

## Our Sanctuary on Lake Cayuga: A Twenty-Year Journey

We love our home and so will you.

In 1983, we traded Pennsylvania for North Texas, but we never lost sight of our lifelong dream: owning a home by the water. We spent years scouting various Texas lakes, but none of them ever truly felt like "us".

The tides changed in 2003 when our son enrolled at Cornell. Discovering the breathtaking beauty of **Lake Cayuga**, we knew we had finally found our place. The search wasn't easy; the market was move-fast-or-miss-out, and we felt constant frustration as promising properties vanished before we could even book a flight.

### A Stroke of Serendipity

Fate finally stepped in during a visit to Ithaca. A friend called us from his boat, shouting over the engine that he'd just seen a "For Sale" sign being erected on the dock of a lakeside property. We didn't hesitate. We contacted the realtor immediately and walked through the doors of 1199 Taughannock Blvd. that same day. It was undeniable—the 1916 lake cottage was unique, and the property was one-of-a-kind. After a whirlwind 48 hours of negotiations, the dream was officially ours.

For years, 1199 Taughannock Blvd. served as our essential sanctuary, a quiet retreat from the high-pressure pace of our lives in Texas.

### Building the Dream

By 2015, we realized we weren't ready to leave this place behind—we wanted it to be our retirement home. After a year of sketching out plans and weighing our options, we made the bold decision to take down the vintage 1916 lake cottage to make room for our ultimate "forever home".

Every night, we would sit together and talk about the details. We imagined every nook and cranny, ensuring it would be absolutely ideal for our retirement years. To bring this vision to life, we assembled a "dream team" of experts:

- **Scott Smith, Latipac Builders:** Our meticulous general contractor.
- **Bert Fortner:** The architect who captured our vision on paper.
- **George VanValen:** Our skilled excavator.

Scott curated a group of top tier subcontractors including **Matt Nearpass** from **Gatehouse Pumps** in Seneca Falls who created a state-of-the-art water system. Matt then built a new beach well giving us total peace of mind that our water was safe and pristine for years to come.

## The Final Result

Construction began in August of 2018. The team worked tirelessly through the New York winter to hand us the keys in June 2019. It was everything we had ever wanted—a masterpiece of design and comfort.

## Life on the Water

The house was designed to embrace the landscape. Some of our favorite mornings are spent on the second-floor deck off our primary suite, sipping coffee and watching the sunrise. On the main porch, we feel nestled in nature, surrounded by woods on three sides with the lake stretching out on the fourth. From our 50-foot rise, the view across the water is nothing short of gorgeous.

Down at the lake level, the perspective shifts. We love sitting around the fire pit in the evenings, and we enjoy morning swims off the dock. Almost every day in the warm season, we watch the Cornell and Ithaca College crew teams glide by, their rhythmic rowing marking the start of the day before they turn back toward their boathouses.

Having the Ithaca Yacht Club as our next-door neighbor has been an incredible bonus. It's been the perfect spot for easy dinners, a quiet glass of wine on the veranda, or watching the grandkids run around the playground and splash in the swimming area.

## A Bittersweet Farewell

Life, however, has a way of shifting our priorities. One of the most difficult decisions we have ever faced is the realization that we need to be closer to our family in Atlanta. It is bittersweet to sell this property—a place we worked so hard for and poured twenty years of love into—but we are ready for our next chapter, holding onto the memories of the house that dreams built.