

Mansion Sees 12th President Walker and Family Given Elbow Room

Story by Judy Harkison
Photos by Dave Bavar

The 92-year-old President's Residence welcomed its 12th guest in November when President Eric A. Walker and his family moved to the traditional campus home.

Dr. and Mrs. Walker, and their two children, Gail, 14, and Brian, 9, are happily settled in the house built in 1863 by the first president of the University, Evan Pugh.

The original house has been remodeled many times, so that today it gives the appearance of a house of Southern colonial style—tall, columned portico.

The high-ceilinged house contains 17 rooms and 9 baths. The formal living room, used primarily for the entertainment of large groups, is to the left of the entrance hall.

The Walkers say they spend most of their time in the study—a room with a casual academic atmosphere—a solid wall of bookshelves, fireplace, large leather chairs and a mahogany desk.

The nine bedrooms are located on both the second and third floors. However, the Walkers converted a few of these rooms into lounges, a sewing room and a recreation room.

Before moving into the President's Residence, the family lived in a modern, ranch-style home on W. Park Ave. It is designed by Dr. and Mrs. Walker with the help of an architect from the University.

Since November, the campus residence has afforded Brian, Gail and dog Gus, a German Shepherd, plenty of elbow room. Gail is a freshman at the State College High School and Brian is in fourth grade.

Mrs. Walker, once a fashion designer, immediately claimed the walls for her still life oil paintings and copperwork—examples of the "first lady of the University's" favorite pastimes.

One room, however, Dr. Walker has reserved for himself. That is his den on the second floor where there is an impressive collection, 14 to be exact, of certificates and awards he has received. Today he will have a new addition—an honorary Doctor of Laws degree presented by Temple University.

With each new resident the house has captured a touch of the family personality—particularly in 1908 when Mrs. Edwin Erle Sparks paid \$10 a roll for silver wallpaper. This indicated a sharp change in style from the

dark tones of the Victorian period to the lighter colors of the early 1900's.

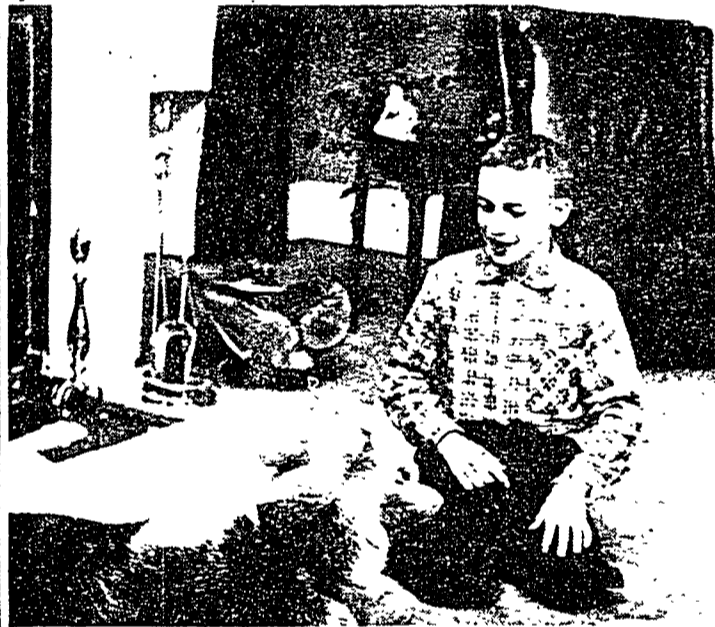
Following this trend the interior and exterior woodwork was painted white, retaining happily the original broad boards and window sills to be seen in the house today.

The following paragraph appeared in a 1950 College magazine:

"With dignity this 85-year-old house, so rich in memories, marks time. Its history is indelibly linked with that of the Old Main, of the past and the present and with Evan Pugh, Penn State's first president, through whose efforts the buildings were brought to completion. With the exception of Evan Pugh, all presidents have trod the path so significantly connecting the two buildings. With them have walked many State officials seriously pondering the welfare of the University."



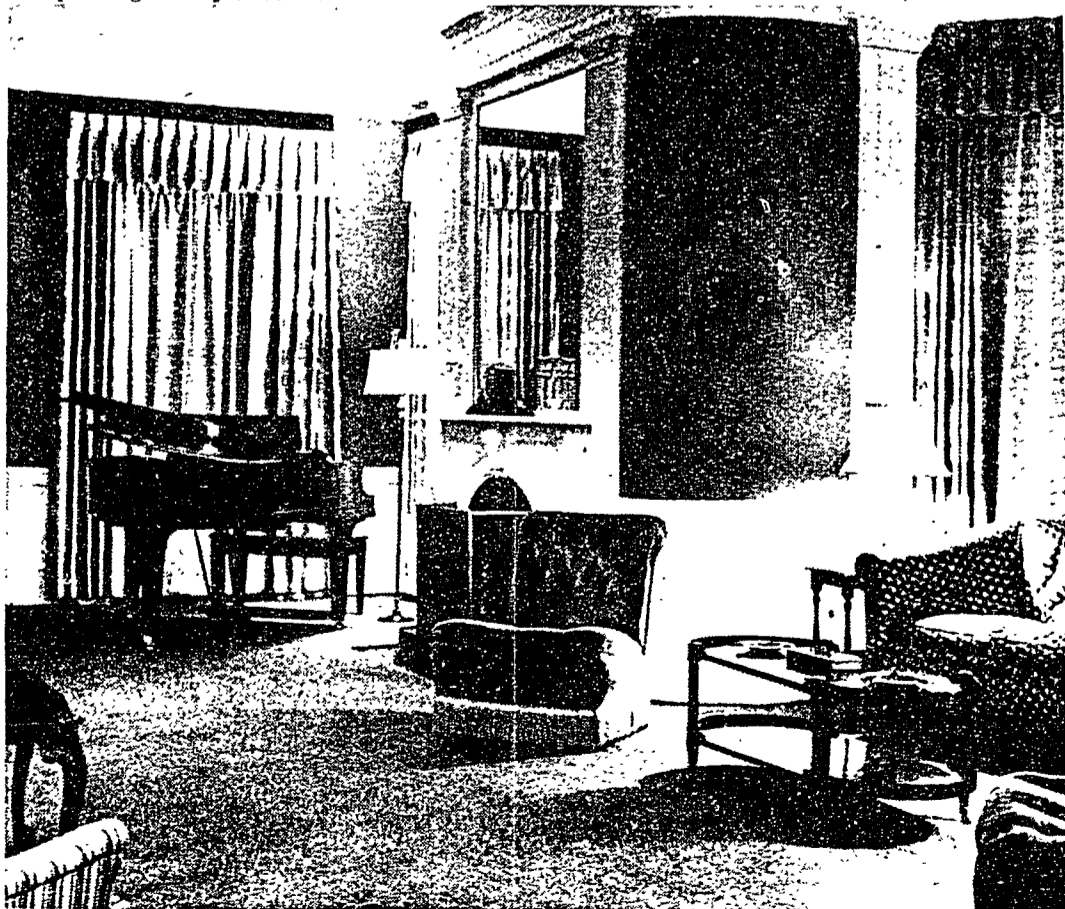
THE STUDY, the favorite room of the family, and "the most livable," says Mrs. Walker. Gus, an 11-month-old German Shepherd, also enjoys the sophisticated academic atmosphere. The room contains red curtains and a large white fireplace with a mirror extending to the ceiling. The china mugs on the shelves were gathered from all parts of the world.



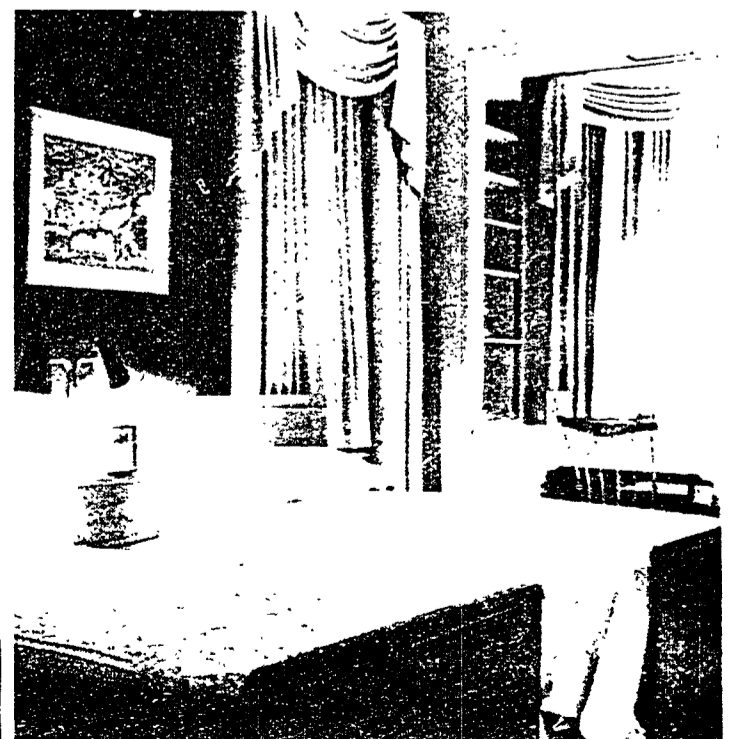
BRIAN, 9, and pal Gus often play together in front of the fireplace in the Walkers' study. Here it seems Brian is trying to teach Gus to read, however Gus' interest is elsewhere.



GAIL, 14, selected a third floor bedroom, one of the largest bedrooms of the house. Here she is talking to a friend on the telephone—a typical activity, her mother says. Gail is a music fan, and collects recordings of show tunes.



THE FORMAL living room, the largest room in the house, was at one time three rooms. It contains gold curtains, a soft green carpet and two mirrored fireplaces. The Walkers' use the living room primarily for the entertainment of large groups.



A CORNER of the master bedroom, showing the contrast of beige and green colors. At the left is a built-in dressing table, with a picture of Dr. Walker on the top.