

The Art of Business

Lee A. Ault III has a knack for combining disparate elements to create a harmonious blend.

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Boldly colored paintings grace the living room walls in the light-filled home that Lee A. Ault shares with his wife, Rachel. Others sit propped up on the floor, waiting to find an appropriate spot in the Westwood home the couple is remodeling following their purchase a year ago.

As he does with his artwork, Lee brings people together to create synergistic arrangements. A Foundation trustee and special advisor to Providence Saint John's Health Center's local board of directors, Lee played a key role in bridging divides when Providence assumed sponsorship of the Health Center in 2014.

"Putting two cultures together can be very challenging," says Lee. "I have enormous respect for the managements of both Saint John's and Providence for working through difficult issues and arriving at a point where I think we now have the best of both worlds."

Donna F. Tuttle, Foundation trustee and chair of the Health Center's local board of directors, describes how Lee helped shepherd the process. "Lee's genius is his ability to set aside the issues and confront the underlying challenge that needs to be confronted and acknowledged," she says. "One memorable example of this during the transition was in a



meeting with Mike Butler, the COO of Providence, and a small group of doctors and trustees. The frustration level on the part of Saint John's was at a critical point. Lee articulated that the real problem was a lack of trust; he summarized the positive message from *The Boys in the Boat*: To be of championship caliber, a crew must have total confidence in each other."

She adds, "His point was clear: We needed to develop the trust between Providence and Saint John's and each other, in order to make the partnership work. The issues would then be resolved in a collaborative manner. Lee's leadership has been invaluable—to me, and to the members of the board."

Paul D. Natterson, MD, former medical staff president and former Health Center interim CMO, has similar praise for Lee. "He has an unbelievably broad breadth of experience and is remarkably insightful," says Dr. Natterson. "Lee has a capacity for drawing on his life experiences to provide perspectives that most people wouldn't consider."

Lee became a trustee in 2003, at the behest of trustee Charles F. Smith. He currently serves as treasurer, co-chair of the finance committee and chair of the compensation committee.

"Lee is one of my favorite people," says Charlie. "He's a strategic thinker and an active participant in everything he does. You can expect him to be dedicated and a real doer."

Lee brings valuable experience and knowledge drawn from his personal and professional lives. A Yale graduate, Lee spent four years as a Marine Corps officer and pilot. For two of those years, he flew the F8U Crusader, a supersonic jet known as "the last

of the gunfighters."

"It was the best graduate school," says Lee. "It gave me confidence and the opportunity to assume leadership and make decisions at a young age."

He spent five years in Peru and Columbia, working in various capacities for W.R. Grace & Co., and gaining a love of South American art.

In 1968, while still in his early 30s, Lee became CEO of Telecredit, a public company that was a pioneer and leader in the payment services industry. He served as CEO for 23 years, until Telecredit was sold to Equifax. Lee served on the Equifax board for 15 years.

In 1999, Lee received a call from his friend Buzzy Krongard, then executive director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Buzzy asked Lee to help build and lead an independent technology venture firm funded by the CIA with the objective of investing in technology companies that would help the intelligence community solve some of its pressing challenges.

While the call was a complete

talented people in discovering and delivering important technology to the CIA and other government intelligence agencies. Several companies In-Q-Tel invested in have gone public or were bought out by companies such as Google, IBM, HP and Microsoft. Today In-Q-Tel provides the intelligence community with a valuable link to the high-tech venture capital world and is a great example of the government and the private sector working together to produce positive results."

He describes his experience with the Health Center similarly. "The competence, commitment and caring that is inherent in the people and culture is an invaluable asset that has great appeal to our various constituents, including the community in general."

Lee and Rachel have been married for 31 years and have a blended family comprised of 6 children and 12 grandchildren. Lee's greatest pleasures have included the sharing of experiences such as skiing,

Rachel says her husband would have made a great diplomat. "Lee can say very disagreeable, true things in a straightforward and non-offensive way. People hear him and they're generally not personally offended."

In 2008 Lee suffered a serious accident at their lakeside home in Camden, Maine, when he was flipped out of a hammock. The impact of the fall broke his neck and injured his spinal cord, initially paralyzing him from the neck down.

During his three months of hospitalization, Lee deeply valued the caring and skill of his caregivers. "They were perhaps the most fulfilled people I had ever known because they were involved with helping people every day," he says. His experience also reinvigorated his commitment to support Saint John's Health Center: "I see that same spirit at Saint John's—that genuine compassion for the patient is one of the things that distinguishes us as a great hospital."

Lee still walks with a limp and uses a cane, but one would never guess the extent of his original injuries. Although he suffers from lingering health impacts that aren't visible, he prefers to talk about the gifts the experience gave him.

"I was 72 years old and didn't know if I would walk again, but I genuinely felt thankful to have led such an interesting and diverse life," he says. "You learn from all your experiences—even the negative ones. I learned to be more empathetic and understanding. I learned to appreciate life even more and live life day by day."

He sums up the experience with a fitting analogy. "I strive every day to make each day a masterpiece." •

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surprise, Lee was intrigued by the challenge and, before the call ended, he agreed to become chairman of the In-Q-Tel board, a position he held for seven years.

He's glad he did. "It was a wonderful opportunity to work with some incredibly

sports and travel with family and friends.

After moving to Los Angeles in 1984, Rachel served as a docent for 10 years at LACMA and was active with the Los Angeles Junior Philharmonic Committee where she was co-president for two years.