In keeping with tradition, The Country Friends (TCF) Art of Fashion (AOF) recognizes those who have given their time and talents to help further the organization’s mission of supporting human care agencies. This year’s honorees are Les & Deborah Cross, affectionately known as “Mr. and Mrs. Country Friends” because of their longtime commitment to the organization.

The Crosses first became involved with The Country Friends in 2007, when Deborah was invited to join the Art of Fashion committee by her dear friend, Marci Cavanaugh, 2007 AOF chair. After experiencing that first year with the organization, the Crosses became committed to The Country Friends mission: “Helping San Diegans Since 1954 — One Hand at a Time.”

Deborah joined The Country Friends Board of Directors in 2008, was elected president from 2014-2018, and now serves as first vice president. She and Les also are on TCF’s finance committee. The couple co-chairs The Country Friends Legacy Campaign and headed up the inaugural “Giving Hearts Gala” in 2018 to benefit that capital campaign.

A San Diego native, Deborah graduated from San Diego State University with a bachelor’s degree and went on to earn a master’s degree in audiology. After working as an audiologist for Kaiser Permanente for several years, she started her own practice at the age of 28, expanding the business to six offices in San Diego County. After 15 years, Deborah sold her practice to devote more time to philanthropy and family. The couple has three children: Lara-Lee, Sarah, and Andrew.

Les, originally from Sydney, Australia, moved to San Diego in 1990. For most of his successful career, he worked in the medical device arena, retiring in 2011 as chief executive officer of DJO Global, Inc., a leading provider of orthopedic devices. He later took the helm as chairman of the board of Alphatec Spine, retiring in 2015. Les now loves to consult, travel, paint, and join Deb in giving back to the community.

Philanthropy has been an important part of their lives since moving to Del Mar in 1991. The Crosses have played active roles in many charities including the USS Midway Museum, Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation, and Boys & Girls Clubs of San Dieguito. They also support Casa de Amparo, Support the Enlisted Project, Heifer International, Project Concern International, Susan G. Komen, Rady Children’s Hospital, and The Salvation Army, which honored Deborah as a “Woman of Dedication” in 2018 for her long community service.

The Crosses are especially passionate about The Country Friends and are dedicated to fulfilling its Legacy Campaign goal so that the organization can continue its mission of helping San Diegans for decades and decades to come.