



**City of Columbia Historic Preservation Commission  
Application for Most Notable Property**

**Community Development Department, Planning Division  
City of Columbia, 701 E. Broadway, Columbia, MO 65201  
[Planning@CoMo.Gov](mailto:Planning@CoMo.Gov)**

**Address Being Nominated** 1805 Cliff Drive, Columbia, MO 65201

**Date Property Built (if known)** 1939

**First Owner/Builder/Architect (if known)** Roy Ivan Johnson and Irmgard Grossman Johnson

**Current Owner's Name** Ruth Brent Tofle and Marvin Tofle

*(properties may be nominated by non-owners but owners must give permission for photography/  
videography of property- see page 2 for release)*

**Address** 1805 Cliff Drive, Columbia, MO 65201

**Phone Number** 573 489 1951 **E-mail** TofleR@missouri.edu

**Submitter's Name** Ruth Tofle

**Submitter's Phone number** 573 489 1951 **E-mail** TofleR@missouri.edu

**NOTE:** The following information provides a starting point for historic research on the property. However, a lack of information should not be a deterrent for an application. All properties chosen for Most Notable will have a history of the property compiled by a historic preservation professional. This history will be provided to property owners for their own records.

Has anyone of local, regional, or national historic note ever occupied the property? If so, whom?

Yes. See attached documentation.

Does the property have any notable or unusual architectural qualities? If so, please identify.

Yes. See attached documentation.

Have any recent renovations been performed that have helped restore the property? If so, describe them briefly.

Maintenance respects original features. Restoration includes refinishing hard wood floors and exterior finial.

Is the property recognized by any other historic preservation organizations? If so, please identify.

While the house is not recognized by another historic preservation organization, it is located in the City's East Campus Neighborhood Association and is adjacent to the East Campus Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places (approved in 1996).

Please describe any other unusual or interesting attributes or stories about the property.

See attached documentation.

**Please attach current and/or early pictures of the property.**

Owner's release for city public communications to photograph/video record around exterior property **and** for property information to be included online in an interactive historic map *(required for nomination)*

Ruth Tofle  
(signature)

Marvin Tofle  
(signature)

Owner's release for city public communications to photograph and video record up to three rooms/elements in the interior of the building *(optional- will require owner's presence)*

Rooms/elements of interest in the building's interior:

1. Interior features with arches, staircase iron railing, light fixtures;
2. Millwork with crown moulding, fireplace mantels, walnut wood paneling;
3. Images of rooms: foyer, living room, dining room, master bedroom

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

### Notable architectural qualities

A mile from the University of Missouri campus in the historic East Campus Neighborhood is an English Tudor Revival style house. The south-facing 1805 Cliff Drive two-story house is crafted of red brick, stone, and stucco. Its exterior has classic half-timbering, stone quoins, steeply peaked roofing with finial, and cross gables.

This house is located within the City's boundaries of the East Campus Neighborhood Association and is adjacent to the East Campus Neighborhood Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places (approved in 1996). On March 29, 1940, plats were recorded as "Miller's Rearrangement of Fyfer's and East Highlands Addition." The combined lots #16 and #17 are included in the East Highlands Subdivision and are the site of this house.

Interior details reflect late 1930's styling with arches, four fireplaces, iron rail staircase, and lighting fixtures. Extensive millwork includes crown moulding, fireplace mantels, built-in book shelving, and walnut wood paneling. It has 3 ½ baths, 3 bedrooms, full basement within 2,370 square feet. See attached images.

A property record card in the Boone County Assessor's Office indicates the house was built in 1939. As explained, "...we left a door hanger on the property in 1983 and the owner indicated the year built was 1939" (email from Brent Stegemann, State Certified General Real Estate Appraiser, July 27, 2022). This 1939 date is consistent with microfiche tax records reviewed in the Boone County Collector's Office. In 1939 taxes paid were \$187 and by 1940 the taxes paid more than doubled to \$441.

There is good reason to believe the architect was the local Harry Satterlee Bill based on the time period of design and construction and Bill's portfolio of Tudor Revival houses. Further study is encouraged to verify.

Notable owners with local, regional, and national recognition

A decorative iron "J" on the front exterior chimney identifies the first owners, Dr. Roy Ivan **Johnson** and Irmgard *Grossman* Johnson. Roy Ivan Johnson was recognized as an accomplished author, poet, speaker, and advocate for improving teacher salaries. He was born in Mercer County, Missouri in 1889. He received his B.A. from the University of Missouri in 1918 and his PhD from the University of Chicago in 1923 when on leave as a faculty member from Stephens College. His published work in 1923 uses Biblical texts as poetic inspiration and his book *Letter-Writing: A Curriculum Study in English Composition* was translated into many languages. He is notably included in the 1931 *Mexico Ledger* article, "Missouri Home of Many Well Known Writers." Dr. Johnson joined the Stephens College faculty in 1920 with an initial salary of \$3,100 and he became Professor and Head of the English Department. According to the 1940 Census, he was making \$5,000 at that time and the reported value of their house was \$10,000. No children are listed as living in the home.

Roy Ivan lost his first wife, Maud, in 1934. In 1936, at the age of 46, he married 20-year-old Irmgard who was one of his former students. As a wedding announcement explains in *The Kansas City Times*, Irmgard is a graduate of Stephens College and a senior at the University of Missouri (11 June 1936). To the neighbors' chagrin, according

to personal notes of later owner Barbara Bauman, the Johnsons went to Europe during the construction of the home instead of supervising the construction in Columbia.

Dr. Frank Luther **Mott** was the second Dean of the University of Missouri School of Journalism in 1942. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize (1939) and Bancroft Prize (1958) and like Roy Ivan Johnson, Frank Luther Mott was a prolific author and scholar. He was “the first outsider to serve as dean and the first nationally known scholar. But he never altered the hands-on Missouri Method of learning” (Weinberg: 2008, 89). A rich collection of Dean Mott’s work was donated to the University Library and the Western Historical Manuscripts Collection. Mott’s widely known work, *The Golden Multitudes: The Story of the Best Sellers in the United States* became a standard reference book for book collectors and was selected for inclusion in the White House Library. (“University is enriched by Dean Mott collections,” 1965, <https://mospace.umsystem.edu/xmlui/handle/10355/75193> .

Frank Luther purchased the home with his wife Vera H. *Ingram* Mott. Before coming to Columbia, Frank and Vera both taught at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa and together they worked on the acclaimed *History of American Magazines*. While Vera did not receive the accolades of her husband, Vera’s obituary notes: “She assisted him with his research and writing of several columns of “*History of American Magazines*” (Find a Grave, Vera H. *Ingram* Mott). Frank Luther and Vera were both 64 years old living in the house without children during the 1950 Census.

Dr. Mott posed for a portrait in front of the living room fireplace bookcase and the framed painting is prominently displayed at the School of Journalism. (See attached images.) The Mott family enclosed the back porch to a screened-in living area.

The George and Ellen **Allton** family lived in the home from 1966 to 1970. Hickman HS and MU graduate, George Thompson Allton was active in community service and recognized with numerous civic awards. He worked in his family's Allton Ford Company. (Joe Machens purchased the Ford franchise from George's uncle, James Miller "Tom" Allton in 1969. The company was located downtown in the building that is now The Fieldhouse bar at 1107 East Broadway.) Ellen Ann *Prather* was a Hickman HS and MU Journalism graduate who worked as a commercial artist for an Iowa television station before returning to Columbia and marrying George.

The John and Barbara **Bauman** family lived in the home from 1970 to 1998. Dr. John E. Bauman was an MU Chemistry Professor recognized for his teaching by the American Oil Company and also by the Mizzou Alumni Association with a Faculty-Alumni Award (1969). He served as Chair of the MU Faculty Council and after retirement served as President of the MU Retirees Association (2000-20022). John played ragtime piano and kept a diary for 70 years. Barbara provided early background information for the summary of this house.

Marvin **Tofle** purchased the home in 1998 as a divorced man. Marvin welcomed his new bride Ruth in 2001—a second marriage for both. Marvin and Ruth both received degrees from MU. Marvin graduated from the MU Law School and was on the *MU Law Review*. He had a 50-year career in private practice in his Columbia firm. Dr. Ruth *Stumpe* Brent Tofle was one of the longest serving MU Department Chairs in recent history having served 34 years in MU Architectural Studies during her 38 years as an MU faculty member. She was awarded two Fulbright Fellowships (China and Morocco/Tunisia) and was recognized nationally by *DesignIntelligence* as one of “30

Most Admired Educators for 2013.” Dr. Tofle received the 1992 Mizzou Alumni Association Faculty-Alumni Award and its 2013 Distinguished Faculty Award. Like John Bauman, after retirement Ruth served as President of the MU Retirees Association (2019-2022). Marvin and Ruth continue to reside in the home.

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Front views of 1805 Cliff Drive





1805 Cliff Drive  
Entrance





“J” for Johnson on front chimney





Foyer





Foyer, stairway, hallway



Hallway





Dining room chandelier





Master bedroom



Living room  
(with rock collection)





Dean Mott posing for portrait in Living room;  
Painting in School of Journalism



After Frank Martin's death, Frank Luther Mott became dean in 1942. Shown here having his portrait painted, Mott was the first outsider to serve as dean and the first nationally known scholar. But he never altered the hands-on Missouri Method of learning. (Courtesy University Archives, Lewis Hall, University of Missouri–Columbia)

