



HUGH KELLY

When Hugh Kelly came to Washington, D.C., in the fall of 1962 for a job as an attorney with the Federal Trade Commission, one of the first things he noticed was the houses on Capitol Hill. They could be rented very inexpensively; they were also extraordinarily varied and utterly charming. In the over forty years since then he has lived in too many houses to count (it's between twenty-five and thirty) and bought and sold countless more as a real estate agent. Despite the fact that he now lives on a fifty-two foot motor yacht in Washington Harbor, Hugh's enthusiasm for Hill houses and the neighborhood that surrounds them is undiminished.

The Hill's village atmosphere has always reminded Hugh of the small town where he grew up, Devil's Lake, North Dakota. There his parents ran a women's clothing store and he was one of nine children. His memory is of a "wonderful" place to be a child; "the town raised the kids," he says. But the winters were "ferociously unpleasant" with wild winds and temperatures as low as 20 degrees below zero. "It's a very hard life out there," Hugh says.

Hugh felt a pull towards the East coast. He attended Dartmouth College (where he remembers the weather as being even worse than what he had left behind) and graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in English literature. He continued his studies

with a "very exciting" year studying seventeenth century literature at Oxford and law school at Columbia University. He then came to Washington and the FTC which he followed with a seven-year stint as chief-of-staff to North Dakota Senator Quentin Burdick.

In the mid seventies real estate on the Hill was hot and Hugh made what he calls a "side step:" he had begun doing some renovating himself and decided to take the plunge as a realtor. Working first with "Houses on the Hill," and later with his own agency, Hugh Kelly Real Estate Brokerage, Hugh bought and sold "pretty houses", and began to lobby for wider acceptance, throughout the city, of Capitol Hill as an alternative to Georgetown and other desirable neighborhoods. At that time, some agents in offices across town were so hesitant even to visit the Hill that Hugh remembers hiring limousines to bring them over. Now working as an agent with Coldwell Banker/Pardoe, he has the satisfaction of seeing that battle won – his first house on the Hill, which he bought for next to nothing during the riots of 1968, is today worth a bundle and is occupied by a friendly competitor. Capitol Hill is a popular "destination marketplace."

Our neighborhood owes much to Hugh Kelly and to his forty years of infectious enthusiasm for it.