





Living HISTORY

THE LINDSEYS DECIDED TO GIVE BACK TO UNC,
THEIR ALMA MATER, THROUGH A HOME RENOVATION

BY JESSIE AMMONS

CAROLINA GRADUATES

Marty and **AraLu Lindsey**, like so many alums, love to give back to the place where they met and where their children now attend. “You can give a lot of money,” Marty says. “Or, you can give time and effort and a skill set. This is a skill set that we had, a way that we could give back.”

He’s not talking about chairing a committee or leading a fundraising campaign; instead, they renovated a home. And not just any home – their abode on **Battle Lane**, literally footsteps away from campus, was originally built in 1908 for **Edward Kidder Graham**, a young professor gaining prominence around campus. Graham later served as president of the university from 1913-1918. More



PHOTO BY LAUREN CRONISER WITH TOUR FACTORY

When they were first considering buying the place, somebody told Marty “it’s being held together by termites holding hands.”

than a decade later, his cousin, university president and U.S. Senator **Frank Porter Graham**, moved in. The house also had a stint in the late '40s as a sorority house and in the late '60s as the set of low-budget comedy *Three in the Attic*. Over the years, it became a private residence and eventually fell into a state of disrepair.

When **Preservation North Carolina** saved the property in the early 2000s, Marty and AraLu saw a photo of it in an alumni publication. Having renovated beach homes on the coast of North Carolina, they expressed interest in buying and restoring the homestead. “Maybe one day [the university] will want it back. That was the idea,” Marty says. “And we wanted to live there!” The site became theirs late last year.

The Lindseys teamed with **Cimarron Homes** to completely rebuild and restore the home with as much historical integrity as possible. The foundation, framing and exterior walls are original, reinforced with cedar shake siding much like those coastal homes the Lindseys had experience with. “Wood is pretty flexible. It doesn’t fall down; it can be straightened up and fixed. Bricks fall off or crack or deteriorate,” Marty explains. “The fact that it was a wooden house is what made it be able to be put back together.”

Inside, much of the flooring is original, and the layout hasn’t



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“The fact that it was a wooden house is what made it be able to be put back together,” Marty says.

AraLu is from Rockingham County, and her family has a lot of great antique furniture that the Lindseys have inherited. “A lot of the furniture here is Thomas Day,” Marty says. “It would have been appropriate for somebody who was a professor in 1908, whose parents would have been in and around Carolina in the 1850s and 1860s, to have had this furniture.” They use it, too! It’s not preserved and then untouched.



PHOTO BY BRIANA BROUGH



The Lindseys didn’t need to buy any new pieces for their Battle Lane house. “We pretty much just transitioned,” AraLu says.

changed much. “The original house was six bedrooms and one bathroom,” AraLu says. “So we did change that. Now we have four bedrooms and five bathrooms.”

Another modern touch was the garage, built separate from the house with an apartment above it. The Lindseys’ 20-year-old son and UNC student, **Sam**, lives there and loves its proximity to campus. Their other son, **Will**, 23, just graduated in May, right around the time the Lindseys officially sold their former home in Durham to move to Chapel Hill. They bought hardly any new furniture for the move. “We pretty much

just transitioned,” AraLu says. “The house fit us.”

“Our kids have said this is better than a beach house,” Marty says of the home that the couple will likely retire in. “Everyone wants to come back to Chapel Hill.”

They’ve enjoyed their new neighborhood, full of recognizable townfolk and academics. “There’s been a passionate interest” in the restoration, Marty says. “We’ve had two or three people come through here in their 70s and 80s who had lived here [in college]. The streets fill with interesting people. **Wyndham Robertson** and **Betty Kenan** rode by [the

other day] to go to lunch and yelled out the window, ‘It looks great!’”

It’s that community feel that they already love the most about their new locale. Although they’ve didn’t live far away prior to this, they have found living near the pulse of the university to be an entirely different – and positive – experience. “People are really active here. They take full ownership of their town. The mindset is a collective,” Marty says. “People have an appreciation for history and who they are and what they’re doing. Chapel Hill is just interesting. You think you know it until you live here.” **CHM**