

901 S. Adams Avenue

Historic Name: John H. and Ann Figi, Jr. House. This modern contemporary house was built in 1954 and is the newest of the historical homes in this brochure. The home was designed for living and for privacy as the home has been "turned around" so that the front of the building overlooks a handsomely landscaped rear backyard. Inside, is an open concept dining & living room with beamed ceiling and brick wood burning fireplace. The home has a gourmet kitchen, breakfast bar and pantry. The south wing has 3 bedrooms. There is also a main floor family room and office. The east wing begins with a walk thru the tranquil atrium and continuing on to a cedar steam room, flanked with showers and dressing rooms. A built in wet bar is located by one of the many sets of patio doors to the backyard. A fourth bedroom also has patio doors. There are over 1,000 sq. ft. of covered porches, lower level family room with gas log fireplace, built in music system, and a 2-car attached garage with a workshop. John and Ann Figi started Figi's back in 1941 by assembling the first gift cheese boxes in their kitchen at 104 W. Cleveland Street.



* * * * *

Contemporary or Modern, House Made for Living

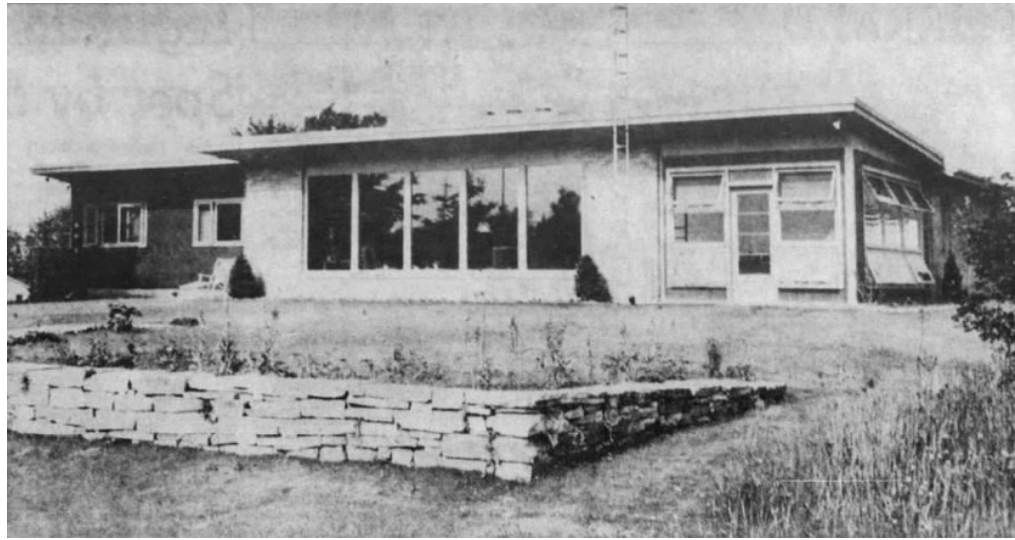
Whichever terminology — "modern" or "contemporary"— best describes the styling of Mr. and Mrs. John Figi's new home at 901 Adams Ave., is probably an architectural technicality, but the fact; remains that the structure is an outstanding example of a home designed for living.

And privacy in that living is assured, for the home has been "turned around" so that the front of the building overlooks a handsomely landscaped rear yard. A Lannon stone retaining wall abuts one elevation in the yard, the rest of which gently slopes away from the building. The area is further augmented by gardens and a tree-enclosed picnic area.

Constructed primarily of brick, the building's exterior also employs some sections of richly stained cedar sheathing. The street side of the house, from which a two-car garage protrudes, belies the fact it is actually the "back" of the structure. To the right of the entrance is a full-length panel of glass.

The large living room and adjoining sun porch are amply supplied with windows; five double-glazed, almost floor-to-ceiling apertures consuming an entire wall in the first room. These windows, of course, do not open, but those in the porch do. They are sectional windows and the upper and lower four on one wall, and the upper and lower six on the other wall open with crank operations.

The slant of the roof over the living room and porch is incorporated into the ceilings of both rooms, where the beams are exposed. Birch stain and a flat finish add to the richness of the lumber in the living room ceiling, while a natural finish is utilized in the porch.



New residence of Mr. and Mrs. John Figi, 901 Adams Ave.

Opposite the five elongated windows is a wall of brick, into which a fireplace has been constructed. The narrow mantle of stone is con-

tinued downward on either side of the opening, giving a frame appearance. Unlike many units, the fireplace's burning area is about 18 inches off the floor and has a protruding hearth.

One wall of the room is almost entirely taken up by a bookcase, the lower section of which is made up of an area equipped with sliding doors. Wall-to-wall carpeting, having a deep pile, is cocoa.

Walls of the vestibule, whose outdoor opening is on the street side the home, are of birch-veneered-paneling and of brick; the floor is tile. From here, entrance can be gained to every room in the house - the living room ahead, the kitchen at left and the building's two bedrooms, den, and bathroom to the right.

The kitchen can be called a modern (or contemporary) housewife's dream. With the exception of the refrigerator, all appliances are built-in. On one wall, the counter work is equipped with a sink and dishwasher, while on the opposite wall other cabinetry contains a counter top stove and a built-in waist-high oven.

Still another wall contains a built-in cabinet having four doors, and is designed for glassware. Where two walls are devoid of counter cabinets, there is wainscoting of richly stained, veneered plywood. The upper walls are covered with paper having what appear to be line drawings of cups, pitchers, leaves and flowers.

On the wall above the stone is a long fluorescent light fixture as well as an exhaust fan. The ceiling is enameled yellow and the floor is inlaid with plastic block tiling.

Yellow ceramic tile covers the lower half of the walls and tub area in the "main" bathroom (there is another off the master bedroom), the upper walls are papered and fixtures are gray.

Flooring is inlaid with small squares of tile in three shades of gray. The other bathroom contains fixtures in beige, walls both turquoise ceramic tiled and papered and a shower equipped with a glass door.

One wall of the large master bedroom is covered with three sets of sliding doors providing access to the closet space. This room, as are the others, is equipped with crank-type windows. The second bedroom is also roomy, but contains less closet space.

Walls and ceilings of both rooms are plastered, while the den is outfitted with cherry paneling. The home was designed and built by contractors for the owners, who are firm believers, Mrs. Figi said in the reverse of "Do It Yourself."

(from Marshfield News-Herald, 18 June 1955, page 3.)

* * * * *

Illness Fatal to Mrs. John Figi

Mrs. John Figi, 55, of 901 S. Adams Ave., wife of the president of Figi's Inc., of Marshfield, died at 11 p.m. Monday at St. Joseph's Hospital. Death followed a long illness with cancer.

Private memorial services will be held, with the Rev. Virgil E. Taylor, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, officiating. No visitations will be made. The Hansen Chapel is in charge of arrangements. Memorials may be given to the Marshfield Clinic Foundation.

Mrs. Figi, the former Ann Claire Rauk, was born Sept. 11, 1915, in Spring Grove, Minn. She attended Wisconsin State University - La Crosse, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and Columbia University, New York, N. Y.

She was married to John Figi on Sept. 20, 1941, in La Crosse. The couple came to Marshfield in 1942 and had since made their home here.

They established the Figi cheese wrapping and shipping firm here 28 years ago, and she served as secretary of the firm for several years.

She was a member of the First Presbyterian Church and was an elder of the church.

Survivors include her husband; a daughter, Mrs. Gary (Sara) Thomson, Coronado del Mar, Calif.; three sons, Todd, Hans and Eric Figi, all of Marshfield; a grandson; a sister, Mrs. Dena Aldrich, La Crosse; two brothers, Col. Karl Rauk and



(The Keel Studio)

Mrs. John Figi

She was preceded in death by her father.
(from *Marshfield News-Herald*, 10 August 1971, page 8.)

* * * * *

CITY MAN FINDS SUCCESS ON WEST COAST

By Victoria Emmerich of the News-Herald

The Figi name in central Wisconsin has become synonymous with success.

Most people may be familiar with one Figi success story, that of John Figi, founder of Figi's Inc. But, his son J. Todd Figi is another such story, the development of Figi Graphics.

Just as his father began Figi's Inc. in 1943 by packaging gift cheese in the kitchen of the family's three-room apartment, J. Todd Figi launched his career in 1968 by melting wax for his candle-making business in a 30-cup coffee percolator at his home in Marshfield.

Figi said his father always encouraged him to go into his own business.

Back in the late 1960's, the seeds of Figi's \$40-million-a-year business began, but on a very small scale.

When the struggling 24-year-old started making candles, he made them for himself.



I decorated my apartment and give them (candles) to my friends. Until one day a friend of a friend told me that he'd like to buy one. From there the business was born."

J. Todd Figi

"I decorated my apartment and gave them to my friends," he said. "Until one day a friend of a friend told me that he'd like to buy one. From there the business was born."

While working for his father during the day, Figi worked nights and weekends making candles for sale. He entered the market by selling his candles at area craft shows and state fairs. Sunday nights, on his way home he would stop in Oshkosh for raw wax for the next week's projects.

Figi, now 46, said he knew that he had to leave Marshfield in order to prove to himself that he could make on his own. If he were to remain in Marshfield, he would only be known as John Figi's son - never having his own identity.

So, Figi and five employees found an old factory in Baraboo, previously home to hammocks and yoyos. It was there that The Butcher, The Baker, Candles Inc. began business.

The problem in the gift business is that customers are always looking for something new. Candles were a hot trend at the time. Figi said candles were so hot that retail stores popped up sell-

ing only candles.

Then he met designer Doug Wilson, a Racine native, who was half owner of Control Tower in Los Angeles. They teamed up as Figi Wilson Designs. Wilson would be the designer and Figi would take care of the business. The company moved to San Diego in 1973 after Figi's first California visit.

"I saw an airport lined with palm trees and I had on a winter coat," he said. And, Figi realized he was living in the wrong part of the country.

As the candle trend faded, Figi Wilson Designs continued its success by breaking into the pub mirror business, at the time a very popular giftware item. After 1 1/2 years, the two separated with Figi buying Wilson's half of the business and becoming Figi's Giftware.



The fickle gift industry was changing again this time with pub mirrors leaving the forefront. That's when Figi decided to specialize in wall decor. He already had the framing capability that was set up for the mirrors. On advice of a New York rep, Figi learned that the industry did not need another me-too framer.

Traditional Southwest themes, lighter country colorations and a romantic look, including hearts, ribbons and bows are popular in wall decor. Hand-made cast paper, like the fish scene here, continue to do well with their original, more natural look. J. Todd Figi said Figi Graphics, San Diego, has strived to be more than a "me-too-framer." (News-Herald Photo)

Instead, Figi had to design and create his own graphics which he said, "is much easier said than done."

With the help of in-house staff, freelance artists and designers, Figi Graphics was the first company to approach wall art as a "start-to-finish" project. It has become the only company worldwide that creates, designs and publishes original works.

Figi said that originality is what has set them apart from other picture framers. He said small stores can buy from his company knowing there's a protection built in because the same product will not appear on department store shelves.

Each artwork is individually treated by hand from cotton fibers and sculpted molds. Details are airbrushed in decorator colors.

Figi Graphics now frames between 15,000-20,000 art pieces a day, the largest picture framer in

the world.

"I put our production in perspective by saying that we create a picture for every sole in Marshfield every day," Figi said.

Three years ago, Figi had looked to a more planned future by developing two additional lines of home decor. He said it has allowed his company to grow more rapidly and securely.

Figi's photo frames themselves are pieces of art. The "Figi Look" frames photos with creative three-dimensional graphics. The frames for all occasions have grown from zero to an expected \$18 million in sales this year.

The third line began with designing wooden hangers for door knobs. Figi Graphics' creativity was extended to words, Figi said, with sayings and art silkscreened on the "Adorables."

With the demand for originality going strong, Figi Graphics came up with the idea of putting magnets on the backs of the hangers and soon "Fridgies" were born. The line now includes tin magnets, animals and country scenes.

The fourth division remains a secret. Figi said he plans to announce the latest market niche in about a year.

About 350 employees work out of the elaborate corporate headquarters in San Diego, 150 sales people sell the company's wares to 12,000 accounts in the United States including JC Penney, and 1,800 employees work at the China factory that specializes in photo frames and magnets.

Figi Graphics retails in 27 countries, on every continent except Antarctica. Todd's brother, Eric Figi, is vice president of international sales.

Figi said Figi Graphics' sophisticated office design "looks more like a hotel in Hawaii." The complex is home to his collection of more than 4,000 palm trees. About 78 species of trees, from seedlings to trees more than 80 feet tall, are planted around the California factory. He said his fascination with palm trees also started with his first trip to the west coast.

Figi Graphics items can be found locally at the auxiliary gift shop at St. Joseph's Hospital; Spring Green Floral & Hobby, 1302 N. Central Ave.; Figi's mail order; and JC Penney, Northway Mall.

(from Marshfield News-Herald, 16 April 1991, page 12.)

* * * * *

FIGI: 'I HAVEN'T MADE IT BIG'

J. Todd Figi, former Marshfield resident and president of a \$40-million-a-year wall decor business, does not consider himself as "making it."

One of Figi's rules at Figi Graphics is that there are no big shots allowed.

"I haven't made it big at all," Figi said of his philosophy. "The minute you think you're big, you've lost the vision of what got you where you are."

Figi, 46, was recently involved in a panel discussion at San Diego State University. He was asked by a business administration student for the secret of his success.

"It's all very simple," he told them. "It's what time you set your alarm in the morning, and what time you go home at night, and what you get accomplished in between."

Figi says he is not as smart as his competitors, he just works harder than they do.

"It's all very simple. It's what time you set your alarm in the morning, and what time you go home at night, and what you get accomplished in between."

J. Todd Figi

Figi's background began with his education at Carroll College, Waukesha, where he graduated with a degree in business. But, he actually accrued more credits in art than in business and continued his interest in art by studying ceramics at Kansas State University.

"Once I think I'm big, there is a smaller person who will run over the back of my head," he said.

Figi said his father was a helpful teacher.

"He knew the pain, loneliness and hard work it takes to get started," he said.

John Figi and his wife, the late Ann Figi, founded Figi's Inc. in 1943 by packaging gift cheese in the kitchen of their home in 1943. Figi's Inc. is now a national catalog marketer of food and specialty gift products.

Figi, in turn, started in his candle-making business at age 24 by molding candles in his Marshfield home.

He said there is no fast and easy track to success.

"I love what I'm doing so it isn't work," he said. "Most people wake up on Monday and wish it were Friday. That's not the case at Figi Graphics."

He said success seems to be built into the Midwestern work ethic. Figi, who has several employees from this region, said Midwesterners can use that ethic to their advantage.

Ever since Figi moved his company to San Diego in 1973, he heeds his father's warning, 'Don't go California on me.'

Figi said many people run into problems living in California. They take on the California attitude of spending the day at the beach. He said people expect to spend the day at the beach and have a successful business a combination that just doesn't work, he said.

Figi and his wife, Suzanne, live in La Jolla, "The Jewel." They have a parrot, cat, horse, four fish and no children.

Figi hopes to be in Marshfield in July. Since his father spends his winters in Palm Springs, he only gets to central Wisconsin once every three to five years.

And about his wall decor company, Figi says, "You ain't seen nothing yet."
(from Marshfield News-Herald, 16 April 1991, page 12.)

* * * * *

John Figi Jr.

John H. Figi, Jr., 84, of 1811 W. Arlington St., passed away of cancer at 8:23 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 11, 2001, at St. Joseph's Hospitals Palliative Care in Marshfield where he had been admitted on Nov. 9, 2001.

At Mr. Figi's request, private services for the immediate family will be held at a later date at the Spring Grove, Minn., burial site of his first wife, the former Ann Rauk, who preceded him in death in 1972. Additional private services are planned with his wife, Irene.

His wife, Irene, invites the community of Marshfield to join her in a memorial service for her husband, John H. Figi, Jr., at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 15, 2001, at First Presbyterian Church in Marshfield with the Rev. Lois E. Swanson officiating. Irene will receive relatives and friends from 6 p.m. until service time Thursday at the church. A time of fellowship will follow the services at the church.

Mr. Figi was born Dec. 10, 1916, in Monroe to John F. Sr. and Minnie (nee Kleeberger) Figi.

John Figi was one of several visionaries who pioneered what we know today as the direct mail industry. He founded Figi's Gifts in Good Taste in the kitchen of the family's apartment in Marshfield and built it into one of the world's largest international food gift companies.



John H. Figi, Jr.

A former federal cheese inspector who understood quality, Mr. Figi, along with his wife, Ann, built Figi's Gifts in Good Taste, which now distributes over 250 million catalogues annually and generates over \$300 million in sales.

In addition to the catalogue company, Figi's also owns Figi Data Center, a large computer operation maintaining mailing lists for dozens of other well-known direct mail companies such as

Eddie Bauer and L.L Bean. Figi Data Center has also been used to assist in many national census compellations.

Founded in 1941 as the Wisconsin Cheese Club, Figi's began with 12 orders resulting from a mailing of a mimeographed order sheet typed by Mrs. Figi and distributed via postcards to names and addresses of professional people taken from telephone directories covering a five-state area offering a "Cheese of the Month" gift assortment.

The couple purchased Wisconsin's best cheese in bulk, cut it in their kitchen and preserved it in wax melted on their kitchen stove. They assembled the cheese and other items into gift packages and stored them in a cooler their parents gave them as a wedding gift. Figi's first employee hauled the packages to a local post office for mailing in their children's red wagon.

As the company grew, the family refrigerator was ultimately replaced by over 1 million square feet of facilities located in several central Wisconsin towns and a fleet of trucks replaced the children's wagon. The annual cheese purchased has grown to over 2.5 million pounds and the 12 orders placed the first year have become 8 million gifts annually. Other products offered in the catalogue include smoked ham, candy, cookies, nuts, cakes, fruits and a variety of nonfood gifts.

Figi's success was due in large part to John Figi's philosophy to "sell the best cheese at good prices and guarantee satisfaction, no matter what." Mr. Figi was always known as an innovator. He produced one of the first cheese spreads, Kave Kure, was one of the first to import pistachio nuts into the United States, and was one of the first to sell wild rice outside of a "regional only" product.

Mr. Figi's other accomplishments include being a founding director of the Milwaukee Bucks basketball team. The Bucks won the 1971 NBA National Championship after only their third year in the league. He was a Director of the Central State Bank of Marshfield, President of the Marshfield Chamber of Commerce, and one of the founders of Westview Country Club, now known as RiverEdge.

He was a scratch golfer for many years and owned two golf courses during the course of his life. Mr. Figi was the Wisconsin State High School golf champion in the 1930's, and scored his eighth hole in one last year at age 84.

Figi maintained homes in Marshfield, Rancho Mirage, California and Aspen, Colorado.

Survivors include his wife of 20 years, Irene; a daughter, Sara Finkle of Aspen, Colo. and sons, J. Todd Figi and Eric Figi of La Jolla, Calif., and Hans Figi of Bozeman, Mont. He has six grandchildren. In addition, Mr. Figi is survived by Irene's children, Frederic Rosa of Lakewood, Colo., Steven Rosa of Arlington, Texas and Sandra Dixon of Grapevine, Texas. He is further survived by his brothers and sister, Mig Figi of Colorado Springs, Colo, Charles Figi of Monroe and Gert VanVost of Maui, Hawaii.

The family requests that memorial gifts be made to the St Joseph's Hospital Hospice Care Cen-

ter and the Marshfield First Presbyterian Church building fund.
(from *Marshfield News-Herald*, 14 November 2001, page 5.)

* * * * *

Hidden In Plain Sight: West Side Includes Unusual Homes

By Ken Wood

Today we are going to look at some nice homes on the west side.

The first is at 901 S. Adams Ave. This distinctively designed home was built in 1954. It is much larger than it seems at first glance, having an area of 3,142 square feet and seven rooms.

The beautifully landscaped yard also has two private patios and a deck, which adds much outdoor living space to go with the original in-ground pool.



The first thing that caught my eye was a very unique feature that adds greatly to the home's striking appearance. There are trees growing up through the roof extension at the front of the home. That feature alone makes it very unique. In all, this home is beautiful, well landscaped and striking to the eye.

Next door to the south, at 907 S. Adams, is a home built in 1950. It has a roofline that is fairly unusual for Wisconsin homes: flat. It has 1,645 square feet of living space divided into seven rooms, and outside there are two decks to enjoy. The two garages give the house a nice balance.

It seems that many of the great features of these two homes are hidden, but not in plain sight...
(from *Marshfield News-Herald*, 28 June 2010, page A5.)

* * * * *

MARSHFIELD ENTREPRENEUR DIES AT 66

LA JOLLA, Calif. —

John Todd Figi, 66, of La Jolla, Calif., died Sunday, Jan. 9 at the University of California San Diego Hospital while awaiting a lung transplant.

He attended high school in Marshfield and Wayland Academy in Beaver Dam and graduated from Carroll University (formerly Carroll College) in Waukesha, with a degree in business.

In 1945, Todd Figi's father and mother founded Figi's Gifts in Good Taste in the kitchen of their one-bedroom apartment. Their pioneering company ultimately became a leader in the mail-

order food-gift business in the United State.



John Todd Figi

In 1969, Todd Figi followed in the family entrepreneurial tradition by starting a candle business in the basement of his Marshfield apartment. "The Butcher, The Baker," as he initially named the company, grew rapidly. He gave up his day job in his father's cheese company and began manufacturing candles and eventually other gift items in the luxuriously larger space of an abandoned commercial chicken coop behind the Figi's warehouses on Roddis Avenue.

On a sales trip from Wisconsin to San Diego in February 1974, Figi stepped off the airplane into the southern California sunshine, heavy winter coat and hat in hand, and reportedly said to himself, "This is the place for me." Within three weeks he had relocated his company to J Street in downtown San Diego.

Todd Figi was a marketing and sales prodigy with an uncanny ability to spot — and occasionally even create — trends in the gift industry. He developed "Figi Giftware" into one of the leading gift companies in the world, manufacturing everything from photo frames to refrigerator magnets. In one year alone, his company sold more than 3 million magnets, and his company's photo frames and other gifts are still sold in stores around the world. At one point, he employed more than 200 sales representatives and had factories in California, China and Mexico. He sold his company in 1998.

Todd Figi was formerly chairman of the board of trustees of the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, president of the San Diego Chapter of YPO (Young Presidents' Organization) and chairman of the California Gift Association. He was active in many local and national charities, usually anonymously, including the Old Globe Theater and the Monarch School in San Diego, which provides educational opportunities for homeless and at-risk children.

In February 2010, Mayor Jerry Sanders announced Todd Figi's appointment to the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture. He received the Award of Distinction from Gift For Life for his support of AIDS education and research.

Todd Figi's great passion was collecting Latin American art. He especially appreciated and collected works by Roberto Matta and obtained pieces by Rufino Tamayo, Diego Rivera and other Latin American artists of note. He frequently loaned portions of his renowned collection to museums around the world, and he and his wife, Jake, were regular fixtures at Sotheby's and Christie's Latin American art auctions.

For all his success and notoriety, Todd ultimately was respected for being a "regular guy" who never forgot his small town, Midwestern roots. He could just as happily share a beer with the gardener as be the host of a black-tie party in a foreign capital. When Todd spoke to someone, he made them feel as though they were the most important person in the world.

Todd Figi is survived by his wife, Norma Jean "Jake" Figi of La Jolla; sister, Sara Finkle of Aspen, Colo.; and brothers, Hans Figi of Guildford, England, and Eric Figi, also of La Jolla. He had three nieces, Anna Patterson of Bozeman; Mont., Kate and Erin Figi of La Jolla; and three

nephews, F. Scott Thomson of Park City, Utah, and John Todd "Jake" Figi and Lucas Figi of Guildford, England.

He was preceded in death by his beloved black Labrador retriever, Nick.
(from Marshfield News-Herald, 12 January 2011, page 2.)

* * * * *

901 S ADAMS AVENUE, MARSHFIELD

Built in 1954 for John Figi,[Jr.], this unique home features over 3,100 sq. ft. on the main with panoramic views of the private .5 acre yard.

(from Marshfield News-Herald, 27 October 2012, page B11.)



* * * * *

901 S Adams, Marshfield

Unassuming Exterior Adds To Your Private Haven.

If you're looking for privacy, an "in the city" large mature west side lot, and over 3,000 sq. ft. then look no further than this sprawling one story home. This unique home was originally built for prominent businessman, John Figi, [Jr.] and comes complete w/memorabilia. Everyday will feel like you're at a resort inside & out. Inside you will find open concept dining & living room with beamed ceiling, brick wood burning fireplace, & all window east wall overlooking your mini sports complex. Meals will be a breeze in the gourmet kitchen w/intimate breakfast bar & pantry. South wing has 3 bedrooms with one or them having a master bath & another full bath. There is also a main floor family room/office. Your entrance to the east wing begins with a walk thru the tranquil atrium. Continuing on to the cedar steam room flanked with showers/dressing rooms. Built in wet bar is sure to please & located by one of the many sets of patio doors to the backyard. Fourth bedroom also has patio doors. Over 1,000 sq. ft. of covered porches, lower level family room with gas log fireplace, built in music system, 2 car attached garage w/workshop, & so much more. **DO NOT JUST DRIVE BY!** Schedule your appointment today.



(from Marshfield News-Herald, 1 June 2013, page B6.)

* * * * *



(photo from Marshfield News-Herald, 29 June 2013, page B12.)

* * * * *

For additional information on this home check:

Property Records of Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin:

<http://assessordata.org/reports/6984252070654.pdf>