

Mid Mod Arkansas Tour  
Gerald and Marjorie Tweedy House  
1411 W. Emma Ave., Springdale  
April 14, 2018

I want to start off by thanking Robyn Puntch, who owns the Tweedy House, for allowing us to tour her home today. Built in 1950, this home was designed by Bill Oglesby for the Gerald and Marjorie Tweedy family. At the time, Oglesby was teaching at the School of Architecture at the University of Oklahoma. The Tweedy House and the J. W. Oglesby House just down the street attracted a lot of attention because of their modern design. Oglesby's holistic design philosophy is evident in the Tweedy House, as he also designed the home's redwood interior and furniture, most of which remains today. Gerald Tweedy was a civic booster and the longtime president of Jones Truck Lines. My talk will focus on the Tweedy family and the home's interior, while Mason Toms will talk to you about Bill Oglesby and the home's exterior.

Gerald H. Tweedy was born on July 8, 1917, at Fayetteville. He was the fifth of six children born to James W. Tweedy and his wife, Maggie Switzer Tweedy. Gerald's father, James, owned and operated a bowling alley in Fayetteville before a long stint as bookkeeper for the Fayetteville Ice Company and later, the Coca-Cola Bottling Company. Gerald's mother, Maggie, worked during the 1930s as a stenographer at the Northwest Arkansas Production Credit Association, which provided low-interest financing to farmers and rural residents. Gerald Tweedy grew up in Fayetteville and attended Fayetteville Public Schools. He continued his education at Fayetteville Business College, where he met his future wife, Marjorie Robsahm. Gerald and Marjorie were married on July 24, 1938, in the living room of his parents' home at the foot of Mount Sequoyah. Gerald and Marjorie Tweedy had three daughters: Patricia, Jean, and Ann.

Gerald Tweedy spent almost 44 years of his life working for Jones Truck Lines. Springdale's Jones Truck Lines traces its origin back to 1918, when local businessman Harvey Jones started transporting dry goods and groceries from Springdale to Rogers and Fayetteville with a team of mules and a wagon. Jones soon acquired a truck, and when the Missouri and North Arkansas Railroad went on strike in 1920, he was able to capitalize on the transportation void, hauling goods between cities along the railroad route. During the 1920s, the freight service expanded and became known as Jones Transportation Company. In 1933 the company name was changed to Jones Truck Lines and had terminals at Springdale and Fort Smith, Arkansas, as well as Springfield and Joplin, Missouri. The freight line continued to expand and acquire new routes and by 1950, Jones Truck Lines was the largest privately owned carrier in the country. By 1979, the company boasted 41 terminals in 15 states with 2,300 employees and did \$80 million in business that year.

Harvey Jones sold the company in 1980 to Sun Carriers. Mr. Jones died in 1989. A couple years later, when his widow, Mrs. Bernice Young Jones, heard that Sun Carriers was going through bankruptcy, she bought back the old JTL terminal property on East Emma Avenue. Through the efforts of Mrs. Jones and other generous donors, the Jones Center for Families opened in 1995 on the site. The Joneses are further memorialized by the names of Har-Ber ("Har"vey-"Ber"nice) High School and the Har-Ber Meadows subdivision in Springdale. Mrs. Jones died in 2003 at the age of 97.

Gerald Tweedy began his career at Jones Truck Lines in 1936. He started off as a bookkeeper, and by 1938, he was also the office manager. When the company incorporated in 1949, Tweedy became vice-president and secretary. Three years later, he advanced to executive vice president and general manager and in 1967 became president of the company. Mr. Tweedy retired from JTL in 1980 when the

company was sold to Sun Carriers. I should mention that Harvey and Bernice Jones didn't have any children, and Gerald Tweedy was like a son to them. Based on all available information, he was Mr. Jones's right-hand man. In addition to his work for Jones Truck Lines, Tweedy was president of Springdale's Washington Federal Savings and Loan Association and one of the five original partners who started Frez-N-Stor, Inc. in the late 1950s.

Gerald Tweedy gave back to his community and the state by serving on numerous boards. He was the president of the Arkansas Bus and Truck Association and the Southwestern Motor Freight Bureau. He was vice president of the American Trucking Association. He also served as president of the Springdale Chamber of Commerce, Springdale Rotary Club, and was the charter president of the Springdale Jaycees. He was a member of the Springdale Memorial Hospital Board of Directors as well as the Harvey and Bernice Jones Foundation Board. Tweedy also served on advisory boards to the University of Arkansas's College of Business Administration. Gerald and Marge Tweedy were faithful members of Springdale's First United Methodist Church, where he taught Sunday School, sang in the choir, and served as chairman of the Board of Stewards. The Tweedys were very generous with their time and money and made a sizeable contribution toward the construction of Rotary Park and the Randall Tyson Recreational Complex in Springdale.

In 1945, Harvey and Bernice Jones deeded about 2 ½ acres each to Gerald and Marjorie Tweedy and Ralph and Mozelle Crumpacker. Ralph Crumpacker had also worked for Jones Truck Lines, retiring as executive vice-president of the company.

In 1947, the Tweedys built a garage with living quarters on part of their acreage along West Emma Avenue. The Tweedy's home was completed and furnished by November 1951, when the *Northwest Arkansas Times* published a story about their modern home as well as the Oglesby House down the street.

The author begins by saying, "California may brag about her redwood tree which has a road running through it, but Sprindale, Ark., literally has a house carved out of a redwood tree. The very modern home [of] Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Tweedy on West Emma Avenue is a brick house which not only utilizes redwood for all the trim, window and door frames and interior walls but even contains furniture made exclusively from redwood." Bill Oglesby designed the home's interior finishes and every piece of furniture, most of which is still here. He even painted an abstract piece of art specifically for the Tweedy House—Robyn still has it in the bedroom—but you can see where it originally hung in the living room.

I'll get back to the interior details and furniture as we go through the house, but I want to tell you more about the neighborhood and about the woman of the house, Marge Tweedy.

Crumpacker and Tweedy combined their acreage to plat the Crumpacker-Tweedy Addition to the City of Springdale in 1955. The Tweedy House is located on parts of Lots 1 and 2 in Block 1 of the Addition, which only consists of a couple lots on the south side of W. Emma and the lots in the cul-de-sac on Circle Drive, a couple blocks to the south. West Emma Avenue was home to several of Springdale's leading businessmen, including Gerald Tweedy of JTL, John Tyson of Tyson Foods, and Joe Steele of Steele Canning Company (later Allen Canning Company). And Don Tyson later built a home on Circle Drive.

Gerald Tweedy died in 1991 at the age of 73, but Marge Tweedy lived to be 100 years old and was well-loved by her family and the community. Marjorie Robsahm Tweedy was born on February 4, 1913, at Carroll, Iowa, to William and Emma Bliss. Marjorie's mother died sometime between 1915 and 1920, leaving behind her husband and three children. Marjorie and her older siblings were sent to live at a

children's home after their mother's death. Marjorie was then adopted by Harry and D'Ette Robsahm from South Dakota, where she grew up. After Marge graduated from high school, she and her parents moved to northwest Arkansas. Marge attended the Fayetteville Business College, where she met her sweetheart, Gerald Tweedy. The couple married in 1938, and they had three daughters. Marge was a stay-at-home mom and an active member of First United Methodist Church in Springdale.

The Rev. Britt Skarda, who pastored at First UMC Springdale from 2000 to 2010 described Marge Tweedy as "tiny, lively, delightful, faithful, a ball of fire, and a breath of fresh air." The "tiny" description refers to Marjorie's height—she was only 5 feet tall. A sweet story about Marge Tweedy—she always encouraged her daughters to participate in the school band and continued to support the Springdale High School Band after her kids were grown. When the band practiced during the summer, they would march down W. Emma and would stop in front of the house and play for Mrs. Tweedy. Marge Tweedy died on January 9, 2014, in Rockwall, Texas, where her youngest daughter, Anne, lived.

Robyn Puntch bought the Tweedy House in July 2011 and has done a wonderful job preserving the home's original character. She has done some roof repair, replaced the HVAC, and added some new lighting, but that's about it.

### INTERIOR DETAILS/FURNITURE

I mentioned earlier that the home's interior was finished in redwood, and most of the original custom-designed and built on-site furniture is made from redwood and remains in the house today.

Bill Oglesby's design maximized the utility of every square inch of the house. You'll notice that each room has some kind of built-in storage, and all of the interior doors are sliding pocket doors to save space.

The design also took advantage of natural light while protecting the family's privacy. The original house stopped at the glass wall in the living room, so there was a lot more natural light, and the house was curved around the patio area. In 1962, a compatible addition was built to enclose the patio and create a sun room. The in-ground pool and back yard fencing were added at this time as well. And you'll notice the clerestory windows that provide indirect natural light. Florescent lights were concealed in the heavy redwood beams, and other lights were installed flush with the ceiling and under the kitchen cabinets to be as unobtrusive as possible.

The original flooring material was black asbestos tile, and it may still be underneath this carpet. The kitchen floor was black and yellow tile. And the original color scheme was yellow, light gray, and plaid. The drapes were yellow, all furniture was upholstered in light gray, and the bedspreads were imported Scotch plaid. See original photos.

Entryway—Original bench

Den—Mostly original furniture. Notice the built-in storage in the corner table and the closet. This also doubled as a guest room originally.

Living Room—This room is missing the original sofas and chair with ottoman, but it has the original end tables and built-in storage. The placement of the sofas was the same as it is now to visually separate the living room and the dining area.

Dining Room—Original dining table and bar/serving area. Notice the storage on the back side of the bar and the repeated diamond motif. Built-in shelving as you go into the kitchen, which is hidden from the living room by a screen wall. Notice the original breakfast table and stool on the other end of the kitchen.

Bathroom—Clerestory windows and corrugated yellow panels to diffuse the light.

Three Bedrooms—When the home was completed, the Tweedys' youngest daughter, Ann, was just 16 months old. She slept in a nursery just off of the master bedroom, and by the time she needed a full-sized bedroom of her own, her oldest sister, Patricia, was graduating from high school, which freed up a room for her.

All three bedrooms have sliding glass doors to the exterior and closets with built-in shelving. The older daughters, Pat and Jean, had identically furnished bedrooms with redwood desks and stools, beds, night stands, and upholstered chairs. When you raise the top of the desk, it reveals a vanity/dressing table. And notice the built-in wastebaskets. The night stands feature the diamond design.

The Master Bedroom has a desk, safe, dressing table, sink, and another bathroom. It also has a large horizontal sliding window. The nursery is just off the Master Bedroom and has a door to the exterior.

Sun Room—I told you that the sun room was built in 1962. It was also designed by Oglesby. Notice the use of redwood on the ceiling and the Nutone indoor barbeque with range hood and exhaust.