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## Making up for time lost in a pandemic: Orinda Citizens of the Year to be honored

By Sora O'Doherty

The Orinda Community Foundation (OCF) has announced the honorees at this year's Orinda Citizens of the Year event will be Melanie Light, Orinda Citizen of the Year 2021; Tom Trowbridge, Orinda Citizen of the Year 2020; and Pete Hasselman, Orinda Citizen of the Year 2019. Honorees are nominated by members of the community and selected by the OCF.

Light is the founder and leader of the Orinda Firewise Council and a member of the Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission, founded to advise the Orinda city council on use of the funds raised by Measure R. Light also writes for the Orinda Association's monthly newspaper, the Orinda News.

The previous Citizens of the Year who were not able to be honored in person because of the pandemic are both leaders of OrindaVision, a group dedicated to improving downtown Orinda. Hasselman, co-founder of OrindaVision and a current member of the Orinda Planning Commission, has had a very long career as an architect and urban planner. Trowbridge, former chair of OrindaVision, has had a long career as a commercial mortgage banker.

In addition, a new category of honoree, called Orinda Everyday Heroes, has been created this year. To celebrate the many COVID-19 frontline workers, the OCF has selected Dr. Christopher Severson, Emergency Medicine Physician, Kaiser Hospital and Diane Acevedo, Registered Nurse, John Muir Hospital as honorees. Severson is Chief of Emergency Medicine at Kaiser Walnut Creek. He is also an elected trustee to the Acalanes Union High School District and lives in Orinda with his wife and five children. Acevedo has been a nurse for 27 years and has worked at John Muir Hospital for the past 15 years. She is an Orinda resident, and lives with her husband and two children. Both health professionals have spoken about the stress and fear that they experienced working through the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Community members are invited to join in the celebration of these outstanding, dedicated citizens at 6 p.m. Oct. 24 at the Orinda Community Center in the Founder's Auditorium. Tickets to the event will be available for \$75 per person. There will be no-host cocktails at 6 p.m., followed by a buffet dinner and the awards ceremony starting at 6:30 p.m.

Register for the event at the OCF website [OrindaFoundation.org](http://OrindaFoundation.org) under the Citizen of the Year tab. Registration will open in early October.

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