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Neighbors in Deed



By [Natalie Mikles](#) World Staff Writer
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"I remember walking through this neighborhood when I was a little girl. The big elm trees met across the street -- it was a shady wonderland. Of course, I never thought I would live here," said Cathryn Young, who with her husband Wess at their Brady Heights home, was recently named to the Oklahoma Neighborhood Hall of Fame.
NATALIE MIKLES/Tulsa World

Brady Heights couple honored with spot in Oklahoma Neighborhood Hall of Fame

If there's a standard for what makes a good neighbor, Wess and Cathryn Young have set it.

The couple, who remain a vital force in their community at 85 and 77 years old, respectively. The two were recently inducted into the Oklahoma Neighborhood Hall of Fame for their work in the Brady Heights district.

Brady Heights, one of the first Tulsa neighborhoods put on the National Register of Historic Places, roughly encompasses the area from Fairview to Marshall streets and north Cheyenne to north Denver avenues. The original homes were built between 1905 and 1925.

Since being placed on the registry in 1980, the neighborhood has turned around, in large part because of the leadership of its residents, said Tim Lovell, Brady Heights Neighborhood Association president.

"Wess and Cathryn led the neighborhood to organize. They were catalysts. On his watch, Wess worked with the city of Tulsa to find funding and grants and they're still keeping the neighborhood together," said Lovell who nominated the Youngs to the Oklahoma Neighborhood Hall of Fame.

When the Youngs moved into the neighborhood 23 years ago, they saw promise in the area they describe as "becoming blighted."

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"There were problems with crime and with prostitution. But that's all fading, mostly because we fuss about it all the time to the city and to the police. We do not like it. We do not want it. They're building \$100,000 or more houses in this area now," Cathryn said.

The decline of the Brady Heights district occurred as, over the years, Tulsa's growth continued to move south and east, Lovell said. And by the time the Youngs moved in, the once prestigious district, which was home to many of Tulsa's founding fathers, had seen better days.

"When these houses were built, this was where the well-to-do lived. They called it the silk stockings district." Cathryn said. "I remember walking through this neighborhood when I was a little girl. The big elm trees met across the street -- it was a shady wonderland. Of course, I never thought I would live here."

Lovell said the Youngs have been a driving force in promoting the neighborhood to prospective homebuyers interested in restoring the history and bringing the elegance back to the historic homes.

Wess was the first president of the Brady Heights Neighborhood Association, which was formed the same year the neighborhood was placed on the national historic registry. He became committed to helping his new neighborhood because he had seen other Tulsa neighborhoods deteriorating and he didn't want that to happen to his.

One project created by the Brady Heights Neighborhood Association is the annual home tour where prospective buyers are taken on a tour of the neighborhood by the neighbors themselves.

Lovell said Wess and Cathryn have never stopped working for the association and could be counted on for their input and decorum at its meetings.

"Neighborhood associations go through cycles. Due to neighborhood differences, it's almost fallen apart several times. But Wess and Cathryn have been at the forefront each time and they're still here," Lovell said.

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