

DECEMBER 2018

# ORINDA

An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Orinda

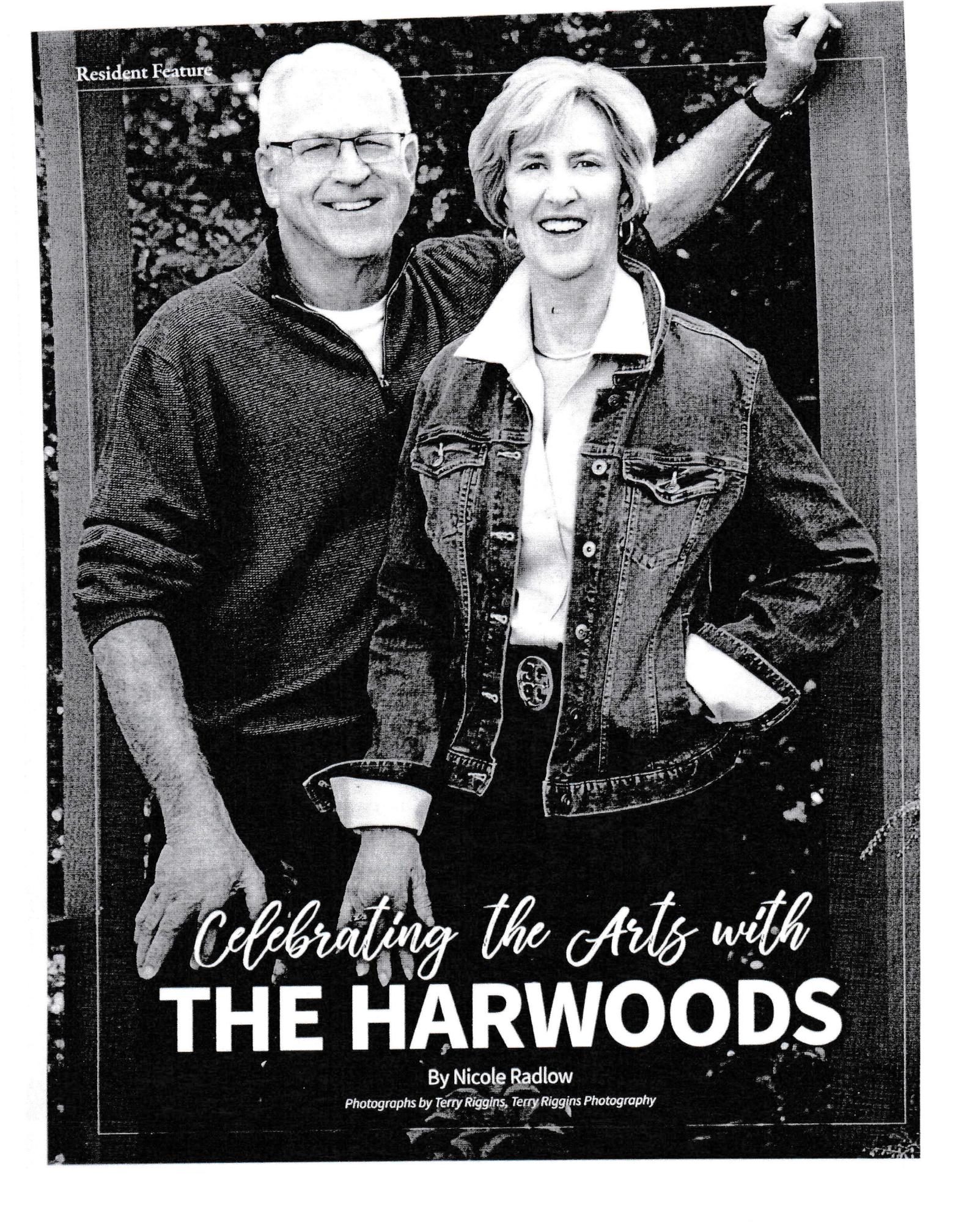
*Living*

*Celebrating  
the Arts with*  
**The Harwoods**



Best Version Media

Cover photo by Terry Riggins, Terry Riggins Photography



Resident Feature

*Celebrating the Arts with*  
**THE HARWOODS**

By Nicole Radlow

Photographs by Terry Riggins, Terry Riggins Photography

Steve and Tish Harwood met in New York City in 1969. Tish had just graduated from nursing school and was attending a new apartment warming party. She lost her contact lens down the bathroom drain and Steve came in and rescued it. "That may have been the last handy thing he's done around the house," Tish jokes.

In 1972, they spent six weeks traveling and camping Orinda rest across the United States and eventually settled in San Francisco. In 1976, with the expected arrival of their first son Will, they moved to Orinda and have been in the same house for the last 42 years.

Tish received her nursing degree from Cornell University and a degree as a nurse practitioner at UCSF in 1976 when the profession was still in its infancy. In 2012, she retired from her position as Nurse Practitioner at UC Berkeley University Health Service that she held for 34 years. "I feel blessed to have had a career in nursing that brought a girl from a small town in Ohio in contact with people who were diverse and who have enriched my life," Says Tish.

Steve got his degrees from Princeton and University of Chicago. He founded the Cypress Financial Corporation, an investment company focused on transportation and energy assets and retired in 2017. Since then they both have focused even more time on their various volunteer activities, particularly in the local arts scene.

#### ALL ABOUT THE ARTS

Many of you may know Steve from his incredible work as Chairman of Lamorinda Idol. "It's a natural for me as I've been a singer all my life and I really enjoy mentoring young people," he says. They've even converted the playroom over their garage into "Club 93," where the kids can come and practice. "Every year, after the Lamorinda Idol Finals, I say to myself, 'This is the good stuff in life.'"

You also may know Steve from the Orinda Fourth of July Parade, where he has MC'd for the last 20+ years. While he's a parade centerpiece today, his start with the parade was less auspicious. Steve recounts the story: "My first involvement was playing "Elvis," singing from the backseat of Jim Barnett's gaudy convertible. We were surrounded by screaming ladies who were held off by "secret service men." When we drove down

to the parade my daughter Alison (then 10 years old) got a ride with me, but she was so embarrassed by her dad dressed up as Elvis that she lay down on the backseat so no one would see her as we drove to town. As Jim's car approached the judges' platform, the generator in his trunk powering my sound system conked out. So there was Elvis (me), sweating and singing to no one as Jim pulled on the generator rope in a failed attempt to get it started."

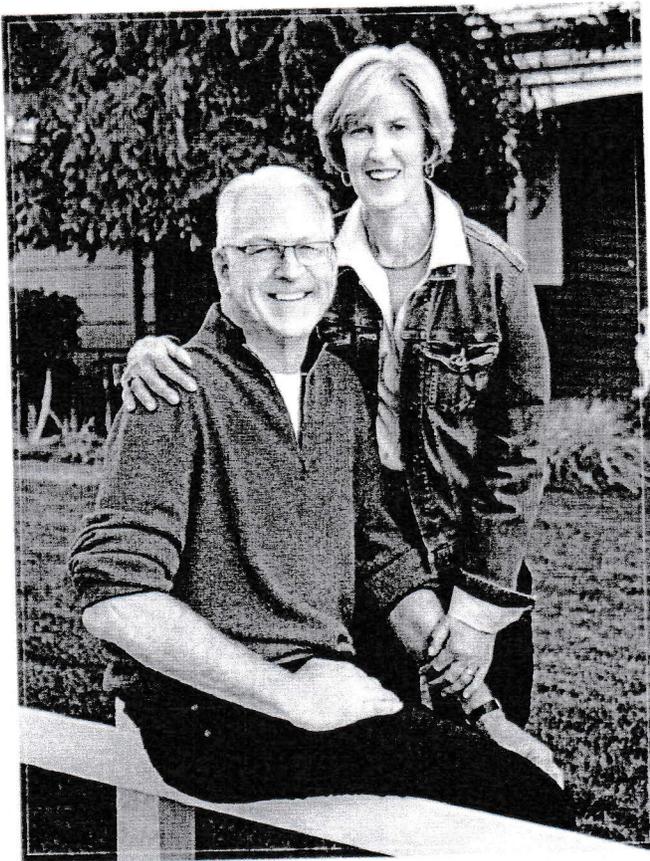
More recently, you may have seen Steve setting up the audio and lighting for Orinda Theatre's new Live at the Orinda Theatre Concert Series. "When (theatre owner) Derek Zemark asked me to help out, I enthusiastically said yes because I just love adding to the arts offerings right here in Orinda."

However, Steve is not the only Harwood who supports the arts in Orinda. Tish recently joined the board of Cal Shakes. While she says she is out of her comfort zone, she's a fast learner. "It's really been such an enriching opportunity. The people are all so passionate about what they do. I've learned a lot about what it takes to produce excellence in theater: A committed artistic director with innovative ideas, a hard-working, talented staff, world-class actors, and loyal subscribers and audience members."

A few weeks ago, the Harwoods took their son Tim and some of his friends who live in the Bay Area to see the award winning production of Black Odyssey. They were all blown away by the quality of the production right in Orinda's own back yard. As their son Tim said, "Where can you see a Broadway quality show in the midst of Eucalyptus trees!"

The dramatic arts aren't new to the Harwoods. About 20 years ago, they discovered Playhouse West in Walnut Creek, a small regional theater that performed high quality plays. They formed a theater group with 6 of their friends. "We'd do a little research about the featured play, gather for dinner beforehand, and then read an act by 'playing' it out," says Tish. "Then, we get to sit back at the theatre and enjoy seeing the interpretation of the roles we 'played'." They love to go to productions at all the local theatres from Leshner in Walnut Creek to Town Hall in Lafayette, and to The Aurora in Berkeley.





For all of Steve's audio and lighting hauls, he has a vehicle you cannot miss. He took the minivan they had already owned and decided to fulfill a life long dream. Steve says, "I figured, 'What the heck.' So now I'm the guy you see around town driving a Toyota Sienna with large red, orange and yellow flames on the side of the car!"

#### BUSY BEES

When Tish retired six years ago, she began to drive for Seniors Around Town for the Orinda Association. She has met the most interesting, delightful individuals who have often led unique lives. "Losing the ability to drive is a life altering experience," says Tish. "The riders are so appreciative and gracious. I leave them feeling uplifted by their positive spirit in the face of adversity."

Steve loves local sports. He's been involved one way or another with sports every year of his life since second grade, as an athlete, coach, fan, or announcer. "I've been announcing high school and college

sports for many years, including announcing Miramonte basketball and baseball games sitting beside my announcing partner and good pal, Bill Cosden, for 25 years." says Steve. Another favorite activity each year is announcing at the BOP Wheelchair Basketball Tournament. "I love the world of sports, especially at the high school level, where the purity of the contest still exists." Tish noted he recently came back from this year's BOP tournament so elated from being a part of such a special event.

If that's not enough volunteering, Steve is also involved in other community activities, such as the Moraga Adobe Fandango, the Pan Asian Art Festival, the Orinda Restaurant Tour, the Hospice Tree Lighting, the Seniors Around Town Annual Luncheon, Lamorinda Arts Council, Orinda in Action Day, the NorCal Kids Triathlon, and various school musicals.

Tish enjoys other activities as well, including a Family History Group, a Thought Group, and a Sunday night discussion group, and taking Osher Life Long Learning Classes. She loves playing canasta and is a beginning West African djembe (hand drum percussion) drummer.

#### YES, THEY HAVE A HUGE FAMILY, TOO

They are very close to their three children and their families. Will (42) lives in the Chicago area with his wife, Shirley, and children, Chloe (13) and Ben (11). Tim, (39) lives in San Francisco. Alison (35) lives in Denver, with her husband, Chris, and their son, Leo (3). "We have a large extended family and we enjoy traveling throughout the US and Canada to visit them," says Tish.

#### LOVING SLEEPY HOLLOW

The Harwoods live in Sleepy Hollow on Lower Van Ripper Lane and absolutely love their neighborhood. "When we moved in, we were the youngest and now we are just about the oldest," Tish says with a smile. "We have been blessed with wonderful neighbors who have become family to us. We all look after each other, love chatting in the street or driveway and share in the joys and challenges of the kids as they grow from infants to young adults."

Each year, their neighbors Sharon and Lou Parrague host a summer block party for families, which often includes a bonfire and a sing-along, thanks to many neighborhood talents. This time of year, the adults have a holiday party, which rotates every year from house to house. Tish adds, "It is so important as you get older to have people in your neighborhood who know you and can be there for you."

The Harwoods truly embrace the spirit of civic duty, support through volunteering, love of the arts, and devotion to the Orinda community. Thank you, Steve & Tish!



Enjoy the most wonderful time of the year in Orinda.

Happy Holidays from your friendly neighbor and Realtor.

I have loved raising my family in Orinda, and am committed to helping every client find their own happy home.



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