

## About Mel and Bob:

We are honored this year to recognize Mel and Bob for their many contributions to our community. Founding members of the Foothill Conservancy, Mel and Bob have lived in Pine Grove since 1988. In their decades of community service, they have been outstanding advocates for the health of local residents, our communities, and our environment. At the same time, they have provided top-quality healthcare for countless individuals and improved the scope and quality of local health services. Now “retired,” Mel and Bob continue to demonstrate how to live lives of service with integrity, compassion, and humor.

“Dr. Bob” and Mel moved to Pine Grove in 1988 and helped found the Foothill Conservancy the following year. Bob was also a founding director of the [Mother Lode Land Trust](#) (formerly Amador Land Trust).

Together, Mel and Bob founded the annual Turkey Trot fundraiser for the [Amador Interfaith Food Bank](#), which will have its 18th anniversary next November, and they both participate in the Amador Homeless Task Force. Their Amador-native daughter Hallie is a registered nurse in Wisconsin, and Bob’s daughter Erin is an editor in New York City.

Until his retirement in 2019, Bob served countless patients as a beloved, local, internal medicine doctor. Originally from Nashville, Tennessee, he graduated from the University of Notre Dame and Vanderbilt University Medical School. Bob completed his Internal Medicine residency at the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill). He made his first contributions to rural health while working with the Student Health Coalition during medical school and the U.S. Public Health Service in Southern Appalachia from 1978 to 1982. At that time, he was also an active member of [Save Our Cumberland Mountains \(SOCM\)](#).

As Chief of Staff at Amador Hospital, Bob helped facilitate the transfer of the county-owned hospital to Sutter Health, securing the construction of a new, modern hospital facility in Jackson. He served as Amador County Public Health Officer from 1999 to 2014 while continuing his private practice. Bob also helped train primary care physicians as the lead preceptor in Amador County for the [U.C. Davis Rural PRIME Program](#).

While retired from his full-time medical practice, Bob continues to volunteer at U.C. Davis Medical Center’s student-run medical clinics, to fill in at Sutter Amador Internal Medicine in Jackson, and to help organize a Rural Track Residency program for Amador County as part of the Sutter Family Residency Program. In his spare time, he runs ultramarathons.

Mel Welsh, also an avid runner, retired from her nursing career in 2016. She worked as a conservation easement monitor for the Mother Lode Land Trust and spent the last four summers as a docent at the U.S. Forest Service’s [Carson Pass Information Station](#).

A native of Milwaukee, Mel holds a B.S. in Nursing from the University of Wisconsin. She has been a registered nurse for more than 45 years and owned and operated a family farm in Wisconsin for 11 years. In addition to her work in healthcare, Mel worked with the Amador County Transportation Commission in community outreach and coordination, grant writing, and bike-pedestrian master plan development for five years. As a community volunteer, she secured more than half a million dollars in grant funds for safe routes to school in Pine Grove, economic

development, and recycling projects. As a consultant to the [Amador Tuolumne Community Action Agency \(ATCAA\)](#) she established the Upcountry Community Center in Pine Grove in 2000.

Mel is a founding member of the Amador County Domestic Violence Council, Amador AIDS Coalition, Pine Grove Council, Upcountry Recreation Organization, and Foothill Fitness. She has served on the Sutter Amador Hospital Foundation Board since 2016 and is chairwoman of its Stewardship Committee and member of its Board Development Committee. She also serves on the boards of Farms of Amador and Operation Care and on the program committee of the Amador Branch of the American Association of University Women.

Mel is the past president of the Pine Grove Community Improvement Club, started Sutter Amador's annual wellness fair, and is past chairwoman of the Amador County Solid Waste Taskforce and Amador Fire Safe Council. She is involved in the local suicide prevention coalition and Amador County Mental Health Services Act Cultural Competency Committee. Mel was a 2006 candidate for the District 5 seat on the Amador County Board of Supervisors.