

# Getting to Know your Neighbor - 711 E. 19th Willis Home

## Featured on the Houston Heights Home Tour April 1-3, 2011



Probably, more than most, the road that brought Dawnia and Darryl Willis to The Heights is a circuitous one. This is Dawnia's second and Darryl's third home here. His first home was in the Woodland Heights at 729 Merrill Street (when single) back in 1999. Moving to London in 2003, he in 2005 with Dawnia purchased their second home at 714 E 8th Street. "We were married that year in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. 2005 was a tough year for us because of the impact of hurricane Katrina on our families. My mother, brother and sister-in-law moved in with us in September 2005 after the storm, so we had a full house."



"We lived at 714 E 8th Street for 1 year before moving to San Francisco, CA. We loved the house so much that we said when we came back to Houston we would find the builder (John Galvin of Kerry Galvin Homes) and ask him to work with us on building our dream home which we completed when we returned to Houston last year (2010). After spending 1 year in California (I was in Grad School for Business at Stanford) we moved to Moscow, Russia for a couple of years."

The home was constructed by Kerry Galvin Homes, Designed by Newberry Campa Architects (Ken Newberry was the Primary Architect, he has become their Neighbor and friend) and the interiors were done by Mel Poet of Poet Interiors. Danny McNair of Glauser McNair Landscapers did the landscaping for the home.

As part of the effort to create a sustainable home, this Heights residence has been carefully designed and built to achieve a LEED certified rating. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is a green building certification system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) to provide third-party verification and a concise framework for identifying and implementing sustainable design, construction and operations practices. To get more details on all of the special energy saving features and their benefits, go to the link below and read the complete article on design and building process.

<http://www.houstonlivingguide.com/2010/05/first-leed-certified-home-in-heights.html>

Both of the Willis' are from Louisiana. Darryl from New Orleans and Dawnia is from Opelousas. They call Houston home now and couldn't imagine living anywhere but in the Heights. Dawnia is a registered Pharmacist here in Houston and works part time out in Katy, TX. She has a Pharmacy Degree from Texas Southern University and spent 7 years in the US Air Force prior to becoming a Pharmacist. Dawnia is the oldest of 5 children, Darryl, the youngest of 2 kids.

Darryl is a Vice President for British Petroleum's North America Gas Business. Having worked in the Energy Industry for 20 years, starting his career as a Geophysicist with Amoco Production Company. He attended college and graduated school in Louisiana (e.g. Northwestern State University, and LSU in New Orleans for his Masters in Geophysics) and business school in California (e.g. Masters from Stanford). Darryl has lived in Houston 10 out of the last 20 years - once in Katy, 3 times in The Heights. Their son Kaleb attends elementary school at the Regis School. He is in 3rd grade.

"The Heights reminds us a lot of home. Sidewalks, neighbors and friends. Interesting shops and places to eat. It's just a warm and lovely place. We consider it a huge gift to live here."

They both enjoy cooking inside and outside, and have put a lot of thought into the design of the







indoor and outdoor kitchens. He states that he enjoys listening to jazz, collecting art and on a journey of discovery as it relates to wine. Dawnia loves to scrapbook when she is not busy with Kaleb or working. She also loves hanging out on 19th Street. They spend lots of time with their friends in and around the neighborhood.

We are fortunate to have the painting (1 of 2 in the world), plus the studies that were done to prepare for the integrated painting. I think Dawnia's favorite part of the house is her office where she spends lots of time. She is also a huge fan of the 1950's Murano Chandelier that is in our Foyer."

The home features art they have collected across Russia, Africa as well as 3 originals pieces by Houston Heights artist John Pavlicek. It also features drought tolerant plants, FSC Wood on the porches and outdoor kitchen, as well as a non-toxic mosquito system. They've purchased furniture from around the world for their home from places including England, France, and Ireland to name a few.

"Some of our favorite parts of the house include the wine room, dry sauna, kitchen, our individual offices, and the exercise area. My absolute favorite piece of art is a piece in our dining room, painted by Russian artist Viktor Len in 1955 called "From the Ferry."

