



Francoise and Darell Christopher stand on the grand staircase of the Kennedy Mansion, 506 W. Fairview St., which they recently purchased and opened as a bed-and-breakfast.

Inn style

Historic mansion is made over into bed-and-breakfast

By **KIM BROWN**
World Scene Writer

A community activist, singer, teacher and member of the Tulsa Metropolitan Ministry, Darell Christopher can now add proprietor to his long list of professions.

He and his wife, Francoise — who has plenty of accomplishments herself — recently purchased a historic Tulsa home, the Kennedy Mansion at 506 W. Fairview St., and have opened it as a bed-and-breakfast.

“This is in a part of town where the city started,” Darell Christopher said. “We’re like pioneers coming back.”

The Kennedy Mansion Bed-and-Breakfast offers guest rooms and suites, and can accommodate weddings, meetings and other events.

But besides the stately mansion and its tranquil grounds, the star of the show is the breakfast, thanks to Francoise Christopher’s authentic French cooking.

She offers traditional French foods such as quiches, omelettes and crepes, and she does all the cooking herself, something she said she enjoys. She’s even written a cookbook in English and French called “Franoise’s Kitchen.”

The Christophers’ move to bed-and-breakfast owners came in part from Francoise’s experience in the hospitality industry in her native France and in Tulsa, where she has worked as a hotel general manager, sales director and in various other positions.

“The general manager jobs were 24 hours a day, and you never get a vacation,” she said. “I thought, ‘I can do this job for myself.’”

After purchasing the mansion in December, the Christophers dashed off to Germany for their daughter’s wedding and have since been in a flurry of activity. They believe that a bed-and-breakfast is just what some out-of-towners might be looking for in Tulsa.

“Bed-and-breakfasts are big on the East and West coasts, but they’re starting to happen more in the middle of the country,” Darell Christopher said.

Guests also seem to enjoy the history behind the mansion. It was built in the 1920s by Samuel Kennedy, the Tulsa area’s first doctor and oil-boom profiteer. When Kennedy married Agnes Lombard, who was an Osage Indian, Kennedy used his wife’s tribal eligibility to acquire thousands of acres in what is now the Gilcrease Hills and northern Tulsa areas.

After many disagreements with the city leaders at the time, Kennedy reportedly placed a clause in his will keeping the land from being sold for 20 years after his death. Many think this was a major factor, though unintentional, in much of Tulsa’s subsequent southward development.

But the Christophers said they are excited to be in their location, right near downtown.

“We wanted a bed-and-breakfast, but we did not just want a house,” Francoise Christopher said. “We wanted something that was a part of history.”

For more, call 712-8065 or go online to www.kennedymansion.com.

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Photos by JAMES GIBBARD / Tulsa World

The Kennedy Mansion was built in the 1920s by Samuel Kennedy, a Tulsa doctor and oil-boom profiteer. He reportedly placed a clause in his will keeping anyone from buying the thousands of acres he owned in the northern Tulsa area for 20 years after his death.



The kitchen of the Kennedy Mansion Bed-and-Breakfast is where co-owner Francoise Christopher cooks. She specializes in traditional French fare.



(Above) The view from the top of the grand staircase inside the Kennedy Mansion.



The dining room inside the Kennedy Mansion, like most other rooms, has been restored and is now part of a bed-and-breakfast.