

TOWN OF PARADISE VALLEY INDEPENDENT

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Meet Your Neighbor: Stephen Van O'Meara

Name: Stephen Van O'Meara

Age: 51

Town/Neighborhood: Paradise Valley

What I like most about living here: Paradise Valley evokes a feeling of family, community, safety, trust and openness that I don't feel anywhere else. It's not just a place to live; it's my home.

Changes I'd like to see in this area: It's important we preserve Paradise Valley's residential character and tradition of rural desert living. We should continue our resistance to high-density housing. I would like to see better traffic enforcement on all Paradise Valley streets.

Favorite community cause & why: I have an interest in organizations dedicated to the prevention and treatment of child abuse. Child abuse comes in many forms and is the Number One evil in our society.

When & why I moved here: My family has had a second home in Paradise Valley since 1958. I moved

here because the people are friendly, the atmosphere relaxed and no one can argue about the weather.

My family: My wife Amy and my mother Bets.

What I do: I am an artist committed to keeping the ancient techniques of goldsmithing alive in contemporary vessels, hollowware and flatware. I work primarily in precious metals and bronze, and the predominant theme of my sculpture is the soul's power to bring peace and solace to the individual. My gallery, O'Meara Sterling, is located on Marshall Way in Scottsdale and exhibits my handmade silverware, objets d'vertu, sculptures and drawings. My wife, Amy, is the gallery director.

What I like most about what I



Submitted Photo

do: There is a great sense of joy in being able to touch peoples' hearts through my art. My sole motive is for my artwork to resonate with one's own deeper sense of being and the significance of one's own life.

Previous occupations & why I left: I have been associated with the fine arts for 35 years. I was very fortunate to take a sabbatical and enjoy a 10-year career as a pilot for American Eagle: the commuter division for American Airlines. I have owned and been affiliated with galleries in Santa Fe, Colorado, New York and the Los Angeles. To meet the people who buy my work, and to develop a rapport with them, Amy and I felt it critical that we open our own gallery in Scottsdale.

My interests and hobbies: Aviation, traveling, composing music and poetry, collecting rare and worthwhile books and art.

The trait(s) I admire in others: The fundamental measures of all

people are their faith, their integrity and their skills. Only integrity remains constant in an individual's life. From integrity comes a pantheon of human virtues: modesty, honesty, insight, dignity, respect, leadership and fairness. Without integrity, the rest are impossible.

People who inspired me (and how): Generally, those who find creative solutions to life's adversities inspire me. Historically, one of my favorite figures was Galileo, who persevered in his quest for the truth long after he was forced to recant his discovery that the sun, not the earth, is the center of the solar system. In my own life, my maternal grandfather inspired me by never wavering from his vision, and his housekeeper inspired me: her decency and compassion toward other people never deviated despite her own very modest circumstances.

My advice to today's youth: Be good to yourself, live close to your heart and trust your instincts.