

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Welcoming In the New Year With Gene and Jagoda Brown

TGN: Gene and Jagodea, tell us how long you have lived here at Menlo Commons.

Gene: We bought the unit in 1978, rented it out for several years, and then we moved here in 2000 after doing an extensive remodel. Like a lot of other residents, we redid the kitchen, bathrooms, bedrooms, and put in stone and onyx. It was a major remodel. Of course Jagoda was in charge of the painting decisions.

Jagoda: Yes, I like lots of color. It feels good. As you can see we have pinks and several shades of yellow, even some orange.

TGN: Where did you live before?

Gene: We resided in Woodside for more than 30 years. It was a big place with lots of maintenance needed. Then our children grew up, the dogs died, and we decided to simplify our lives, so we sold and moved here.

Jagoda lived in Krakow, Poland before we were married and she still has a place there which she visits three or more times per year.

Jagoda: I like the people here - they are nice, smiling, and polite. It is such a convenient location, and we love the weather too. Last June my brother Waldek and his wife Krysia purchased B303 here, remodeled and moved in. He owns The Mechanic in Redwood City, specializing in BMW, Porsche and Mercedes.

TGN: Tell us about how you met each other.

Gene: In 1977, I was in Krakow, Poland, working on a project to build a hotel there. Jagoda was a high school geography teacher there and I met her on a business trip. Because of the threat of a Russian invasion following the Solidarity movement, the hotel project never got off the ground. A year after I met Jagoda we were married. I brought her directly to Woodside - the first time she had been in America. We have now celebrated our 35th anniversary.

Jagoda: At first I couldn't speak English and Gene could not speak Polish. I learned the language primarily

by myself at home in Woodside, watching TV, reading newspapers, using dictionaries.

TGN: Tell us about your career, Gene.

Gene: I was born and raised in Southern California. Our family moved from San Bernardino to San Diego after I finished junior high school. I went to San Diego State, I got my MBA at Cal Berkeley, and my PhD at Ohio State. Then I taught accounting, finance, management, and economics for 3 years at the Harvard Business School and thereafter 5 years at Stanford Business School. They must have liked me at Stanford as I was awarded "Best Teacher on the Faculty" while I was there. I left

Stanford to become vice president of corporate development at Syntex, then president and CEO of a medical instrument company, and co-founded Advanced Micro Devices. All the while I was in the active Air Force Reserve from which I retired after 22 years. Later, I started testifying as an expert witness in lawsuits involving business damages and governance practices.

TGN: The lawyers liked your background in business?

Gene: Yss. I was hired by large law firms and I wound up testifying in 120 cases. I testified as an expert in 3 out of 5 of the largest antitrust actions in the U.S. I also testified in Canada, Singapore, and even England (the British liked the fact I did not have a New York accent, and the Singapore lawyers liked the fact that I had white hair).

TGN: Now tell us about your car collection.

Gene: We have cut back on it from earlier years. We have had several Ferraris, but we sold the last one recently. We now just have a Bentley, which we keep covered in Building D. And Jagoda has a Mercedes SL. Then we also have a new Hyundai hybrid.

TGN: Now tell us about your interest in cooking and fine wines.

Gene: With a French cook book I got involved in cooking while a second lieutenant in the Air Force. I still enjoy cooking. My wine collection was more extensive at Woodside, although I suffered a theft of some of it. The theft was interesting, they took some of the less valuable wine along with more valuable wines. They must not have known the difference. Now I keep my wine in the cool and locked storage units we have in the garage area of Building E. Makes it easy to select the wine we want to enjoy with a meal.

TGN: You also like to travel?



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(Continued from Page 1)

Gene: Yes we do. We have explored many different areas of the world. We particularly like the exotic places where we can add to our collection of contemporary and primitive art. We have especially enjoyed Papua New Guinea, and Africa.

TGN: I will take some pictures of your art collection. Please explain these for myself and our readers.

Gene: *Below on the left* is "Portrait of a Dying Signboard" by John Baldassini, 1961. A major work which was the second featured piece from the opening of the Museum of Modern Art in Los Angeles, one of four of his works we own. They are by far our most valuable art investments. *Below on the right* is "Piramide de Perros" (Spanish) or "Pyramid of Dogs" a *paper mache* from Mexico. This is folk art. *In the center* is "An Orator's Chair", New Guinea. This is from a village on the Sepik River. In village meetings, the person desiring to hold the floor leans on the chair and cannot be interrupted. Potentially this would be useful in Menlo Commons HOA meetings! *Across the bottom* is a lifesize sandstone bas relief of the artist Bob Mack's wife. He lives in Minnesota, and specializes in bas reliefs such as this in sandstone and bronze.

