

Waterfront getaway House on Moses Lake makes room for family, memories

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Photos by Jennifer Reynolds

You may know him as the chairman of the board of Texas First Bank and former mayor of Texas City, but his neighbors around Moses Lake know him as Chuck, the guy whose lake house sits on an oblong marshy peninsula where the hustle and bustle never stops. Charles “Chuck” and Mary Ellen Doyle built their waterfront getaway in 2000 as a place for their large, 32-member family to convene, have fun and relax. The 8-acre parcel of land is mostly under water, but the peninsula is a paradise for the grandchildren, who fish, crab, swim and enjoy playing in the mud when the tide is out.

Views from the upper decks are panoramic. “You can see the ship channel to your right and the vastness of the lake to your left,” Doyle said. The elevated two-story home has two bedrooms and three baths, but other spacious areas set aside for entertaining can easily accommodate all family members at one time. “Most of the activities are outside around the pool or down by the four-slip boat dock where we have several boats, water skies, and a Sea-Doo,” Doyle said.

Doyle modified the blueprints to give the house a lighthouse feel as well as accommodate an elevator. The entry doors, purchased in Vancouver, were hand-carved by American Indians of the Pacific Northwest. The engraved fish and whale totem doors open into the “great room” with cathedral ceilings, limestone fireplace and walls covered with art and memorabilia from the family’s world travels. The bleached faux board flooring and off-white bead board ceiling complement the soft yellow walls, white shutters and blinds. The focal point of the room is a large entertainment center in the shape of a boat standing on its stern, built by local carpenter Tommy Williams. The great room, dining room and kitchen have easy access to the outdoor deck. The kitchen cabinets also are some of Tommy Williams’ handiwork.



Art and treasures from around the world represent the Doyles’ many excursions. A map of Ireland shows the location of every “Doyle’s Irish Pub.” “We’re stretching hard to find a place we haven’t been,” Doyle said. A world map in Doyle’s office pinpoints the cities and countries they’ve visited. An adjoining hallway displays a photo of Doyle carrying the Olympic torch in the Rice Village area of Houston in 1998. The Doyles have attended many Olympic Games.



A wall-sized map is covered with colored push pins marking all of the cities and countries they have visited

The entry hall of the Doyles' lake house provide a place to showcase the artwork from their travels and pieces acquired while Charles “Chuck” Doyle was mayor of Texas City

The first-floor, nautical-themed guest room with balcony is filled with more mementos and photos, including those of presidential inaugurations the Doyles have attended. A photo of Doyle with actress Bo Derek at the Kentucky Derby also is on display. Mary Ellen doesn’t mind at all, she said. “I was in the Trophy Room drinking a mint julep,” she said.



Mementos and artwork from the Doyles' travels are displayed throughout their house, including a Polynesian dancer from Hawaii

The elevator is perhaps the most charming part of the house. The interior is a moving scrapbook of the entire Doyle family visible while ascending and descending floors. The second-floor master bedroom and bath are painted sea green and the bedroom opens to an outside balcony. Here you can see the 23-foot high levy and tide gate that protects this area of Texas City from storm surges. Across the lake is a nature preserve, which guarantees a lifetime of privacy.

A marlin Mary Ellen Doyle hooked is displayed in the dining room

The walls of the garage exhibit more mementos, including a football picture from University of Oklahoma, Chuck Doyle's alma mater. A side room houses beer on tap and a flag from every country the Doyles have visited. An enormous "Happy Buddha" marble statue that Doyle bought in Vietnam hovers over one end of the swimming pool — on the other stands an even bigger bronze pelican. In the far corner of the yard, among palm trees, sits a bronze mermaid.



Underneath the house is known as the "party space." "This is an area that we use a lot," Doyle said. "We can put multiple tables and chairs down here and everybody fits." (see photo next page)



The pool, overlooking Moses Lake, is a popular gathering spot for the Doyle family during weekend get togethers