

Power couple celebrated for conservancy

The Donnans are gracious and spirited as they make the valley a better place.

By Brielle Schaeffer

Addie Donnan has been known to single-handedly pull strangers out of snowy ditches with her truck when she encounters them stuck on roadsides.

Donnan, 87, has recruited many volunteers for the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance by helping people during winter this way, said Cynthia Harger, managing director of the organization.

Donnan's husband, Ted, who turned 90 June 23, is known for his expertise in asking good questions as he probes his fellow board members at Teton Science Schools and executives at other organizations on their decision-making.

"He asks hard questions that make a nonprofit person think about how they might do their job better," Jack Shea, Teton Science Schools' executive director, said. "He has an amazing balance of a hard-edged financial view of the world and a great compassion in the program. He's both a tough guy to debate and a fun guy to hang around with."

Inside their dedication for conservation and philanthropy, the Donnans are sweet, generous and spirited.

"They have no problem getting their hands dirty to keep Jackson Hole a special place," Harger said.

The Donnans have been the driving forces behind many Jackson area nonprofit and conservancy organizations.

Involved with the alliance since its inception, they also have been active with the National Museum of Wildlife Art and were founders and continued advocates of Teton Science Schools, The Murie Center and the St. John's Medical Center Foundation.

"We've been glad that we did what we did, and, of course, the community is of great interest to us because it's so beautiful," Addie Donnan said.

It's obvious the community appreciates the couple's service.

Addie Donnan is being honored by The Murie Center for her dedication to conserving land and wildlife with its inaugural Spirit of Conservation Award Dinner on July 29.

Her husband's 90th birthday party June 25 was hosted by the Jackson Campus of Teton Science Schools with some 170 guests in attendance.

"Their commitment to the community and their giving back to this community is in a way that not many people in the valley have done," Ann Smith, former board chairman of Teton Science Schools, said.

Married 65 years

Smith is also the president of the Ted Donnan Fan Club. She thinks he's the sexiest man in Jackson Hole, she said.

"I used to think I was the only one that had a crush on Ted Donnan, but it's universal. Everyone has a crush on Ted Donnan," Smith said.

However, Donnan has eyes only for his wife.

The couple's 65-year-long marriage "hasn't been hard," he said.

Addie Donnan, from Greenwich, Conn., became acquainted with him while visiting a friend from boarding school in Ohio.

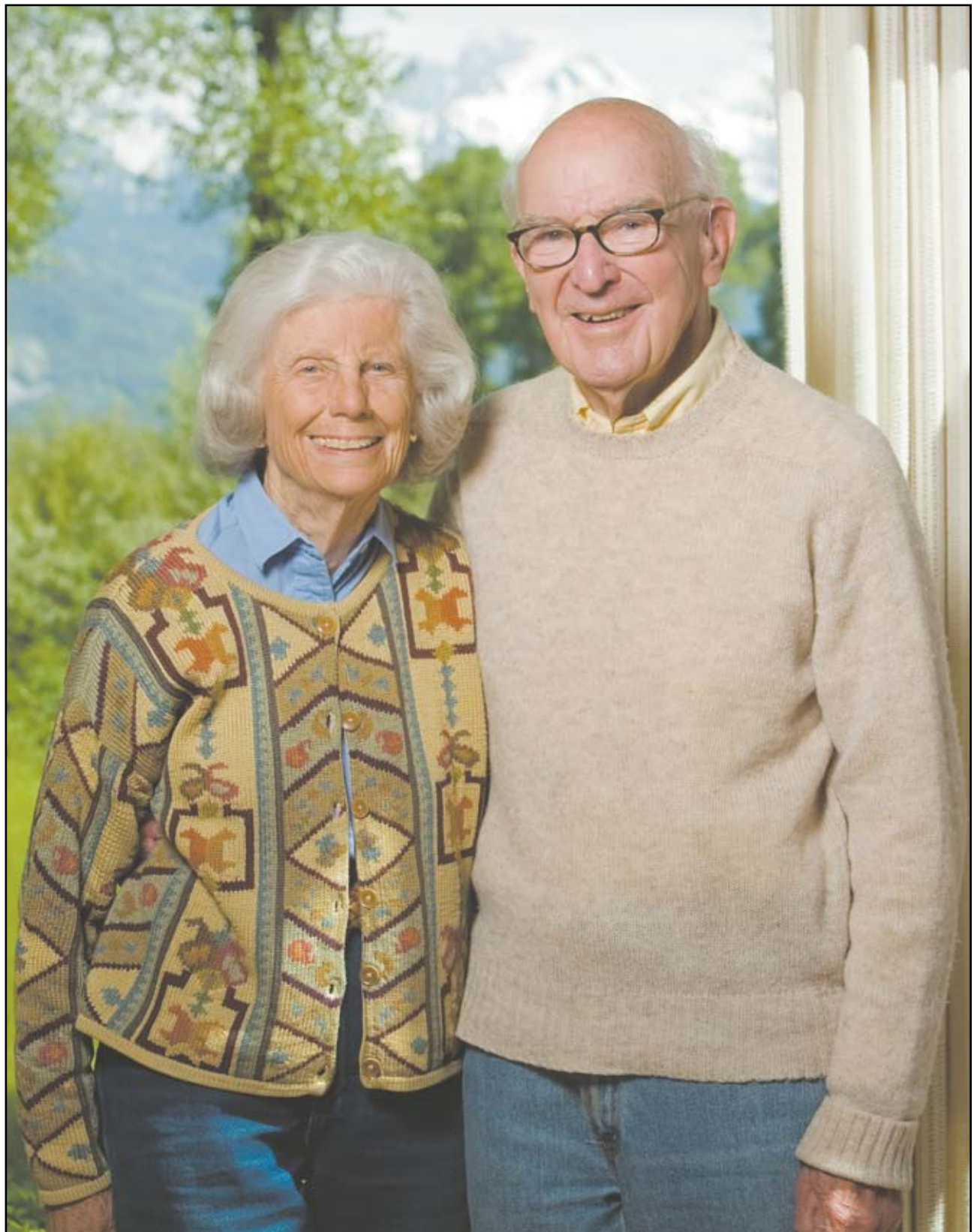
"I met this young lady and immediately fell in love," he said.

They were married in 1946 after he returned from World War II, during which he fought the Battle of the Bulge.

Originally starting college at Washington and Lee University, he finished his degree in business administration at Ohio State University.

She received a degree in economics from Columbia University after beginning her coursework at Vassar College.

Addie Donnan's affection for Jackson Hole began when she was a little girl visiting her uncle's



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Addie Donnan will be honored June 29 by The Murie Center for her dedication to conserving land and wildlife with an inaugural Spirit of Conservation Award Dinner. A 90th birthday party held June 25 for husband Ted brought 170 guests to the Jackson Campus of Teton Science Schools. The couple have been a driving force behind a handful of Jackson area nonprofit and conservancy organizations.

ranch in the valley.

When the Donnans visited the area together after they were married, they fell in love with it, she said.

"There's something about the air," Ted Donnan said. "I'm from Columbus, Ohio, and the air there is damp, and the air here is dry. The ambiance up here was enough. We've got to be a part of this."

The Donnans bought a vacation property in Jackson Hole. Then, more than 40 years ago, after he retired from his career as an executive at the Federal Paper Board Company, they moved to Wyoming from Connecticut.

"We didn't expect to have so many years full-time out here," Addie Donnan said.

Entertaining, raising funds at ranch

The Donnans' full-time home sits on Snake River Ranch Road in Wilson on nearly 10 acres adjacent to the Teton Mountains.

Their house, called the Owl Ranch, is a frontier-like compound complete with old log cabins, relocated from downtown Jackson, used as guest houses and decorated with African art and rugs from their frequent travels to the continent.

The couple entertain guests regularly, and Addie Donnan has hosted fundraisers at their home, including an annual trunk show to support the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance and the Jackson Hole Medical Center Foundation.

"Addie's Benefit Boutique" will be held at Owl Ranch again this year from Aug. 8 to 10.

She also helps organize the Silent Art and Antique Auction for the alliance as well as its needlepoint rug project, where she rallies volunteers to hand stitch pieces for auction.

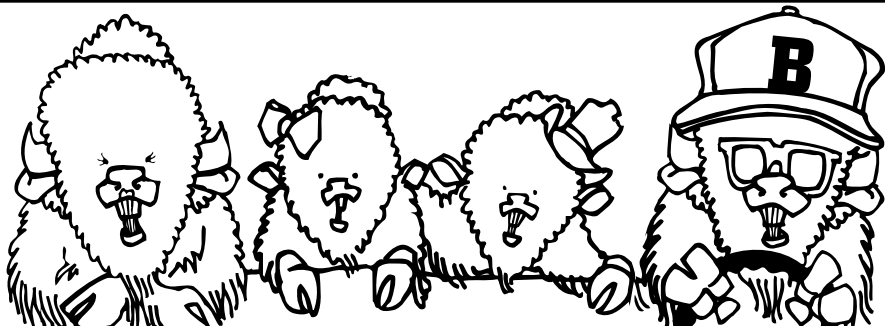
"We do the work that we've done because we love the place and we want to save it," she said.

"I think you've got to give back to the community," her husband said. "You can't be selfish."

But selfishness is the last word to describe the Donnans.

Shea said they are the most gracious people he has ever met.

"They make you feel good around them, feel good about the work you do, and they invite you into their home to eat," he said. "It's who they are that is so powerful as a couple. You feel you are in the presence of people that make the world a better place."



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