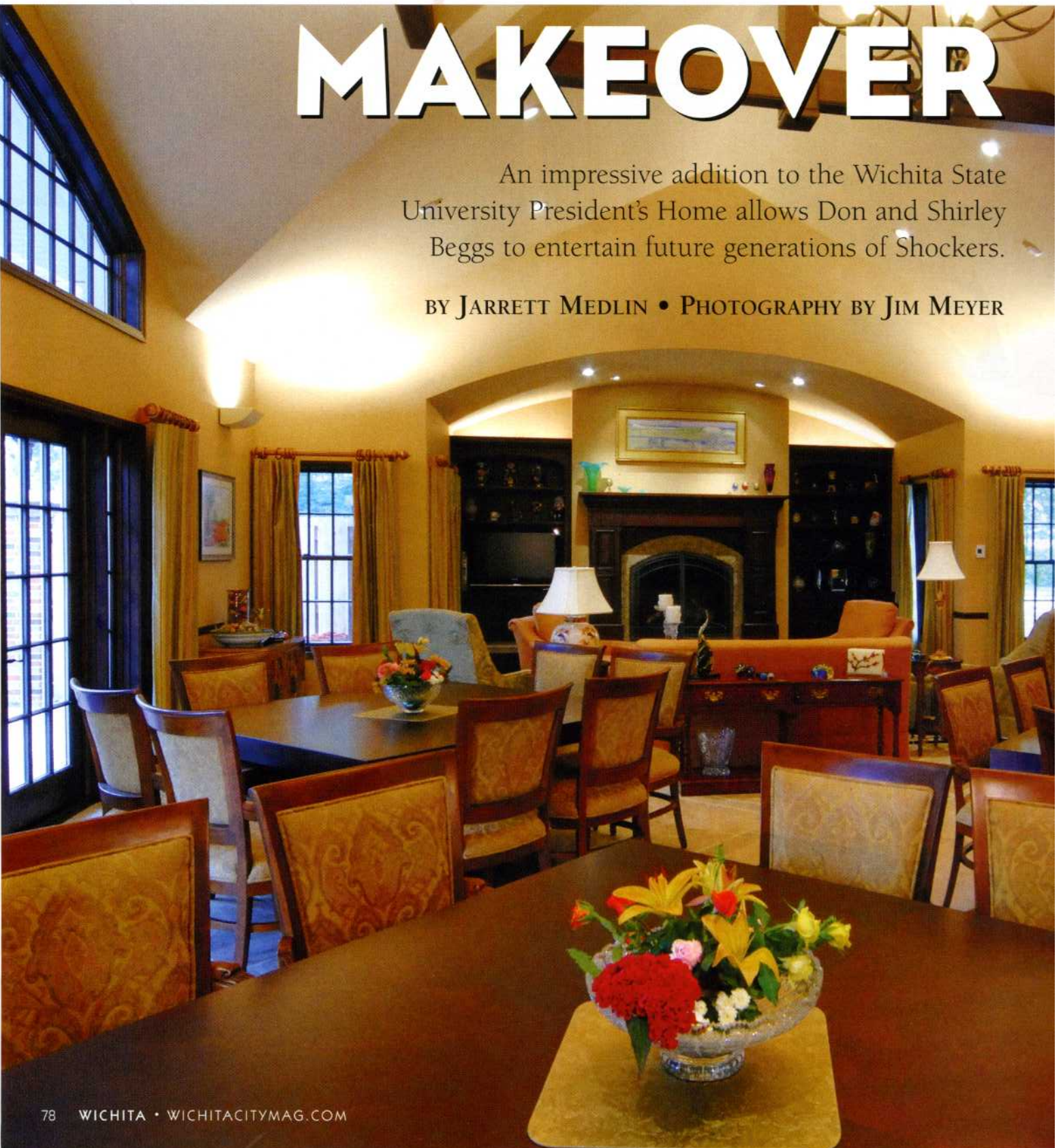




A Presidential MAKEOVER

An impressive addition to the Wichita State University President's Home allows Don and Shirley Beggs to entertain future generations of Shockers.

BY JARRETT MEDLIN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM MEYER





The First Lady of Wichita State University answers her back door with a wide smile, and in an instant you feel welcome. Shirley Beggs, the wife of WSU President Don Beggs, is a pro at hosting guests at the WSU President's Home on the corner of 17th Street and Hillside. She escorts me through the original Georgian Revival-style house and into a 2,000-square foot addition that was completed the day before. Right away, it's apparent how ecstatic she is about the sizeable add-on. "The whole purpose when anyone walks in the door is for them to feel welcome and like it so much they don't want to leave," says Shirley. "We want to show alum, friends and guests how much we appreciate them when they visit the house."

Today, the vastly improved space allows the Beggs to easily host alumni, students and local leaders while enjoying their living space. The new addition is tailor-made for get-togethers with a modern dining room, hearth area, large kitchen, two bathrooms and expanded patios. At the same time, the area

compliments the original residence. "We tried very intentionally—both inside and outside—to make it look like part of the original house," says Shirley.

Before the addition was completed in October, entertaining at the President's Home was no easy task. The original 6,800-square-foot structure, built in 1938, lacked space for storage, cooking or comfortably seating more than 15 people at a time. Setting up was a strenuous, three-day task that involved hauling tables and boxes of silverware up and down the narrow basement stairway. Extra furniture was stored in a warehouse. Staff often plated food in the garage because only two people could work in the kitchen at once. Not only was the setup impractical and intrusive to the Beggs' personal life, but it felt cramped and forced many guests to stand during events. So two years ago, Shirley talked to the WSU Foundation about raising private funds to build an addition. In less than a year, the Foundation reached its goal, and construction began in March. Despite unpredictable weather, the addition was completed in mid-October, just in



>> Above: The previous dining room at the Wichita State University President's Home comfortably seated only 15 guests during events for WSU alumni and students. The original home now blends naturally into a 2,000-square-foot addition. >> Opposite page: The new dining area has a high ceiling, a hearth area and a warm interior design. The room can seat more than 32 guests.



time to host basketball alumni events and the WSU Women's Association.

From the beginning, Shirley worked alongside Nies Construction and architect David White of Helmer & Howard to ensure the project was practical and didn't compromise the integrity of the original home. The bricks on the new exterior are the exact same brand as those on the original structure. Extended patios on two sides of the home run up against the dining room and provide space for 10 additional tables during events held on nice days. A beautifully landscaped yard complements the expanded house and brick patios.



Inside, the new dining room naturally flows into the original living area. A high ceiling with eight angles accented by space lighting adds an open feel. The large room's warm color scheme, mostly shades of brown, yellow and green, was inspired by a painting that Shirley has owned for 41 years that now hangs on the north wall. The walls and ceiling are painted with a rich hue called cheddar biscuit. Four large square tables allow seating for 32 people, and a black Steinway baby grand piano sits in one corner. "You want to linger in that room," says Vicki Flores, the designer from Accent Interiors who has worked alongside Shirley on projects in the home for the past six years. "It's basically an auditorium, but it feels like an intimate space." At the east end of the room is a carpeted hearth area with a fireplace and a comfortable sitting area where guests can watch away games on a flat-panel television that gets ESPN-U.



Shirley was very particular about the materials in the dining room. For the floor, she selected 18-inch Italian square tiles

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>> Top to bottom: The original 6,800-square-foot home has evolved over the years. The original living room was at one time converted into a dining area, but the Beggs returned it to a living room with three sitting areas. >> The original home had only one small downstairs bathroom for guests. The new addition includes two elegant bathrooms, this one located just off the new kitchen for guests and the catering staff. >> The parlor was at one time a dining room, but it was far too small for entertaining. The Beggs have had to remain flexible while entertaining up to 150 guests.



>> The home's original kitchen (left) was so small that only two people could prepare food at a time. As a result, the catering staff plated food in the garage. The new kitchen (above) is custom-made to fit the staff's needs with a professional refrigerator, a warming oven, two convection ovens and a mobile island.

and a border with rosettes. A cabinet at the south end of the room stores the fine silverware that Shirley used to have to get on the floor to pack into boxes before and after events. The cabinet's countertop, as well as the border around the fireplace, consists of dark granite. The baseboards for the shelves around the fireplace have a dark walnut finish that matches the dining room tables, which she hand-picked from a Canadian company because they were similar to ones used when she entertained at Southern Illinois University, before the Beggs moved to Wichita.

The new kitchen is also impressive but entirely practical. Shirley talked to the catering service to discuss their needs before meeting with the architect and Jess Frize at The Kitchen Place. The result is an entirely workable space that can accommodate a large staff. There's a professional refrigerator that can hold a

kitchen cart, a warming oven, two convection ovens, a professional dishwasher and double sinks. Plenty of storage provides a place for Shirley to store her fine china. At the center of the room is a portable island on wheels that stores pots and pans, which the chef can conveniently move beside the stove while cooking and out of the way of other kitchen staff. Finally, two new bathrooms—one beside the kitchen with a walk-in shower and one next to the dining room—are conveniently accessible to guests and staff.

The completed addition brings the President's Home into the 21st century and provides enough room for future WSU presidents to entertain alumni, students and locals. "Don and I are only stewards in this house; it really belongs to the state of Kansas," says Shirley. "Now future presidents can walk in and open this home to future generations with no problem."