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College Heights Foundation to move into historic home owned by Kentucky Supreme Court Chief Justice

By AARON MUDD amudd@bgdailynews.com Dec 28, 2018

Kentucky Supreme Court Chief Justice John Minton shakes hands with Tim Caboni after officially swearing him in as president during a WKU Board of Regents meeting on Friday, July 28, 2017, in the mass media and technology hall. (Austin Anthony / photo@bgdailynews.com)

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The College Heights Foundation at Western Kentucky University has found a new home thanks to a gift from a prominent WKU alumnus and his wife.

Next spring, the foundation will relocate its offices to a historic home at 1703 Chestnut St. after purchasing the home from John D. Minton Jr. and his wife, Susan, according to a news release.

The couple agreed to sell the home at a “bargain sale price” in exchange for preserving the exterior of the home and its 3-acre grounds next to WKU.

“When we heard the College Heights Foundation was looking for a new home, it seemed like a perfect opportunity to achieve our joint goals of making a gift to WKU while also ensuring that this historic property would be placed in good hands where it would be preserved for future generations,” John D. Minton Jr., the current Chief Justice of the Kentucky Supreme Court, said in the release.

The home, originally built in 1898, has been known for years as Birdlawn, a name given to it by a local ornithologist and flower enthusiast who lived in it in the early 20th century.

While the grounds will keep the name, the home itself will be designated as the Cliff Todd Center after a 1950 WKU alumnus and philanthropist who donated the \$1 million lead gift that made the move possible.

Initially, the foundation planned to demolish its aging 1960s-era building atop WKU's hill and rebuild a more modern and wheelchair accessible facility in its place.

However, College Heights Foundation President Donald Smith previously told the Daily News those plans had to be scrapped after bids for the project came in over budget.

The College Heights Foundation was founded in 1923 and provides scholarship assistance to students.

Minor modifications will be made to the home and grounds and a ribbon-cutting is planned for spring 2019.

“The College Heights Foundation and Western Kentucky University are very near and dear to my heart,” Todd said in the release. “I have seen firsthand the number of students whose lives have been transformed by scholarship support, and it has been my pleasure to play a small part in making their educational dreams a reality.”

– Follow education reporter Aaron Mudd on Twitter [@BGDN_edbeat](#) or visit [bgdailynews.com](#).



Aaron Mudd

Education reporter. Covers education and related issues, focusing primarily on the Bowling Green and Warren County public school districts and Western Kentucky University.