

# Wyro is Orinda Citizen of the Year

By Lou Fancher, Correspondent  
San Jose Mercury News

Posted: Wed Mar 02 17:57:49 MST 2016

ORINDA -- Other than the sense of completion he felt as a Boy Scout more than 50 years ago when collecting and recycling newspapers to raise funds for charities, John Wyro can't say why or when the volunteer bug bit him.

But he knows exactly the person deserving credit for his more than 30 years' commitment to community volunteering and why he received a phone call from a member of the Rotary Club of Orinda announcing he'd been selected as Orinda's 2016 Citizen of the Year.

"First person I wanted to tell? It was my wife, Evans, because so much of what I do is possible because of her. We've been married for coming on 48 years. I can't imagine doing all of this without her support," Wyro said.

A Monterey Bay area native who has lived in Orinda since 1982, Wyro, 70, has brought his energy and professional expertise in land development and city management to board positions with local schools, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, and the Oakland Museum of California. He has been active in national organizations, including the United Way and will be honored at a March 18 Citizen of the Year dinner at the Orinda Community Center.

"John Wyro's time has finally arrived," says Ted Urban, a 40-year friend and 2008 Orinda Citizen of the Year.

"His recognition is not for any single great deed he performed in the last year, but instead his contributions to our public schools, community infrastructure and fire protection over the last 30 years that have made him so deserving of this recognition."

Wyro says "shocked" is the best word to describe his reaction to having received the recognition that he says so many other people in Orinda deserve in equal measure. But surprise, and the way life reverse-engineers a person's expectations, is almost a theme in his history.

Growing up on the peninsula and attending five different high schools as a teenager -- due to his father's job transfers and one time, a school redistricting -- Wyro learned to adapt to change.

While in college, he received his draft notice. "Vietnam was heavy ... I signed up, got my commission, and flew for the Navy for five years. It was one of the best things that ever happened to me, although it wasn't what I'd planned to do. I have friends I made 40 years ago, I traveled, I bought my first house because of the stability it gave me."

About the years he devoted to coaching Orinda Youth Association athletic teams when his two, now-adult daughters participated and his time on school and fire district boards, Wyro says, "I just got in a groove, thought I could help. I was just doing it."

Currently serving on the school board for the East Bay Waldorf School and on the city Public Works Aesthetic Review Committee, Wyro defines a good citizen as "someone who's engaged and contributes to the community."

When he's not volunteering or spending time with his four grandchildren, the best place to find Wyro is on a golf course, unperturbed by his handicap (16) -- or fishing for steelhead trout in Northern California waters.

Wyro succeeds 2015 Citizen winner Mark Roberts, a member of the Orinda Community Foundation with a long history of local involvement.

## IF YOU GO

**WHAT:** Orinda Citizen of the Year dinner

**WHEN:** Friday, March 18; cocktails 6 p.m., dinner 7 p.m.

**WHERE:** Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way

**COST:** Tickets are \$55, with choice of prime rib, chicken piccata or vegetarian dinner, plus wine; available at Park Plaza Real Estate, 18 Orinda Way, or 925-254-7766