroncelli passed away in 2015, the Pedroncelli Winery remains a family operation, with the third and fourth generations working in the vineyards, the winery and the tasting room.

Source:

Interviews: John and Jim Pedroncelli.
pedroncelli.com

Russian River Recorder: Spring 2006.
winespectator.com



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Clarence Ruonavaara, 1953 and 2007

Clarence Ruonavaara — 2007

by Jane Bonham

Clarence Milton Ruonavaara was born in Fort Bragg in 1919. He grew up in Albion during the Great Depression, when, “everyone was poor.” For a growing boy, that meant “doing things without cost—fishing for trout in Salmon Creek, playing horseshoes, playing ball in the alley with balls made of stuffed stockings sewn tightly...flying homemade kites [made] with homemade paste.”

When Clarence was fourteen, the family left the coast and moved to Healdsburg. His father worked in the Mill Creek woods making railroad ties; the older boys helped fell trees. In the early 1940s, Clarence was old enough to join his father at work.

In Healdsburg’s schools, Clarence played basketball and refined his baseball skills, cementing his passion for the sport. High School Vice Principal Earl Osborn became his mentor and encouraged him to pursue a career in education. After two and one-half years at Santa Rosa Junior College, Clarence transferred to University of California, Berkeley, where he joined the college baseball team. It was on a baseball tour to the East Coast that Clarence met his future wife, Betty Ann Thomas.

When Clarence graduated from Cal, he joined the Navy’s Flying Golden Bears squadron, patrolling the East Coast for enemy submarines. After the war, he and Betty Ann married and lived in a one-room apartment in Richmond while he got his teaching credentials at UC Berkeley.

After Clarence completed his student teaching, the young couple moved to Healdsburg

where he landed his first teaching job at Healdsburg High School. He eventually was promoted to vice principal and then principal, but “being in administration had become so frustrating,” he spent the last eight years of his career back in the classroom.

At his Pioneer Award dinner in 2007, Clarence told the gathering, “People say that Healdsburg has been discovered, but it was never lost.” Later he elaborated, “We’ve had a wonderful community here, but the newcomers don’t know our history. They don’t know that so much was done by small groups of dedicated people.”

Clarence knew, because he was one of the dedicated. Clarence was a founding member of the Recreation Park Lighting Committee and the Redwood Empire Invitational Basketball Tournament. He was an active member of the Healdsburg Community Church and the Salvation Army Advisory Committee. He and Betty hosted foreign exchange students through the American Field Service. Clarence belonged to SIRS, the local Retired Teachers group and the Kiwanis.

“He was also very humble about it,” remarked his longtime neighbor Bob Platt. “He always wanted everyone else to get the credit.”

Clarence passed away in 2012.

Sources:

Press Democrat: January 14, 2012.

Russian River Recorder: Spring, 2010.



Source: pressdemocrat.com
Rachel Ann Seghesio, c.2007 and Ed Seghesio, 2016



Source: seghesio.com

Rachel Ann and Ed Seghesio — 2008

by Jane Bonham

Rachel Ann was born in 1930, the daughter of wine grower Emil Passalacqua. She was raised on the family ranch just north of Healdsburg, instilled with a strong Catholic faith, a love of farming and an appreciation for learning. She attended Healdsburg Elementary and Healdsburg High School. Then she enrolled in the San Francisco College for Women at Lone Mountain, where she received her teaching credential. She taught in schools in the Windsor area for five years.

She met her husband, Pete, at her father's ranch. The couple married in 1956 and she devoted her life to the family business and her husband. She weighed grapes and did the bookkeeping and the payroll. She cooked three meals a day for her husband and later their two children. Her daughter remembers, "She was your typical generous, kind, magical Italian mother. She was a super woman, hardworking, self-reliant, an old-school mother and wife. She was also a lot of fun."

The Seghesio family traces its roots back to the late 19th century, when Edoardo Seghesio planted his first zinfandel vineyard in the Alexander Valley. Since then, five generations of the family have tended more than 400 acres of vineyards in the Alexander, Dry Creek and Russian River valleys.

Gene "Pete" Seghesio was a member of the second generation of the family and one of the loose-

knit group called the "Wine Industry Old-Timers." For 30 years, this pioneer ran the family's 110-year-old Seghesio Winery in Healdsburg. He attended the College of Agriculture at the University of California at Davis, where he graduated in 1941. He was a partner in his family's wine business since that time and served as president of the winery from 1965 until 1995. Active in the Wine Institute, he served as a director from 1948 until 1972.

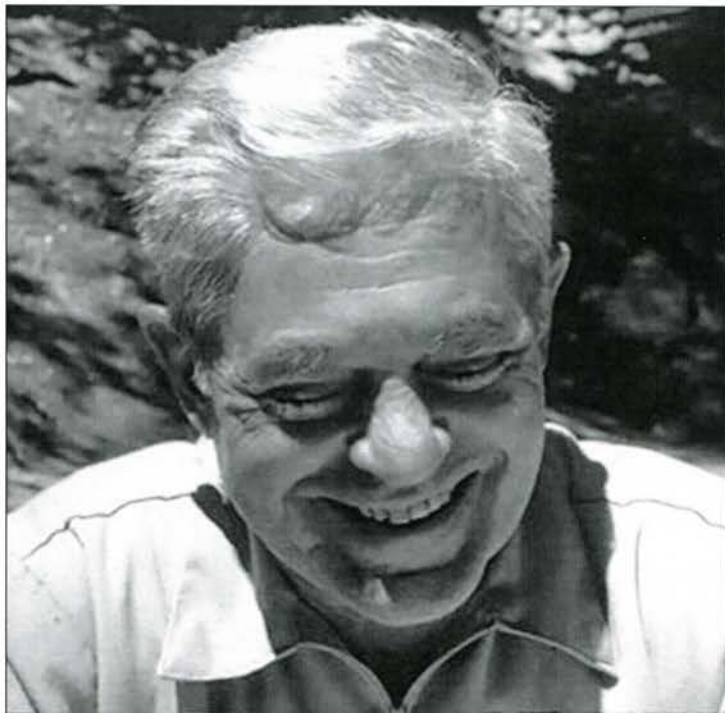
Sons of Italian immigrants, Pete and Ed personified the tradition of deep attachment to, and respect for, the land—with a passion about sharing the fruits of that land. The Seghesio grapes—particularly due to Pete and Ed's efforts—were the source of many popular wines of the time.

After Pete passed away in 2004, Rachel Ann was semi-retired. Then in 2006, to display the label, the family opened private tasting rooms modeled after the home atmosphere that Rachel Ann maintained in her ranch house, and she returned to the business as hostess. Rachel Ann died in 2010.

When the Healdsburg Museum presented the Pioneer Award in 2008, Rachel Ann and her nephew, Ed, proudly represented the history and successes of the Seghesio family.

Sources:

Press Democrat: October 2, 2004; October 3, 2010.



Gene Domenichelli, c.1940s and c.1980s

Source: Gina Illingworth

Eugene Domenichelli — 2009

excerpt from Press Democrat, May 13, 2014

Eugene Domenichelli was born in Geyserville to Almino and Anne (Guadagni) Domenichelli. Almino was the oldest of the seven Domenichelli brothers, and Gene was the first grandchild in the family. Raised on the family ranch in Geyserville, he graduated from Geyserville High School, moving on to Santa Rosa Junior College and then to Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, with a goal to become an engineer. Instead, as World War II broke out, he joined the US Marine Corps to fly corsairs.

After the war, Gene settled in Sonoma with his wife, Dolly, where they started their family of eight children. There, Gene became a masonry and swimming pool contractor. He was active in the Sonoma community, coaching CYO Basketball and Little League Baseball.

In 1960, Gene and Dolly bought a prune ranch in Healdsburg and Gene became highly regarded in construction as a stonemason and

contractor. He also continued to be active in his community, serving on the Healdsburg High School Board of Trustees and the Healdsburg Planning and Recreation Commissions.

Gene was an accomplished accordion player. As a young boy, he often performed at dances, and, as he got older, he played with local bands, but he especially liked and continued to play at family gatherings throughout his life.

Gene also enjoyed sports. An avid baseball player through high school and college, he also played on community teams and played fast pitch softball. Gene was a hunter, but he truly enjoyed fly fishing and tied his own flies, particularly the bucktail fly. He was also a golfer, winning a tournament in Sonoma in 1960, although he rarely played until the last 20 years of his life when he became a regular at Tayman Park in Healdsburg with his golf cart and wife Dolly.

Gene passed away in 2014.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Joe Rochioli, Jr., 1987 and 2010

Joe Rochioli, Jr. — 2010

by Jane Bonham

Joe Rochioli Jr., the son of an Italian immigrant family, was born in 1934. He grew up working hard on the family's Westside Road farm, growing hops, fruit, grapes, prunes and vegetables. When Joe entered Healdsburg High School, he was one of the first students in the Healdsburg Future Farmers of America chapter in 1950. He loved raising animals and continued showing at the Healdsburg, Sonoma County and Sonoma-Marín Fairs throughout his high school years.

Joe also enjoyed sports, playing four years of baseball and football, earning all-league honors in both. He even played for the Prune Packers while he was a senior.

Popular in school, Joe was elected student body vice-president. Graduating in 1952, Joe left town to attend Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, studying animal sciences and taking as many agricultural classes as he could. He also played baseball all four years.

A college graduate, Joe returned to Healdsburg to help his dad on the family farm and start a family of his own. The draft and U.S. Army took him away to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington DC where he researched radiated food

and vitamin deficiencies. He left the service and returned to Healdsburg in 1959 to again farm wine grapes.

The family attributes their passion for fine wine and high-quality grape growing to Joe. He was a pioneer, among the first to plant pinot noir in 1968. Now, the name "Rochioli" is synonymous with premium wine and wine grapes.

In 2003, Joe received the inaugural "Copia Award" as Wine Grower of the Year, a national recognition. In 2009, Joe and his wife Vivienne received the Sonoma County Harvest Fair Lifetime Achievement Award.

Joe served 16 years on the Westside Union Elementary School Board and 25 years on the Healdsburg Future Farmers Fair Board of Directors. He was also one of the founding members of the Healdsburg Future Farmers Fair, dedicating many years to support youth in agriculture.

Sources:
harvestfair.org
PinotFile: October 4, 2011.
rochioli.com
sonomafb.org



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Arnold Santucci, 1956 and 2011

Arnold Santucci — 2011

excerpt from History Lives Event Press Release by Barbara Baxter

Arnold has been a true pioneer in his own fields of publishing and editing. He has also been a pillar of support over many years to the Healdsburg Museum & Historical Society by serving on the board, heading the publications committee and editing the *Russian River Recorder*.

Arnold was born in San Francisco's Cow Hollow district in 1920. He attended St. Ignatius High School and then the University of California at Berkeley where he majored in English and Business. After graduating in 1942, he joined the Army Air Corps and spent the next three years stationed in Atlantic City, Alabama, Seattle and eventually the Aleutian Islands where he completed his tour of duty.

After serving his country, Arnold returned to San Francisco and spent the next few years working for newspapers and publishers. 1950 was a big year for Arnold. He moved to Healdsburg, purchased the *Healdsburg Tribune* and married Vi Miller, a teacher from Wisconsin.

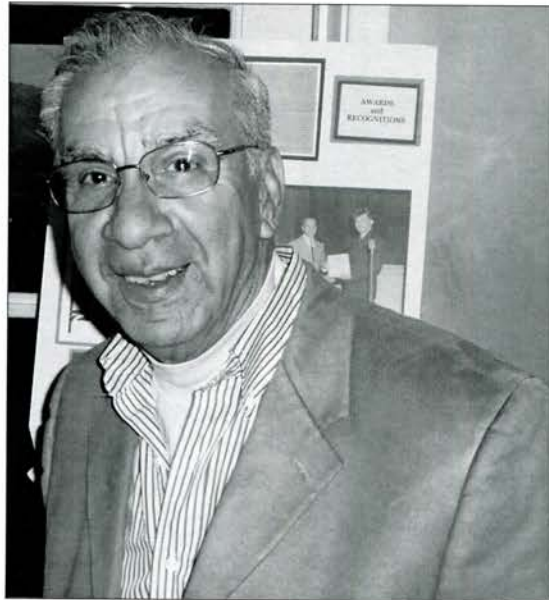
Arnold spent the next twelve years publishing, writing and editing the *Healdsburg Tribune*, becoming involved in the community he and Vi had chosen as their home. He became a

familiar face to all as he turned up at city council meetings, sports events, fundraisers, board meetings and school events. If he wasn't scribbling notes on a pad, he was behind a camera taking pictures. The town of Healdsburg expanded and transformed under Arnold's watchful eyes. He recorded the conversion of this small farming community of 3,300 to today's [2011] trendy town of 11,000.

Arnold seemed to be everywhere, covering every event, but he still found time to join the local Kiwanis and, of course, edit their newsletter. He was also a member of the Elementary School Board for eight years and served as President for the American Field Service Exchange Student Program. He has sat on the Advisory Council of the Salvation Army at Lytton Springs and on the Board of Directors of the Friends of Lake Sonoma where he (what else?) edited their newsletter!

In 1958 Arnold was awarded the first Healdsburg Chamber of Commerce "Citizen of the Year" award. He also edited a book, *A History of Healdsburg as reviewed through articles appearing in the Russian River Recorder 1977 – 2000*.

Arnold now considers himself retired, but he is still a welcome sight at local events and activities.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
Edgar Deas, 2012

Edgar Deas — 2012

by Jane Bonham

The Deas family emigrated from Cuba in 1936, led by Edgar's grandfather Marti. While young and with limited English-speaking skills, Edgar was raised by his parents with a strong ethic of education and self-made industry. During World War II, they worked in the shipyards of Albany, then found post-war work in Mendocino and Sonoma counties.

Edgar and his father Mario founded E&M Electric in 1955. The business was originally located in Willits before it was moved to Healdsburg. They began E&M as an electric motor supply and repair business for the local logging, mining and winery industries, building it into a very successful enterprise.

Edgar's sons describe their father as a role model who taught them to "build jobs...create vision...set an example...always work hard and look forward as a family." By 2012, under the leadership of this fourth generation, the company was a leading systems and automation firm for inventory management and distribution with clients across the country and in Europe. The firm has been a member of the Healdsburg Chamber of Commerce since 1959 and has aided in its efforts to strengthen the business community.

Edgar, his wife Judy and their four sons are well-known and appreciated for their leadership and financial support of many of Healdsburg's projects and non-profits, including significant support for the Healdsburg Museum.

During Edgar's term of office as president of the Healdsburg Kiwanis in 1981 the club sponsored the first of a successful series of wine auctions. The monies raised from this event funded scholarships and launched the Sonoma County Wine Library housed in the Healdsburg Library building.

From 1989 to 1992, Edgar successfully served the community as a member of the Healdsburg City Council. In 1990, he served as the first president and founding member of the Windsor Oaks Community Bank (later called North Coast Bank).

The Deas family has also been a major supporter of the Healdsburg Education Foundation, the Healdsburg Jazz Festival and the Recreation Park grandstand renovation. They are still active today.

Sources:

Healdsburg Tribune: July 12, 2012.

The Review: June, 2012.



Source: Charles Bacigalupi
Helen and Charles Bacigalupi, 1947 and 2013



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Helen and Charles Bacigalupi — 2013

by Jane Bonham

Charles Bacigalupi grew up in Santa Rosa. His mother was a homemaker and artist; his father ran the local market, Bacigalupi Market, first established by Charles' grandfather in the early 1900s. Charles attended local schools including Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC), but World War II and the draft interrupted his education plans. In the Navy, Charles became a corpsman assigned the duty of dental assistant which sparked his interest in the field of dentistry.

Returning home after the war, Charles finished his prerequisites at SRJC. During his final year at school, Charles met Helen Long. They attended similar classes since Helen had plans to become a pharmacist. Both Helen and Charles attended the University of San Francisco (UCSF) and lived in San Francisco while they finished their degrees. Soon after graduation in 1952, Helen and Charles were married. They decided to settle in Healdsburg, Charles as the local dentist and Helen as a pharmacist.

Sharing a love of the land, the couple moved onto Westside Road in 1956 where they purchased 121 acres of land. Charles began to care for the 16 acres of existing vineyards. Through his dental practice, he became friends with Bob Sission, the farm advisor for University of California, Davis, and Paul Heck who had recently acquired Korbel

Champagne Cellars with brother Adolph Heck. They would chat about grapes and wine, sharing insight and advice. Seeing a future demand for premium wine grapes, Paul encouraged Charles to expand his vineyard. Joined by his son John, Charles worked to perfect their viticulture techniques and expand the vineyards.

The Bacigalupis gained widespread recognition as growers when they sold chardonnay grapes to Chateau Montelena Winery. The resulting wine won the Paris Tasting of 1976, a turning point in California's global wine image.

Charles developed a reputation in the business for being an honest, hardworking man with a ready smile. Helen became known for her warm wit as well as her shrewdness in selling grapes.

Working alongside Helen and Charles, the next generations of Bacigalupis have learned how to enhance their family legacy through John Tyler Wines and Bacigalupi Vineyards. Charles passed away in 2013.

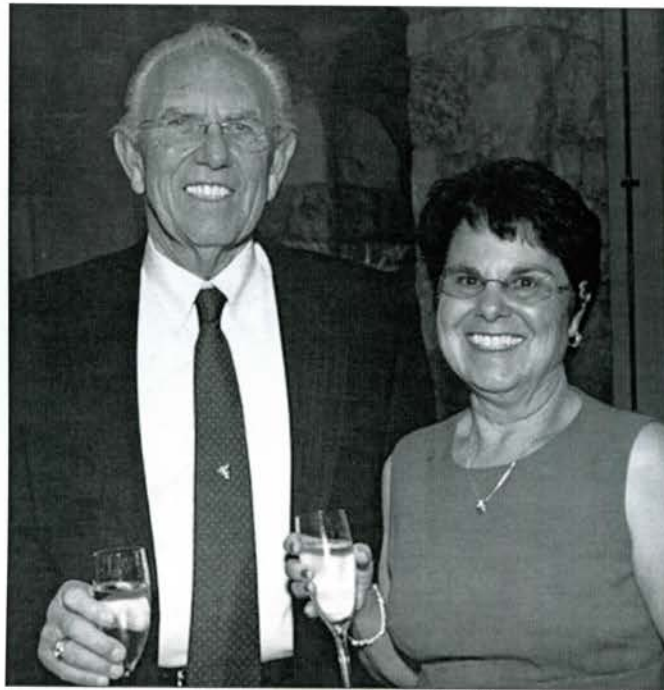
Sources:

bacigalupivineyards.com

Healdsburg Tribune: November 6, 2013.

Press Democrat: November 3, 2013.

The Review: March, 2013.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Mary Lou and Jerry Eddinger, 2014

Mary Lou and Jerry Eddinger — 2014

by Jane Bonham

In 1950 Mary Lou Cattalini moved with her family to the old Dry Creek Store, looking for something different in their lives. Her mother “loved people and wanted to get into the business world.” For nine-year-old Mary Lou, the most exciting thing about the move was having the only TV in the valley. The family lived in small quarters in the back of the store, nonetheless providing plenty of opportunities for celebrations, games, good food and laughter.

Jerry Eddinger was ill as a young child, in and out of the hospital. The family moved to Kelseyville in Lake County seeking better air for his asthma, but that proved to be ineffective. They returned to Healdsburg, but sadly Jerry’s parents divorced when he was six. The children stayed with their mom, who married Martin DeLisle in 1948. Jerry describes Martin as “a great guy [who] showed real perseverance with me.” In high school Jerry worked for Al Barbieri’s furniture store. Al had founded a boxing club, which had a genuinely positive influence on Jerry.

Mary Lou and Jerry married in 1962 and began a long life of building deep roots as leaders and pioneers in business. The Eddingers credit family,

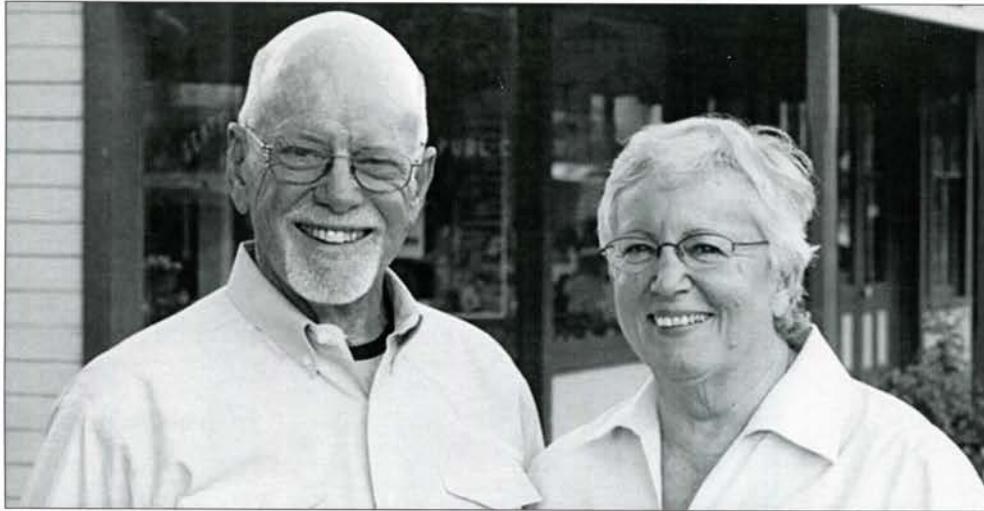
friends and the community for their success and demonstrate their gratitude by giving back. The family contracting business, Eddinger Enterprises, has championed many community projects, including conversion of the Healdsburg Public Library to the Healdsburg Museum, construction of the current gazebo in the Plaza, the Senior Center, the Swim Center, Carson Warner Memorial Skate Park and renovation of the grandstands at Recreation Park.

A longtime member of the Planning Commission, Jerry served on the City Council and two terms as mayor. He was an inductee into the Construction Hall of Fame by the North Coast Builders’ Exchange in 2011. Mary Lou is an active volunteer at the Senior Center and St. John’s School. Both are past recipients of the Marie Sparks Volunteer Award and received the Healthcare Foundation of Northern Sonoma County Community Leadership Award in 2008. Jerry currently serves on the Healdsburg Museum Board of Directors.

Sources:

Russian River Recorder: Winter 2014.

The Review: March, 2014.



Source: Rick Tang

Karen and Harry Bosworth, 2015

Karen and Harry Bosworth — 2015

by Jane Bonham

The Bosworth family was among the earliest settlers in Geyserville; both Harry's grandmother and grandfather arrived with their respective families in the 1850s.

In 1911, Harry's grandfather, George, and his father, Obed, opened Bosworth & Son General Merchandise in downtown Geyserville. After George died, Obed invited Harry into the business. When Obed passed away, Harry took over the business. Now Harry's daughter, Gretchen Crebs, has taken over its management.

More than a unique shopping experience, Bosworth & Son General Merchandise has served as the cultural and historical heart of the Geyserville community. To locals, Bosworth & Son General Merchandise has been there forever, long before the freeway bypassed the town and the prune trees were burned for firewood. Many would say that, in some way, the store and the Bosworths have long been a significant part of the fabric that holds Geyserville together.

Like his father before him, Harry possesses detailed historical knowledge and impressive oratory skill. In 1966, the *Press Democrat* called Obed "a pretty good candidate for a title like 'Mr. Geyserville'." Although Obed probably scoffed at the notion, Harry qualifies for a similar designation.

Karen Bosworth's roots also grow deep in northern Sonoma County. As the daughter of a

local doctor and nurse, Kenneth and Ruth Dunlavy, her passion for healthcare came naturally. After graduating from University of the Pacific, Karen worked for Southern Pacific Hospital in San Francisco. Meeting Harry on a blind date brought her back to Sonoma County, where she operated a clinical lab for Doctors Grace, Neal and Wellock. Later, Karen worked as a clinical scientist in Healdsburg General Hospital.

As the mother of two daughters and later a grandmother, Karen still found time and energy for addressing the needs of her community. Deeply involved in public education, she served four terms on the Sonoma County Board of Education. Her passion for promoting healthcare led her to serve as a board member of the Healthcare Foundation. Karen also participated as both a member and president of the Geyserville Chamber of Commerce.

Together, Karen and Harry have owned and operated the store as well as the Geyserville Waterworks, Olive Hill Cemetery and the Bosworth vineyard.

Sources:

Healthcare Foundation publication, 2007.

Press Democrat: April 17, 1966.

Russian River Recorder: Summer 2011.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Nancy and Karl Seppi, 2016

Nancy and Karl Seppi — 2016

by Lauren Carriere

Prior to their move to Healdsburg in the 1970s, Nancy and Karl Seppi lived in Idaho and southern California in support of Karl's professional golfing career. When they relocated, Nancy and Karl chose a home in close proximity to the golf course. While they had a lovely home in a wonderful town, the Seppis also had a desire to run a family business.

The opportunity presented itself in Costeaux French Bakery. The bakery had a long history of its own, established in the 1920s as the French American Bakery run by the Cassazas family. When the bakery went up for sale, Nancy's aunt Mary Zandrino suggested that it would be the perfect family business for Nancy and Karl. The couple purchased Costeaux French Bakery in 1981 with no prior experience running a bakery. Fortunately, Jean Costeaux mentored Karl in the art of bread making.

Within the first year of owning Costeaux, Karl's bread won a gold medal at the Sonoma County Harvest Fair. This was just a taste of the future success that they would realize; however it was not without sacrifice that they earned their reputation and respect from the community. For many years, Karl baked from 10 pm until the early morning hours, while Nancy ran the bakery during the day. They hardly saw each other, but they made it through!

Nancy and Karl built their business on a strong foundation and took opportunities to expand it. They moved the business to its current location on Healdsburg Avenue and later added a café menu and expanded into the catering business.

When it comes to giving back to the community, the Seppis seem to be everywhere. Each year they donate money and products to an astounding number of community events, including Healdsburg Senior Center's Christmas dinner, Redwood Gospel Mission's Great Thanksgiving Banquet, Future Farmers of America and more. They contribute to the local Secret Santa gift program, the Algebra Academy and internship programs at Healdsburg area schools. They have also sponsored family ESL literacy programs for their employees. The list goes on and on.

After 27 years of running Costeaux, Nancy and Karl's son Will took over the family business. He has followed in his parents' footsteps with his dedication to quality food and an investment in the Healdsburg community.

Source:

Haran, Michael, "A Town Treasure on a Baguette," June 4, 2015.

Healdsburg Living: July 2019.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Meredith and Jim Dreisback, 2017

Meredith and Jim Dreisback — 2017

by Holly Hoods

Meredith's great great grandparents, Elihu and Mary Meredith, for whom she is named, settled on 160 acres on Westside Road in 1857, the same year that Healdsburg was founded. Jim's family roots in Sonoma County go back to Henry Dreisback who homesteaded in Cloverdale in the 1880s.

Jim's grandmother, Genevieve Summers Kroll, purchased the Westside Road property in 1929. The property was used as a vacation home until 1950 when Jim's father Bill decided that he had had enough of city living in Berkeley. The family moved to the ranch, built barns and fences and filled the property with chickens, sheep, horses and pigs. Jim and his siblings grew up on the ranch where he and Meredith have lived since their marriage in 1977.

While in high school, Jim got a part-time job at Silveira Buick GMC washing cars. He continued working there part-time throughout his college years, assisting the service manager. After college, Jim worked as a service manager and was eventually promoted to be their chief financial officer. Jim retired from Silveira as the vice-president and general operations manager.

Meredith retired from her job as assistant curator at the Healdsburg Museum in 2013.

Meredith's previous work experience included the Healdsburg Chamber of Commerce and the City of Healdsburg's Finance and Parks and Recreation Departments.

Meredith and Jim have been active in neighborhood groups, including the Westside Community Association and the Wohler Bridge Neighborhood Association. Meredith is also an enthusiastic member of Alexander Valley Ladies Aid, currently serving as its historian and recording secretary.

Most recently, Meredith and Jim have shown exceptional dedication to the Healdsburg Museum. They helped relocate the Museum's collection to the new state of the art collections storage building. As project manager, Jim helped raise money and awareness and brought local business owners, farmers, arborists, tree trimmers, vineyard management companies and volunteers together to clean up and restore the historic portion of Oak Mound Cemetery.

Meredith and Jim are the recipients of the Healdsburg Museum Langhart Volunteer Appreciation award in July 2019.

Source:

Interviews: Meredith and Jim Dreisback

History Lives Pioneer Award

Every year the Museum honors a member of the community who has made an important contribution to the history of the area. These people are pioneers not only in their respective fields, but also in the creation of the place that Healdsburg and northern Sonoma County is today.



Third Class

**Healdsburg Museum & Historical Society
P.O. Box 952
Healdsburg, CA 95448**

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

**NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
HEALDSBURG, CA
PERMIT 149**