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Meet your Neighbors - Bobbie Echard



I grew up in central and coastal North Carolina enjoying both the mountains and white sand beaches. Upon graduation from college (go Wolfpack!) and law school, I practiced law before being given the extraordinary opportunity to join the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as a Special Agent in 1985. After completing the FBI Academy, I was assigned to the Houston Division. When I researched Houston's location on a map (there was no Internet!) I was excited by the beach's proximity. Upon arrival, I was shocked to learn that more people resided in my downtown apartment complex than in many NC towns, the barbeque was beef not pulled pork, and the beaches were very different. For the next two decades with the FBI, I worked federal violations involving foreign counterintelligence, international terrorism and violent crimes including fugitive investigations. Additionally, I also became close friends with an FBI couple who lived in Woodland Heights. I fell in love with the Heights architectural and cultural heritage and the sense of community. I should have bought a home then; however, I put my dream on hold to raise our sons, Matthew and Mitchell, in the suburbs near Cypress, TX where we remained for over 20 years.

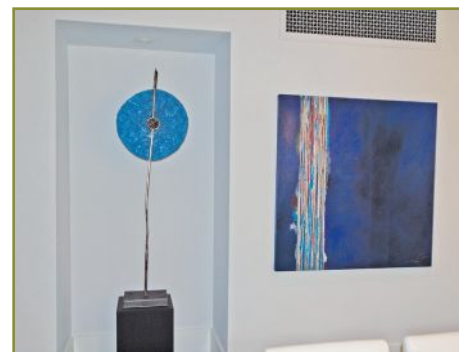
In 2008, I retired from the FBI, became a security advisor and investigator in the oil and gas industry and contacted Bill Baldwin, Boulevard

Realty. With both kids away at college, we began our house hunt in the Heights with intensity and dedication. After viewing approximately 50 houses, Bill told me that *my* idea of modern bungalow did not exist. It took me 100 more houses before I believed him and embraced the idea of an extensive renovation, something I had previously resisted. I was already working with Colby Weems, Owner, CWeems Designs and Eclectic

Home, to develop an interior concept that would incorporate my modern design aesthetic and a space for our expanding art collection. When 1005 Oxford, my ideal location, was listed in December of 2010, Bill affected the sale immediately. Knowing that planning and the right team was paramount, I added Troy Campa, Principal, Newberry Campa Architects and Colin Shelton, Owner, Southland Homes, based on recommendations and interviews with their clients and their experience building in a historic district. While most believed that the house should be demolished due to extensive termite and fire damage, my team, tackled the project with dedication and determination.

We worked with the Houston Archeological and Historic Commission for the next two (2) years to design, plan and restore the property. It was a vernacular cottage, a functional type of architectural design that did not utilize stylistic elements merely for aesthetic purposes. Research of the Houston Archives, Directories, Deeds, Maps, and database searches and interviews with current and previous homeowners/descendants revealed the home was built in 1896 on the adjacent lot before it was moved to its current location in 1928. It was owned by German immigrants who worked as a farmer, piano maker, servant/hair dresser, and carpenter. The original single story dwelling (2/1)(1100sf) was rehabilitated, restored and a

new one-story addition and two-story garage apartment were constructed resulting in a home (3/2, 2200 sf) that retained and preserved the historical character and allowed for the continued availability of the property for our family's contemporary use. This included a center hallway that functions as an art gallery for our collection of works by local artists including Patrick Palmer, John Palmer, Ryan Fugate, Taft McWhorter and Arturo Rodriguez and sculptures by Mark Bradford and Daniel Esquivel-Brandt. Finally, recognizing our



responsibilities regarding preservation and the environment and ignoring previous advice to "build large for re-sale value", many of the rooms were designed for dual purposes (guest room/home gym; office/bedroom; laundry/storage).



My dream, and now my family's dream, to live in a historic property in the Heights for generations to come has been realized. And, I found delicious pork barbeque at Gatlin's BBQ!

