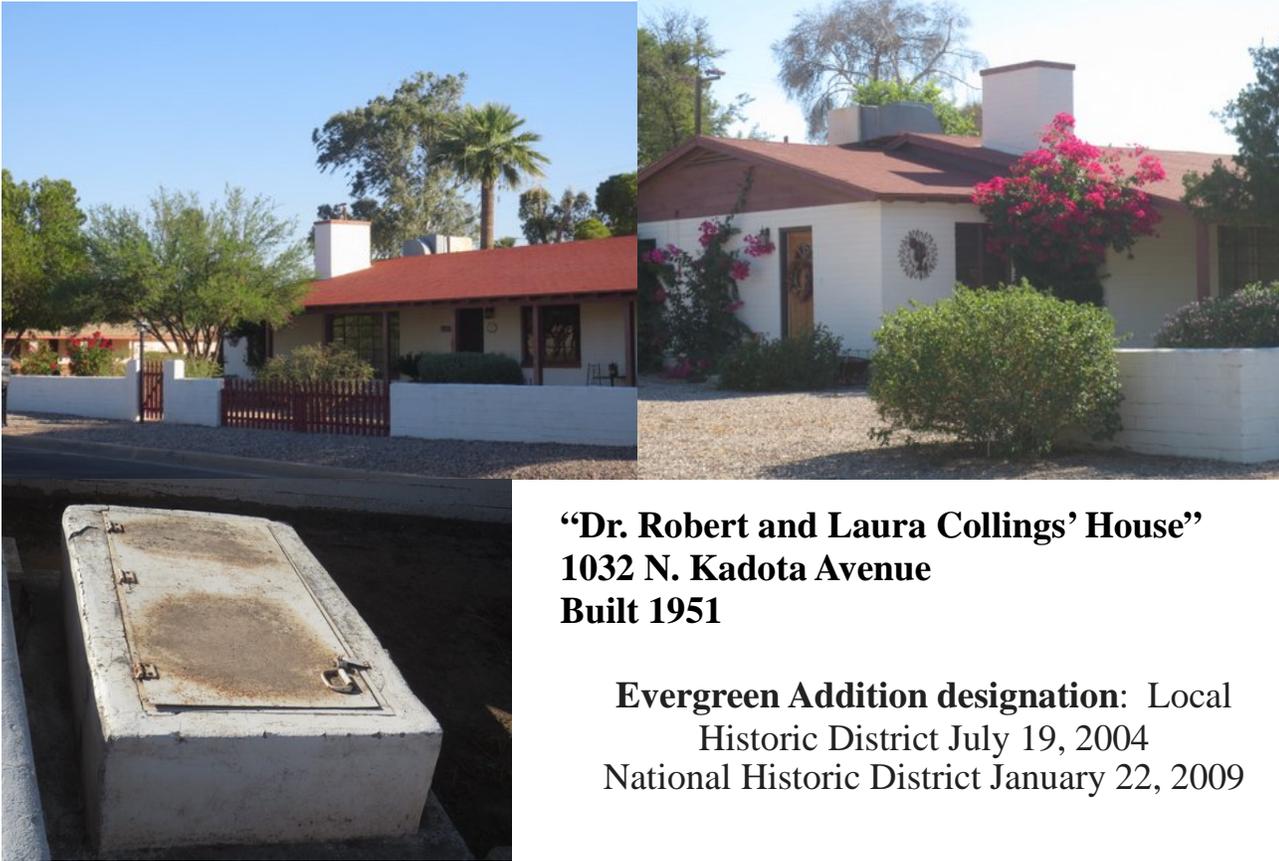


# EVERGREEN 1ST ADDITION HISTORIC DISTRICT

Newsletter No. 4

## FEATURED PROPERTY/STORY .....



**“Dr. Robert and Laura Collings’ House”  
1032 N. Kadota Avenue  
Built 1951**

**Evergreen Addition designation: Local  
Historic District July 19, 2004  
National Historic District January 22, 2009**

The first time I saw the house, I thought it had a lot of character. This big 2,553 square-foot ranch home has four bedrooms on the south side and two offices on the north side, as well as a living room with a wood-burning fireplace, a joint family/dining room, small kitchen and two and a half bathrooms. The pocket doors throughout, the large windows and 7-foot ceilings provide an “open” feeling.

Friends and acquaintances have been eager to share stories and tidbits about the previous owner, the well-respected Dr. Robert Collings, whom many considered to be quite a character. The doc believed that there was nothing he couldn't do. So, some of the electricity, plumbing, tile, and upholstery had been done by the doctor himself. As a physician he was known to be a flight surgeon that settled in Casa Grande in 1951, delivered more than 5,000 babies in Pinal County, and retired from medical practice in 1979.

Even strangers would comment about being familiar with my house, specifically the northern entrance off 11<sup>th</sup> Street. The current office and guest room served as a medical clinic. The large wooden medicine cabinet, the old blackboard on the wall, built-in bookcases, and the small half bathroom still exist as reminders of Dr. Collings' practice.

Of course, the main interest in the house continues to be the bomb shelter built off the garage. The first time I entered the bomb shelter, it had wall-to-wall cockroaches because of the food containers that had popped open. Stink bomb treatments helped to get rid of those critters. Later when my children were teenagers, I heard that their friends had visited the bomb shelter out of curiosity and without my knowledge.

I was recently reminded of the two or three bunkers that had been built inside the garage/work room. These bunkers were constructed of solid cement and rebar. The removal process of these eyesores was long and arduous.

As the only resident since 1990 when purchased from the original owner, I love my large home situated on a corner double lot in Evergreen's Historical District. It continues to possess a lot of character that new homes do not have. Besides, I enjoy hearing those interesting stories about Dr. Collings. He's beginning to feel like family!

# ***EVERGREEN 1ST ADDITION HISTORIC DISTRICT***

## ***Street Name History of the Evergreen neighborhood.....***

### **Gilbert Avenue**

The Evergreen subdivision is most closely associated with Frank T. Gilbert and his wife Gabrilla Gilbert. Frank was born in 1874 in Homerville Ohio. He met Gabrilla in Celina, Ohio in 1901 and they were married in 1905. They moved to Oklahoma where their daughter, Agnus Ruth, was born in 1907. They moved to the area of Glendale, Arizona in 1908 and from there to the Casa Grande area in 1922. Frank soon became involved in the great agricultural craze of the area: fig cultivation. By 1924 he grew several varieties of truck crops. These included turnips, watermelons, fruit trees and the figs. By 1925 Gilbert's fig orchard had grown to six acres. After taking on partners from Santa Monica, California who purchased 860 acres of land and divided it into small plots for resale to individual farmers, what was known as the Granada Fig Farms was big business for Casa Grande. As it turned out the thin skinned Kadota figs fared badly in the dry and dusty winds of the Casa Grande Valley and the promise of low-cost water from the Coolidge Dam didn't materialize in time. The stock market crash in 1929 was the final blow and by 1932 Gilbert's partners had moved out of the area.

Frank Gilbert decided to pursue real estate speculation rather than agriculture on his property. Working in conjunction with his in-laws and C.D. and Ida May Bradley on September 8, 1928 the Evergreen Addition plat was recorded with the Pinal County Recorder. In November of 1929 Mr. Gilbert constructed a twenty by thirty foot office east of the High School to publicize the Evergreen Addition. The Gilbert family and Casa Grande received a shock when Mr. Gilbert took ill and died at age 55 on June 8, 1930 while seeking treatment in Santa Monica, CA.

### **Kadota Avenue**

The Kadota Fig tree, of course. Kadota figs were the once-important industry in Casa Grande. During the late 1920's, local farmers Judge Pete Overfield and Frank Gilbert had almost all of their acreage dedicated to Kadota figs. Overfield's Kadota fig farm was jointly owned by him and an old friend of his, American steel magnate Charles M. Schwab. Moeller-Sellers Development Co. was growing figs on 650 acres at Florence Boulevard and Peart. For a period of time Casa Grande was producing more figs than anywhere else in the country but eventually it stopped due to our extreme heat, the water required and because the farmers found it more profitable to grow cotton.

### **Brown Avenue**

Casa Grande's newspaper service dates back to January 13, 1912, three years prior to the City's incorporation. Later in 1912 the second editor of the Casa Grande Times was John "J.F." Brown. Mr. Brown was also Pinal County's senator in the first State Legislature. Brown Avenue was named to honor this pioneering legislator and newspaperman.

### **Morrison or Cameron**

**If you have information on Morrison or Cameron streets, please send it to [laurab@casagrandeaz.gov](mailto:laurab@casagrandeaz.gov) to complete the street name history in the next newsletter.**

## ***EVERGREEN IRRIGATION***

If you are interested in signing up for irrigation or checking to see if it's available on your street, contact Lydia Cordova, Administrative Assistant, Community Services Department at 520-421-8600 Ext. 4520.

The fee is \$14.00 per hour and the property owner will be assessed a fee of \$1,019.00 (which assists towards payment of the well and pump repairs per City Ordinance 645.16.1).

# EVERGREEN 1ST ADDITION HISTORIC DISTRICT

## A "Jewel" of the Evergreen Addition Historic District

Lehmberg View



11<sup>th</sup> Street View



Alley View



**1038 N. Lehmberg Avenue  
Built 1967**

Although the house is a non-contributor to the district, the house and property has been immaculately maintained. According to the history property inventory survey in 2001, the architecture was described as "compact and irregular massing, recessed entry porch, street facing gables and gabled roofs echo each other". The house is surrounded by mature trees lawn and shrubs and the lush green shrub growing around the garage and house is a fig tree.

- The Historic Preservation Commission has recognized and acknowledged the property with signage placed in the yard for the upcoming month.

**If you would like to nominate a "Jewel" in the Evergreen Addition Historic District, please contact Laura Blakeman, Planner, 421-8630 Ext 3010.**



# EVERGREEN 1ST ADDITION HISTORIC DISTRICT

## Evergreen Historic Plaques

There's an opportunity for contributor properties in the Evergreen District to purchase a bronze historic plaque for their home. The plaques are a standard size, bronze in color and with a standard narrative. Also included is the year of construction and either your street address or the historic name as it appears on your Historic Property Inventory form.

If interested in one of these prestigious plaques, please contact Laura Blakeman in the Planning Department 421-8630 Ext 3010. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will place the order and deliver the plaque to you. The cost is \$345.



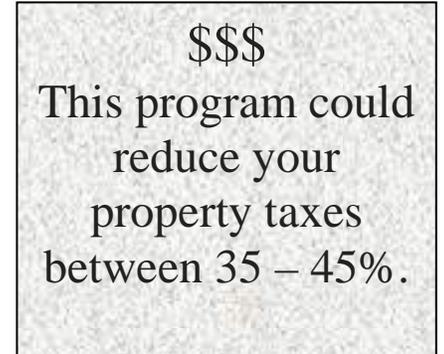
Plaques have been installed on the following homes.

Property built: 1950 Located at: 1032 N. Lehmberg Ave.

Property built 1949 Located at: 1015 N. Kadota Ave. Historic Name: J.F. Clements House

## PROPERTY TAX RECLASSIFICATION

Contributor homes in the Evergreen District have the benefit of a Property Tax Reclassification. A low percentage of homeowners are taking advantage of this benefit. The process requires completing a one page form and attaching photos of your home. **To begin this process go to [www.casagrandeaz.gov](http://www.casagrandeaz.gov), click on Planning & Development Department, then Historic Preservation Program, Documents.** The information needs to be in the hands of the County Assessor's Office by June 30 to be enrolled for the following tax year.



## HOW THE PROCESS WORKS.... FOR ANY EXTERIOR CHANGES TO YOUR HOME..... OTHER THAN ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

Page 11 in the Design Guidelines is a straight forward explanation to assist homeowners for any exterior changes (other than routine maintenance) you are planning to make to your home. This is a helpful resource to become familiar with the process. The Design Guidelines are available on the City's website: Go to [www.casagrandeaz.gov](http://www.casagrandeaz.gov), click on Planning & Development Department, then Historic Preservation Program, Documents.

# ***EVERGREEN 1ST ADDITION HISTORIC DISTRICT***

## ***Historic Preservation Commission***

***Marge R. Jantz, Chairwoman***

***Clara L. Trulove, Vice-Chairwoman***

***Susan G. Rooney***

***Brett Benedict***

***Joyce E. South***

***James Sommers***

City of Casa Grande Liaison to the Historic Preservation Commission:  
Laura Blakeman, Planner, 520-421-8630 Ext. 3010

**For information on the Historic Preservation Commission and the Evergreen Addition Historic District, visit the City's web site located at <http://casagrandeaz.gov/dept/planning/historic-preservation/>**

***Historic Preservation Commission Mission Statement >>>*** To protect, enhance and perpetuate the City's landmarks and historic districts for the economic, cultural, educational, and general welfare of the public.

***Interested in serving on the HPC?***

(Check the City's Web Site for open positions)

<http://casagrandeaz.gov/dept/clerk/boards/>

***The Historic Preservation Commission meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m.***