

GOING TO TOWN

Out of the starlight and under the streetlights, couple commits to 'aging in place' in the city



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PHOTOGRAPHY



For 40 years, Judye McCalman and Earl Morrogh lived in a house they built with their own hands on a wooded acreage seven miles south of Quincy.

There, they tended to a large, organic garden surrounded with tall deer netting tucked into the ground. They loved the brilliance of the night sky and the quiet of the place.

“The sounds you heard were natural sounds,” McCalman said, adding that their property was shaded by majestic hardwoods and frequently visited by wildlife, including foxes and coyotes.

“We miss our pontoon boat on Lake Talquin,” sighed Morrogh, a self-described water baby. He knew where all the submerged stumps were.

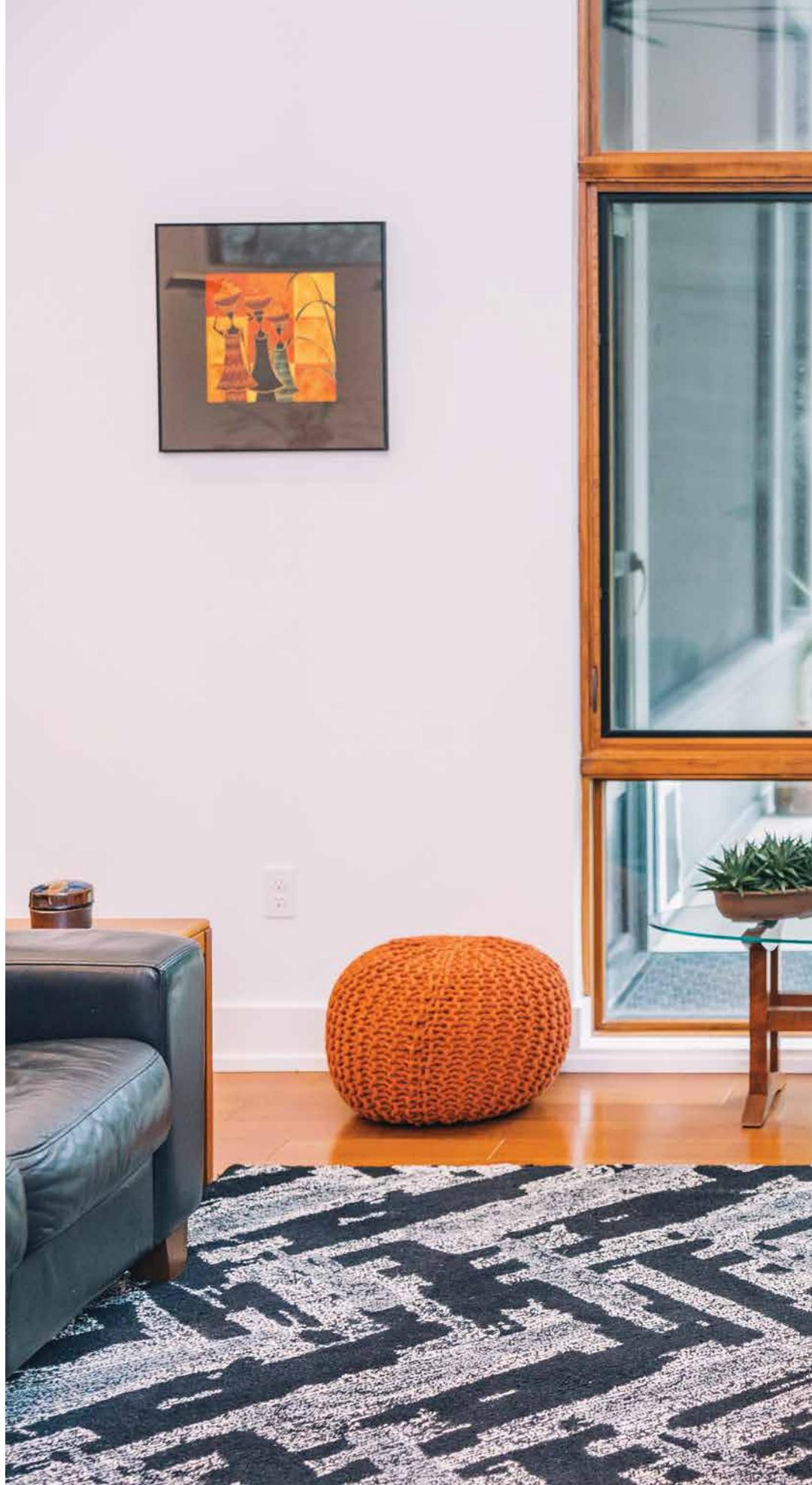
But there are tradeoffs to living in the country and, as McCalman, 76, and Morrogh, 71, grew older, the conveniences of city life became more attractive.

In March, they moved into a “forever home” designed to permit them to age comfortably in place and located on Country Club Drive near its intersection with Limbo Lane.

“We have a Country Club Drive address, but we were hoping that it would be Limbo Lane,” Morrogh said. “We don’t consider ourselves to be country club people.”

True that.

McCalman and Morrogh were living in Gadsden County as members of an “intentional community” — locals called it a commune — when, to give themselves some privacy, they built what Morrogh called a “small contemporary cracker house” that would be their residence for four decades.







The community, which had been formally established as a corporation, eventually dissolved, as communes often do, and its 150 acres were divvied up. McCalman and Morrogh became owners of 13-acre piece of the pie that included their homesite.

To prepare for building their own home, the couple had taken a class offered at Florida A&M University. McCalman worked for FAMU for 27 years, retiring as the assistant dean for administration for the School of

Architecture. It was there that she would first cross paths with student and future architect Cam Whitlock.

Upon deciding to move to town, McCalman and Morrogh weren't sure that they were going to build, but when they did, they contacted now retired FAMU professor Tim White, seeking a recommendation for an architect. White recommended several, and they selected a Tallahassee firm, Architects Lewis + Whitlock.

The couple, who celebrated



→ Earl Morrogh and Judy McCalman left behind their Gadsden County home of 40 years — a place they had built with their own hands — in deciding to move to Tallahassee and be closer to essential services. They were delighted to find a lot surrounded on three sides by green spaces. Inset photo: Rodney Lewis, left, and Cam Whitlock.





their 40th wedding anniversary last year, met with Whitlock at the offices of Architects Lewis + Whitlock in Tallahassee. Whitlock explained that the firm doesn't do much residential work, focusing instead on municipal and institutional work. Its largest clients include the state Department of Management Services and Florida State University.

"We put on our sad faces and told him that Professor White had said that if he wouldn't do it, he could always change his grades to incompletes," McCalman joked.

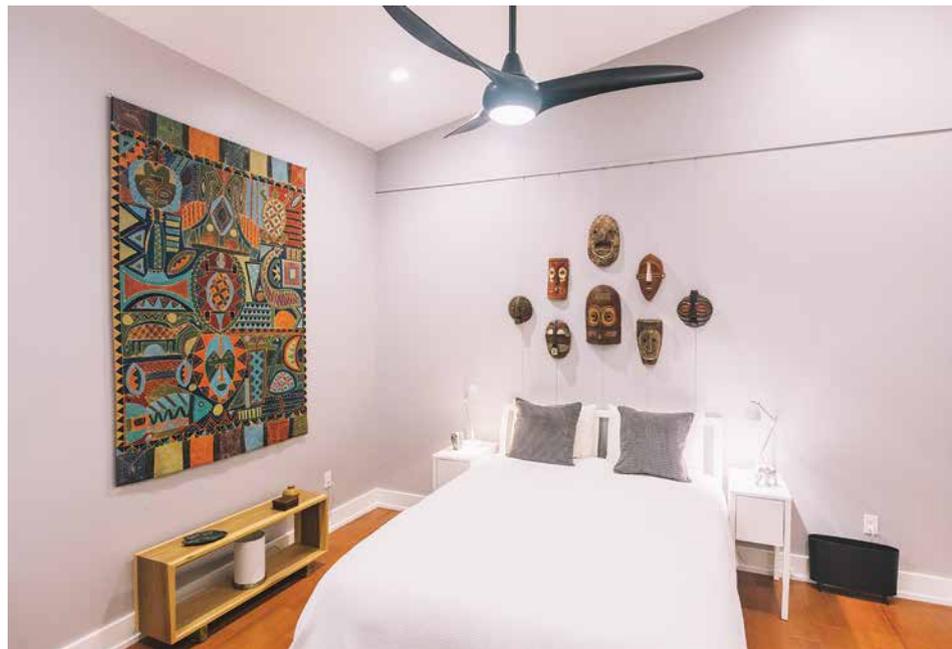
Whitlock agreed with the understanding that the couple would do much of the design work themselves. Indeed, forever homes have emerged as something of a niche for Whitlock, one that affords him creative latitude.

"Couples who are retiring and





→ McCalman and Morrogh opted for contemporary styling in their new home and made energy efficiency a priority. The house reflects principles of Universal Design, which is intended to make it possible for people to live in and visit a home even as their needs and abilities change.



looking to downsize are more likely to have a specific program in mind,” he said. “Based on a lifetime of experience, they have specific ideas about the spaces they want and need, and that makes for a smoother design process.”

“Our country house was a successful project, and we have been interested in architectural design ever since,” said Morrogh, who studied architecture for four years at Louisiana State University but wound up working

as a magazine designer and communication director before pivoting and becoming the second professional hired at FSU to pioneer online learning. He retired in 2006.

“Having been exposed to the architecture process, we came up with what architects call a program,” Morrogh said. “We itemized all the things that were important to us, and one of those was absolutely no steps, inside or outside,” McCalman added.





Earl Morrogh and Judy McCalman provided architect Cam Whitlock with a program of features for his use in designing their house. That program included features related to the aging-in-place objective, many of them consistent with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines:

- Wide doorways with levered door hardware
- Wide hallways
- Single story
- Hard-surface floors (hardwood and tile)
- Large, roll-in shower
- Space for in-home caregiver
- Toilets meeting ADA specifications
- Whole-house generator for power outages

And, the program reflected the couple's design preferences, including:

- Energy efficiency
- Contemporary style
- Open concept floor plan
- Screened porch
- Low-maintenance materials, inside and out
- Window placement and sizing to provide abundant natural light
- Situating house on site to provide maximum privacy
- Outdoor shower with hot and cold water
- Charging station for electric vehicle
- Attached two-car garage
- Whole-house water filtration system

→ While she has sworn off gardening, Judy McCalman has lots of potted greenery to tend to at her new home in the Myers Park area of Tallahassee. The house was fitted with windows designed to admit an abundance of natural light.

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“The hallway is wide enough for two wheelchairs so one day we can have races,” Morrogh said. Indeed, Morrogh is probably capable of supercharging a wheelchair. He once built an electric-powered mini-barge and piloted it the entire 106-mile length of the Apalachicola River with a couple of friends, wildlife photographer David Moynahan and Chris Smith.

Whitlock described the Country Club Drive house as “transitional modern.” It measures over 2,600 square feet, heated and cooled, and was built by Southern Standard Construction. Jonathan Hatfield was the project manager.

“The house is on a sloped site, so we had to work the grading out to keep everything on one level,” he explained.

Bordered on three sides by green spaces, including Capital City Country Club, the house sits on a half-acre lot that “appears visually to be an acre and a half,” Morrogh said.

While she has plenty of room for a garden, McCalman has vowed not to get back into it. In her lifetime, she has nurtured 100 organic gardens.

“We go to Publix and the Community Co-op,” said Morrogh, who tends toward the sardonic from time to time.

Morrogh and McCalman are finding much to like about life as townies.

They enjoy living in a university town with abundant green spaces and mature vegetation and cultural opportunities. Morrogh likes being within an easy drive of St. Marks and Apalachicola — he once served as a board member for Apalachicola Riverkeeper.

And, the couple finds that they are surrounded by people who share their progressive values.

“Everyone has been very friendly and welcoming, and I look forward to the day when we can invite them all in,” McCalman said.

“The hallway is wide enough for two wheelchairs so one day we can have races.”

— Earl Morrogh