

# Longevity in North Avondale: 1401 Dana Avenue

## Description

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Can you imagine visiting your grandparents at Casa Blanca, their home (below) at 1401 Dana Avenue and then getting to live in this house yourself once they passed? Well Annamarie Becker Harten (and her 7 siblings) got to do just that!

Casa Blanca was built in l927-28 and Annamarieâ??s grandfather, Judge Edwin Becker and his wife, Arnolda, bought the house in l929, the year her father, Flavian, was born. The Beckers lived in the house with two of their children quite comfortably. In l968, Flavian and his wife, Peggy and their SEVEN children (Flavian, Maura, Julia, Annamarie, Brian, Gregg, and Eric; son Sean was born later ) moved into the THREE bedroom house (+ maidâ??s quarters on the second floor) from Mt. Lookout. The family had planned to build a house on Alpine Terrace on a lot they owned, but decided to come to Casa Blanca for â??a year or soâ?• and ended up staying until 1986 when they sold to Xavier University. Original thoughts were that this would become the XU Presidentâ??s house, but ultimately XU decided dorm space was more important and sadly the house was torn down to make way for Xavier Village, which is currently on the corner.

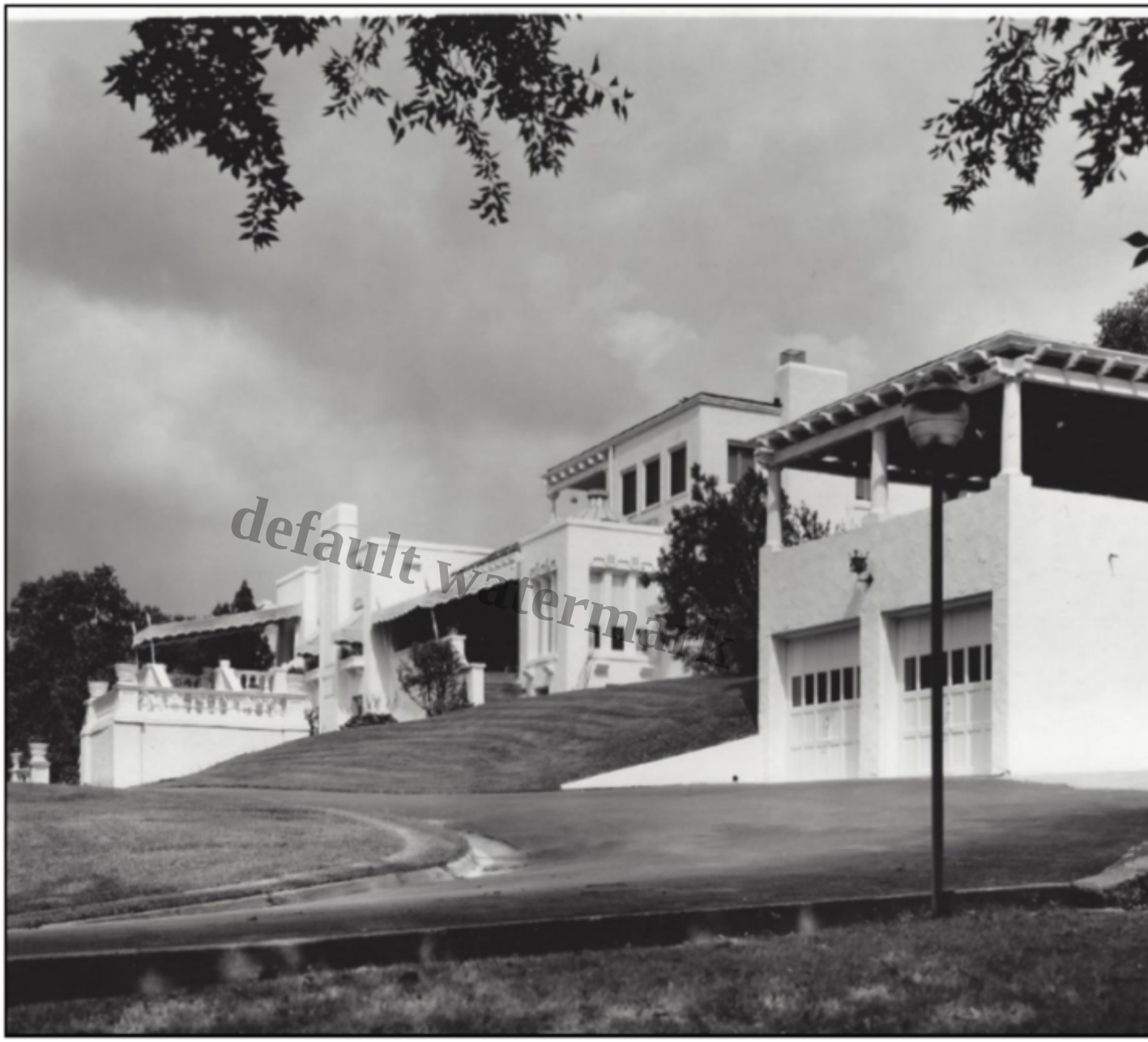



Annamarie recalls that while the house was definitely NOT a house for 10 people, to an 8 year old it was a â??treasure troveâ?•. When the family moved in, they inherited all of their grandparents furniture and belongings! Annamarie loved going to the basement and looking through all the family photo albums. The basement was the largest floor of the house with many rooms. They had a rathskeller complete with a fireplace, pool table, juke box and pinballâ??perfect for the entertaining needs of the

teenagers that grew up in the house! The home also had a large library with built in cabinets. Annamarie especially loved the fountain room with its fish and the calming sound of water in the fountain. It had arched windows that overlooked Victory Parkway and Dana and they had plants everywhere in the room!



The property had 5 acres and was very secluded; the kids could run and run. The family had a few dogs, then a few more (none were neutered or spayed as Annamarie recalls) until they had 13! The dogs became helpful as the family was broken into more than a few times. Flavian used to get the dogs bones from the market â?? really large cow leg bones. When the dogs were done with the bones, they left them in the yard. To some, they looked like human bones â?? all the better to keep the â??uninvitedâ?• at bay. Annamarie recalls that there was a phone booth at the bottom of the hill that her friends would handily use to call up to see if the coast (dogs) were clear before coming up.




The Becker kids followed their parentâ??s leads and went to The Summit Country Day School through the 8th grade. For high school, some of the kids remained at The Summit, and others went to Walnut Hills or St. X. They participated in the Bellarmine Chapel (at XU) youth groups and they all enjoyed playing football at the Quaker Church yard and going to the XU football games. In fact, Annamarie met her future husband, Tom Harten, at the XU football game when she was just 11. Tom was fooling around, stomping on mustard packets and squirted mustard all over Annamarie! The Hartenâ??s also had eight children and enjoyed throwing parties at their home at 952 Lenox. Annamarie says she almost lived at the Hartenâ??s, hanging out with her best friend, and Tomâ??s sister, Maura. In fact, there were many large families in the neighborhood at the time and all played together. She also notes that if her parents had built that house on Alpine Terrace, she likely never would have met Tom. But she did.

Tom and Annamarie Harten, married since 1979, have lived in Norwood and Avondale, but the longest as North Avondale residents, first as childhood residents, then residing on Beechwood Avenue and in

two different houses on Marion Avenue, where they currently reside. Tom and Annamarie love their neighborhood and have been active in NANA (GreenUP) and NABA (with Tom serving as President and on the Board). They have 4 children, all raised in North Avondale (Maura, David, Stephen, and Elizabeth), and 6 grandchildren. Three of their children live and/or own properties in North Avondale, continuing the love of the neighborhood for yet another generation!

**Date Created**
September 1, 2022
**Author**
jolene-struebbe

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