

# Frank Lloyd Wright Masterpiece, the DeRhodes House, Listed for Sale

SOUTH BEND, IND., USA, August 20, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- After 43 years of private ownership, the Frank Lloyd Wright [DeRhodes House](#) is for sale to the public. The 1906 home is one of only two Frank Lloyd Wright homes in South Bend and one of only seven remaining in the state of Indiana.

Wright, an iconic American architect (1867-1959), is considered the pioneer of the Prairie School movement of architecture and design. Over his seven-decade career, he designed churches, schools, skyscrapers, hotels

and museums. However, his unique residences had the largest influence on the world of architecture and interior design. Two of the nearly 400 structures that he designed and built are in South Bend. Both are well-known, celebrated examples of homes designed by "the greatest American architect of all time" and the only modern American architect whose work has been inscribed on the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage list.

The DeRhodes House is the first Frank Lloyd Wright-designed building in Indiana. The home, used as a fraternal organization for over two decades, was purchased in 1978 by Suzanne and Tom Miller. The Millers poured their time and energy into the restoration of the home, accurately following original blueprints found in the attic after they took ownership, as well as historic photos and evidence discovered in the house during the process of restoration. Tom wrote his doctoral dissertation on Wright's architecture and thought it was a dream come true to have the opportunity to restore the home. He and Suzanne also received advice and research assistance from the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation and the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy.

Mr. and Mrs. K.C. DeRhodes originally commissioned the home. K.C. DeRhodes was a banker and the owner of the first Ford dealership in South Bend. After making his money introducing the Model T to the area, DeRhodes, a widower, proposed to widow Laura Bowsher of Illinois, who



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then commissioned the DeRhodes house from Mr. Wright. She lived in the home from 1906 until her death in 1952. She left the home to the First United Methodist Church to use as a parsonage, but the home was sold two years later to the Avalon Grotto.

Wright designed the DeRhodes House to feel spacious on a typical city lot, with intricate art glass windows throughout the home, both exterior and interior. The house includes a full basement and garage, two elements that became less common as Wright's career progressed. As is the case with much of Wright's work, the main entrances are recessed and semi-covered.

The Millers were devoted Wright enthusiasts and preservationists. Tom passed away in 2018, and Suzanne passed away earlier this year. Suzanne's dying wish was to restore this architectural masterpiece to its original layout and design, down to the original paint colors they had analyzed and recreated.

"I had the pleasure of working with Suzanne to sell her secondary residence so she could finally finish the DeRhodes House. I was in awe of the architecture and detail in 2018 when I first saw it, and now I am absolutely honored to represent her estate in the sale of the home today," said the listing agent, Beau Dunfee of Weichert Realtors – Jim Dunfee & Associates in South Bend. "Frank Lloyd Wright may have designed this home, but the Millers have put their heart and soul into it by restoring it to pristine condition."

In the spring of 2021, shortly before Suzanne's death, the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy recognized the significant work that Suzanne and Tom Miller did to preserve and restore the DeRhodes House by honoring them with its coveted Wright Spirit Award. The award was introduced in 1991 and recognizes the efforts of extraordinary individuals and organizations that have preserved the legacy of Wright through their tireless dedication and persistent efforts. The award will be formally presented at the Conservancy's annual conference in October.

The DeRhodes House is located at 715 West Washington Avenue and is listed by Dunfee, who is an Indiana-licensed real estate broker, realtor and attorney. He was elected to the South Bend Area Realtors Board of Directors in 2018 and is president-elect of the South Bend Area Realtors.

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