

UT Martin professors become activists to improve the community

Julie Hill and David Coffey didn't aspire to be community activists, they just wanted to live in peace and comfort in their Union City home.

The University of Tennessee at Martin professors married in 2008 on the grounds of the property Julie purchased at 625 East Main St. in 2005, when the Martin native returned to West Tennessee to accept her dream job: teaching percussion at her alma mater.

David, a transplanted Texan who teaches history at UTM, offered home improvement tasks to work his way into Julie's life. He helped install a koi pond and built a deck and a pergola in addition to turning a cluttered, bug-infested basement into a stylish den and entertainment venue. With the help of Julie's late father and a team of gifted craftsmen, the couple turned a tired old house into their dream home; they call it "Paraiso," paradise in Spanish.

The house and its grounds took on the special meaning that comes from hands-on treatment and hard work. But paradise was soon threatened. The unexpected death of a next-door neighbor left a large house in the hands of renters and soon the property was in visible decline. The new neighbors posed other challenges: noise and junk, prompting Julie and David to erect a privacy fence that did little to ease fears of further neighborhood decay, fears stoked by a visit to blighted Detroit. The couple saw the home they so carefully created — not to mention a substantial capital investment — in peril.

When the longtime neighbor who lived behind the Hill-Coffey compound moved out, exposing yet another property to a rental nightmare, something like desperation set in. The couple thought about moving, but couldn't stand the idea of leaving something in which they had invested so much. Julie sought support from the city and reached out to concerned neighbors in an effort to address the neglected property situation, but these efforts — city council appearances, petitions and door-to-door campaigning — brought little hope.

Just when it seemed like a lost cause, Julie and David caught a break. A large vacant lot behind their home went up for sale and they pounced, securing the property and opening the prospect of additional acquisitions. More good fortune came in the person of Larry Mink, who had purchased the small house recently vacated at 622 Exchange St., adjacent to the lot. Mink and his team completed a thorough renovation of the house and promised only solid renters, but when Julie ap-

proached him about purchasing the little house, he agreed to sell. Julie and David now doubled down, going all in on their Union City homestead.

All in involved one last acquisition. Abandoned by its most recent occupants, the badly neglected house next door had reached a point at which it was no longer inhabitable and well beyond repair. Julie convinced the city finally to condemn the structure and reached out to its owners, who agreed to sell.

Julie and David quickly found themselves in possession of half a block of Union City property. Their home is now much more secure. The run-down structure next door has come down and will be replaced by green space. The little house behind them, now fully renovated and lovingly furnished, is a guest house and vacation rental called Gloria's on Exchange — named after its former occupant. And that large vacant lot? Julie and David have some ideas, but for now it's more green space.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.



GLORIA'S — Julie Hill and David Coffey (at left) recently opened a new vacation rental near their home on Exchange Street in Union City. Gloria's on Exchange was named after its former owner and is listed on VRBO, Airbnb, Trip Advisor and Homeaway. The home can also be rented through the Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/gloriasonexchange/>. More information may be found at www.gloriasonexchange.com.

proached him about purchasing the little house, he agreed to sell. Julie and David now doubled down, going all in on their Union City homestead.

All in involved one last acquisition. Abandoned by its most recent occupants, the badly neglected house next door had reached a point at which it was no longer inhabitable and well beyond repair. Julie convinced the city finally to condemn the structure and reached out to its owners, who agreed to sell.

Julie and David quickly found themselves in possession of half a block of Union City property. Their home is now much more secure. The run-down structure next door has come down and will be replaced by green space. The little house behind them, now fully renovated and lovingly furnished, is a guest house and vacation rental called Gloria's on Exchange — named after its former occupant. And that large vacant lot? Julie and David have some ideas, but for now it's more green space.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

proached him about purchasing the little house, he agreed to sell. Julie and David now doubled down, going all in on their Union City homestead.

All in involved one last acquisition. Abandoned by its most recent occupants, the badly neglected house next door had reached a point at which it was no longer inhabitable and well beyond repair. Julie convinced the city finally to condemn the structure and reached out to its owners, who agreed to sell.

Julie and David quickly found themselves in possession of half a block of Union City property. Their home is now much more secure. The run-down structure next door has come down and will be replaced by green space. The little house behind them, now fully renovated and lovingly furnished, is a guest house and vacation rental called Gloria's on Exchange — named after its former occupant. And that large vacant lot? Julie and David have some ideas, but for now it's more green space.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.

Other challenges remain and there's more work to do. Neighborhood activism has proven effective in at least this section of Union City, but Julie and an army of mobilized neighbors have not yet finished the fight.



DEMOLISHED — When this neglected house located near the home of Julie Hill and David Coffey at 625 East Main St. in Union City became in disrepair and no longer

inhabitable, the couple purchased the property and had it demolished. The plans are for it to become a green space.



REELFOOT METAL
ROOFING SYSTEMS
EST. 2000

Reelfootmetal.com

Metal Roofing Materials Made Locally in Troy, TN
702 C C GURIEN DR. / TROY, TN 38260 / 731-536-0101

Union City Civitan Club
"People Helping People"

Second and Fourth
Tuesday — 6 p.m.
Meal and meeting
at Ryan's

For information,
call 885-9730

45 Years Locally Owned
UNION CITY CARPET CENTER
602 Perkins Street • Union City, TN
731-885-2830

Let Union City Carpet Center work with you to fit your
Taste, Lifestyle & Budget!

- Carpet
- Area Rugs
- Hardwood
- Laminate
- Ceramic Tile
- Luxury Vinyl

For your Driveway Repair or Landscaping Needs, Call

Farmer's Lime Company

Spring is just around the corner!

- Mulch
- White Rock
- Red Rock
- Top Soil
- Fill Dirt
- Septic Rock
- White Sand
- Fill Sand
- Lava Rock
- White Marble Chip
- Bulk Lava Rock

Lime and Fertilizer, Seed and Chemical

FARMER'S LIME COMPANY
Martin Highway • South Fulton

Pickup and Delivery Available
CALL 731-479-3827

The Name You Can Believe In And Trust With The Comfort Of Your Home!

LOOKING FOR FINANCING OPTIONS?

No Money Down Low Interest Rates
Subject to credit approval, see store for details.

Visit Us At:
www.airjohnson1.com
for all your air quality needs:
Maintenance, Service, Product Knowledge, & Lots More

Like us on:
facebook

Contact us or visit our Website for more details!

JOHNSON HEATING & AIR
Independent Dealer

TRANE

It's Hard To Stop A Trane.
100 S. First St., Union City, TN
731-885-8325
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
~John 3:16