

PLATEAU

April / May 2021

MOUNTAIN LIFE IN HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS NORTH CAROLINA

Destination Highlands

4118 Reasons Why

Jump Shot

Croquet on the Plateau

S'more Fun

Summer Youth Camps

PLATT
HOME

Celebrated Living
at Mountaintop

Mary Adair Trumbly
of the Highlands PAC

Well Styled

design | home | garden | fashion |

Make Yourself at HOME

From architecture to art and texture, PLATT HOME encourages you to define your unique sense of place.



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Getting HOME

A family legacy of design, storytelling and placemaking

By KAT FORD

THERE'S A TABLE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NEW PLATT HOME SHOWROOM. LONG AND WEATHERED, it could effortlessly serve as a repurposed harvest table- the setting for a doting mother's large family gathering. It could just as easily be a worktable- where a tinkering father unrolls maps, collects tools and teaches small hands big skills. The androgyny in purpose magnifies the table's appeal. Layered with objects, it captivates, evoking the unspoken importance of togetherness. Fingertips follow the grain from one wood plank to the next, taking note- a stack of books, an orchid. A story forms, you become less consumer, more student. The showroom transcends retail. You are a welcomed observer in the abode of a well-traveled host. Each article hints at the inherent nature of things - the insight contained is free for any willing to study. As in any home, these items hold intimate meaning. Especially that orchid, those stacks of books.

The House That Al and Cindy Built

Every home starts as a house. The house of PLATT began with Al and Cindy. Al had a Bachelor of Arts in English from UNC-Chapel Hill. With an innate understanding of how his surroundings affected

him, he soon found himself desiring a different career path. He received a Master of Architecture from NC State University in 1975, and the couple moved to Brevard, NC. In 1982, Al formed what would grow to become a respected architectural firm.

Al was focused more on people from the beginning. In designing homes, he intended to listen and construct something that complemented each client's life. With a portfolio including houses with native pollinating roof gardens and a bridge

house built to create living space over a protected creek, PLATT triumphs over ubiquitous industry jargon and ego- not merely resulting in a sense of place but manifesting physical settings for clients to live out the desired story of their lives. Armed with a degree in the liberal arts, it's no surprise Al Platt excels in the 'who, what, when, where and why.'

While Al elevated the bar of storytelling from English to architecture, Cindy mastered the narrative of placemaking, both in the residence where they raised their three children and the community of Brevard. The walls sheltering her family were full of works by local artists, people they knew. She loved layering colors and found objects with an affinity for orange, orchids and stacks of books. Cindy had strong feelings about togetherness, both in family and community. She served in leadership roles for and was a founding member of several organizations benefiting children and the arts.

All three Platt children expanded on the strong creative and community-focused foundation that Al and Cindy provided. Their youngest son, Woody, plays guitar in the Grammy award-winning American bluegrass band Steep Canyon Rangers. Daughter Maggie, sharing her mother's love for children, teaches in the exceptional children's program at Brevard Elementary. In 2021, their oldest son, Parker, became principal owner and president of PLATT, having worked alongside Al since 1994. While Parker shares his father's appreciation for architecture as an experience, he admits that Cindy made the earliest impression on him in the art of decorating spaces within his childhood home.

Load-bearing walls are critical to the structure of a house. The same can be true of a matriarch. In 2013, Cindy Platt passed away unexpectedly. With a lifetime example of teaching and service, she left behind a master plan and blueprint for the future. "She did and still does center us all, and the example she set continues to keep us focused on the things that really matter- family, community, kindness, generosity, beauty and plain old hard work," said Parker.

(Left) PLATT HOME founders: Curtis M. Greenwood, Parker Platt and Katie Jackson; (Below) The new PLATT HOME retail showroom is located at 214 South Broad Street in Brevard. With a collection of furniture, found objects, custom pieces made by local artisans and antiques, the PLATT HOME product mix heralds a family legacy of design and togetherness. Orchids and stacks of books throughout the PLATT HOME showroom offer personal touches honoring Cindy Platt's love of placemaking.



WELL STYLED home



Making a House a HOME

Since it began in 1982, PLATT has grown into a multiple division, full-service firm including architecture, construction and interior design. Al and Cindy's legacy of connecting people and places radiates through a company that designs and builds highly regarded residential and commercial projects and helps clients protect their land through Witherspoon Platt + Associates, their affiliated real estate brokerage and land conservation consulting business, which has helped preserve nearly 9,000 acres to date.

Up until 2015, PLATT had worked with many great interior designers, but all third parties, none in-house. For PLATT, this was a missing piece. While in school at NC State University, Parker Platt once pitched an entire project by describing the experience of a child living in the dwelling. A house should mean something to the owners and offering interior services would enhance PLATT's ability to help clients find and define their own space. The opportunity came in 2015 through a project in Omaha, NE, creating a guest lodge for The Cloisters on the Platte. The client requested full design services- from start to finish. By chance, Parker had met Katie Jackson through mutual friends. Katie had just moved to Brevard from Atlanta, desiring to be near her recently retired parents. Parker asked if she had the professional acumen to tackle a large interior design project. It just so happened that she did.

Katie learned how to sew at a young age from both of her parents. In college, a neighbor in her apartment complex needed a seamstress to make a bed canopy cover

for a Highlands, NC, client. Katie took the gig and fell in love with the process of interior design. She soon began working for the same design firm, first in administration. After 13 years, Katie had worked her way up to partner. When she left Atlanta, she thought that world was behind her; perhaps she would grow flowers in the country. Katie joined the team part-time, and PLATT explored the entire spectrum of experiential architecture. The lodge project gave PLATT precisely what they needed, a client who offered free reign to cut their teeth while expanding a new in-house offering. PLATT developed a custom scent; Woody Platt and wife Shannon Whitworth assembled a 30-minute original soundtrack for the lodge. Katie moved into a space in PLATT's main office. Word spread that PLATT was offering full-service interiors. Before long, they were taking additional clients, with Katie soon becoming PLATT's interior design director. The Cloisters on the Platte project set into motion a path that would ultimately lead to the creation of PLATT HOME, founded by Parker, Katie and PLATT's business director, Curtis M. Greenwood.

PLATT interior services are currently available for PLATT architecture clients. Showing clients samples often meant a drive to product showrooms in Atlanta or Charlotte. It became clear that a retail location would be advantageous and allow PLATT to display represented brands, stock product and explore other offerings they are known for- found objects, custom pieces made by local artisans, antiques and community-mindedness. At PLATT HOME, clients and shoppers alike are

encouraged to peruse various options and price points, from a \$40 PLATT HOME candle to a unique piece of furniture. "We like to mix fine pieces with less expensive items. With the right mix of meaningful things, it gives the whole room energy, soul," said Jackson. Touches that reflect PLATT's sense of authentic integrity lie in their private-label furniture, where a nearly 30-piece offering in luxe, durable fabrics are all made in North Carolina, two hours away. Treasures throughout the store reflect Katie and Parker's travels. Argentine textiles and knives mark Parker's love of South America. The collection of hats- also a nod to Parker's style. Several items in the store are made by local craftsmen- like a collection of handsome leather fire bags, projects conceived while Katie and Parker collaborated for PLATT clients. Even the PLATT HOME candles have personal sentiments. Katie chose 'Earl Grey' for memories of drinking tea with her mother. Parker chose 'Honeysuckle' because it reminds him of his youth. And of course, there are those stacks of books, that orchid.

Blueprints for the Future

Plenty of poetic sentiments play on the concept of home; most surmise that when the memories are gone, so is the enchantment. A simply stated lyric from the Steep Canyon Rangers' 2018 album "Out in the Open" laments, "I can find the house- but I can't get home." The band has hosted the Mountain Song Festival in Brevard since 2006 after Cindy asked Woody to plan a music event to benefit the local Boys & Girls Club, now named The Cindy Platt Boys & Girls Club of Transylvania County. For over 40 years, the Platt family has built a legacy in placemaking, creating a sense of place for clients and making the community of Brevard a better place. "This part of the world is important to us, and we are trying to make a difference where we can," said Parker Platt.

While memories are so much more than objects, it is deep-rooted within the most intimate items in a living space to tell a narrative. Stories that teach, remind and are passed down to future generations- narratives that come with a master plan and blueprint. With a collection of products intended to help customers leave their own legacy of personalized placemaking, PLATT is hoping to get us all a little closer to home- whether that be through items crafted by local artisans, found objects, a piece of furniture, an orchid or a stack of books. ■

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