

723 Court Street

Soon after the unexpected death of her husband, Elizabeth MacNeal Wright purchased Lot No. 9 in Maryville's Stanley Addition in 1941 and construction commenced on a unique home that she and her daughter, Nathalia, designed. It was completed in 1942. The exterior of the house follows Cape Cod architectural detailing with a symmetrical faced, prominent shutters, steep gable roof and clapboard siding. The interior layout of the home, which is more reminiscent of Cotswold-cottage design, features a cozy sun room and larger sunken library, where Nathalia, a noted scholar of early American literature and distinguished university professor displayed her 1,500 books. Built-in cabinets and extensive oak and pine woodwork add to the home's charm. Nathalia passed away in 2004, bequeathing the home and grounds to Maryville College, from which she graduated in 1933. With plans to use the home as a guesthouse, the College in 2006 renovated the interior to create three separate suites and several commons areas to allow guests a "bed and breakfast" type experience. World travelers when their health allowed, the Wrights purchased significant artwork, furnishings, collectibles, and books while abroad; many of these items remain for guests to enjoy in the Wright House. Furnishings in two of the suites- "The Melville Room" and the "Florence Room"- pay homage to Nathalia's research and interests. Family photos also adorn the walls. In accordance to Nathalia's wishes, a small electric candle continues to burn in a second-floor window of the home every evening. The light is in imitation of the beacon lamp lit nightly in Rome's *Torre della Scimmia* in reverence to the Virgin Mary. This custom is described in *The Marble Faun*, a novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

