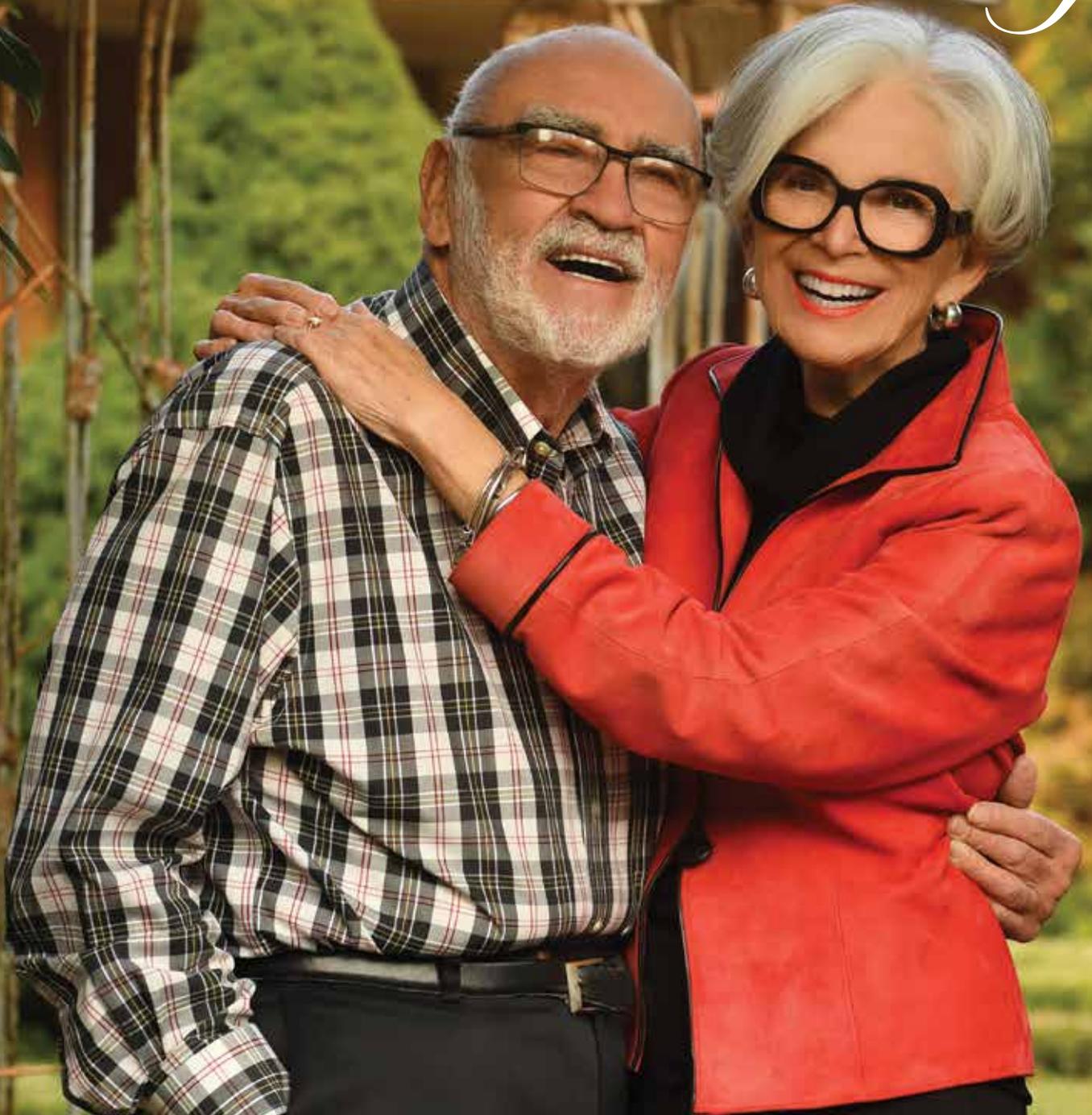


LOS GATOS

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An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Los Gatos
The Heart of Los Gatos

Living



The Decker Family:

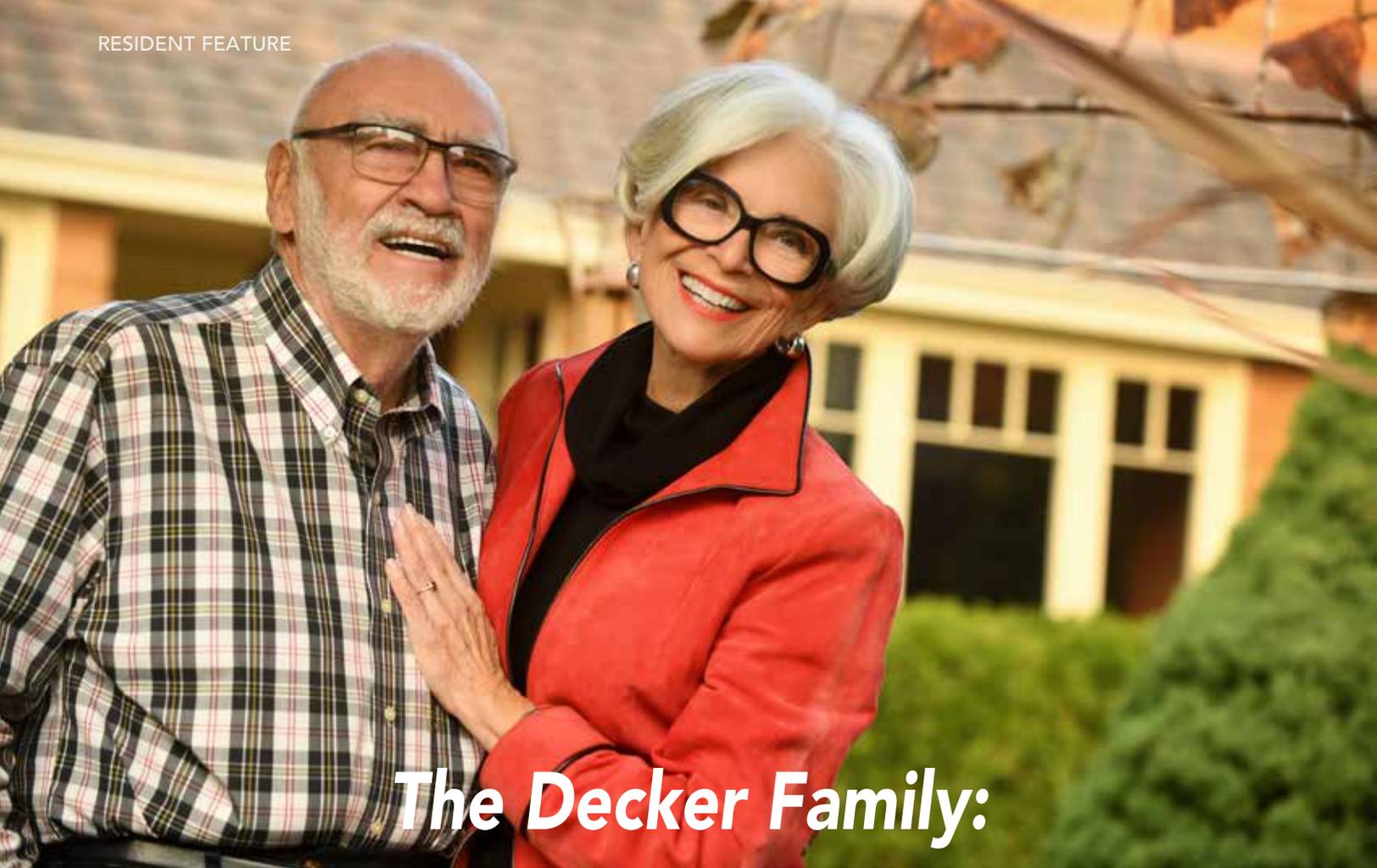
Loving Life in Los Gatos



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Cover photo by Dave Lepori



The Decker Family:

Loving Life in Los Gatos

By Genevieve Laucher, Photos by Dave Lepori

Gil and Sandy Decker have many wonderful qualities and accomplishments, both individually and together as a couple. They love their life in Los Gatos, and we are lucky to have them in town!

Although he has now called Los Gatos home for many years, Gil has lived in other parts of the country and even internationally. He was born in the state of Georgia, and as a child moved with his family to Munich, Germany, where his father was stationed with the US Army after World War II. Gil attended an American high school there and planned to return to Georgia for college, but his counselor recommended Johns Hopkins. Gil applied and was accepted on a scholarship, so he then moved to Baltimore, Maryland.

While in college, Gil earned his engineering degree and joined the ROTC. After graduation, he entered the Army first as a tank officer, then went to flight school and became a helicopter pilot. He was stationed in Korea after the war, when US forces were still there. Gil worked with the Korean Army for 17 months before finishing the tour. Since he was a pilot, he returned to Georgia as a training officer to prepare the troops that were going to Vietnam.

At that time, Gil was married to his first wife and had two of his three children. He resigned with excellent records from the Army so that he could attend graduate school. Gil and his family moved

out to California, where he went to Stanford Graduate School part-time and worked part-time at a tech company. There, he met his good friend Bill Perry, who was forming the company Electromagnetic Systems Laboratory (ESL).

Gil joined Bill at ESL, which grew to become one of the best defense contractors and went public. Bill later left ESL for a senior position in the government, and Gil became the president of ESL. Bill later returned to Stanford as faculty and also did venture capital work. Meanwhile, Gil met his now-wife, Sandy, when she began working at ESL with him. Sandy was already living in Los Gatos at the time. When she and Gil married, almost forty years ago now, he moved into her home in Los Gatos.

Soon, however, Gil and Sandy temporarily left Los Gatos when the company TRW acquired ESL and moved the business down to Southern California. Later, Gil was asked to take over a company in Washington DC, and he and Sandy lived there for four years. When they finally returned to Los Gatos, Gil received yet another job offer. His friend Bill Perry was serving as the Secretary of Defense under Bill Clinton, and he asked Gil to be the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research and Development. Gil accepted, and spent four years in this position.



As the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Gil met many fascinating people. He became friends with someone from Walt Disney Corporation, who told Gil about the work he was doing to expand Disneyland. After Gil moved back to California, his friend contacted him, and Gil spent four years as the Director of Engineering at Disneyland! During this time, Gil and Sandy traveled back and forth to see each other. Gil was happy to move back to Los Gatos to spend more time with Sandy and the wonderful Los Gatos community.

Sandy also did not grow up in the Bay Area, but is extremely happy to live here, especially in Los Gatos! She was born in Los Angeles and also lived in Whittier growing up. Like Gil's father, Sandy's father served our country in World War II. Sandy did not like how Southern California was becoming overdeveloped, so she chose to go to college at San Jose State.

She returned to Southern California after graduating college with a degree in teaching, and taught school there before meeting her first husband and heading north again. Sandy loves traveling, and she and her husband did a tour around the world with their two children, working as teachers in multiple countries from 1967 to 1968.

When they returned to the Bay Area in 1968 and discovered Los Gatos, they had a vision for their family. Los Gatos was the perfect place for raising their children, with a kind community, a fun town, and intelligent, thoughtful people who cared about the environment. Sandy continued to work as a teacher. As a district substitute, she got to teach at all the schools in Los Gatos, including Daves Avenue, where her children went to school.

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Sandy went to work at ESL after her marriage with her first husband ended. There, she met Gil. They eventually married and settled in Los Gatos. Sandy moved with Gil to Washington DC, then Southern California for his work, but when they returned, she became more politically involved in Los Gatos.

Some of Sandy's priorities in Los Gatos included preserving both the beautiful hillside environment and the unique history that Los

Gatos holds dear. She got involved in the planning commission to save the hillside and history of the town from being overdeveloped and erased. She spent eight years on the planning commission, where she helped develop a stronger set of rules and dialogue to preserve Los Gatos as we know it. She was elected for town council on this platform, where she spent four years including one as the mayor. Sandy loved this time, and felt honored to be in a position of leadership in this community with so much to preserve.

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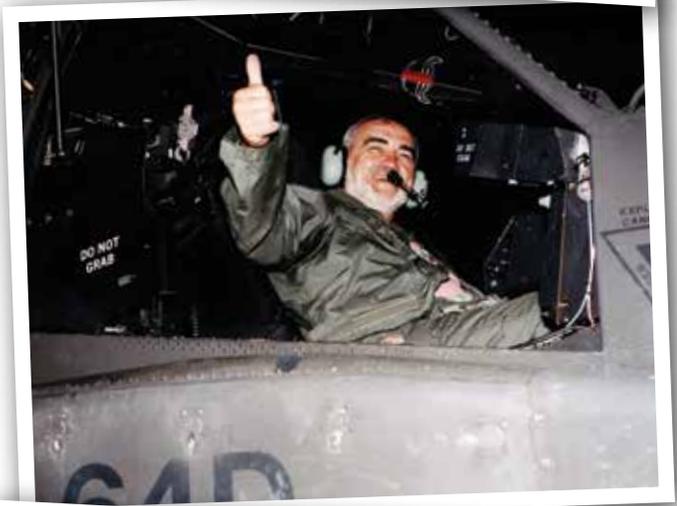
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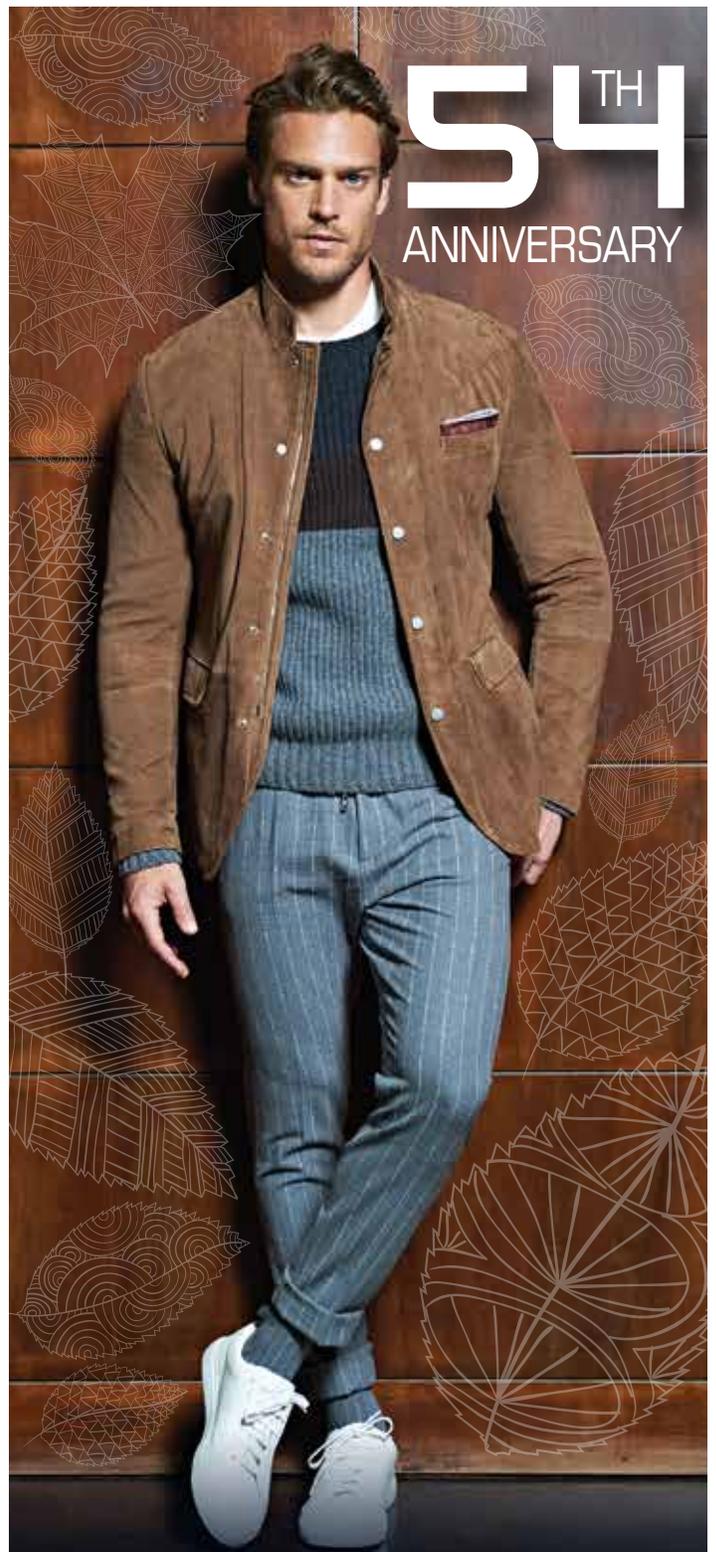
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Some of Sandy's highlights from her time on the town council include helping fund the new library and helping create "Alive and Loving Life," a safe place downtown for teens to play their music, hang out, and have fun. Sandy was also involved in starting the videotaping of council meetings in order to have more transparency and get more people involved in town politics.

Sandy and Gil greatly enjoy being part of the Los Gatos community. They love spending time as a family, with Gil's three children and Sandy's two children, all of whom are now adults. They have a wonderful relationship and are so glad their lives led them together and to Los Gatos!



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