

Popular visionary restores Atascocita landmark

By SUSAN MCFARLAND

Tribune Correspondent

A lot has changed about the former Atascocita Country Clubhouse since it was built in the early 1960s. In December 2012, Kevin Kilgore bought the property, completely remodeled it, renamed it The Overlook and reopened it in May 2013. The \$2 million renovation involved fully gutting the building.

"The only thing original inside is the wood bar and the front doors. We tore every surface inside and outside completely off and redid it. We did it in American Craftsman architecture and added a chapel and two outdoor settings for weddings. It's a country club setting without the members," said Kilgore.

Today, Kilgore, along with his full-time staff of eight, provides turn-key large and small event services in one of several different size ballrooms at The Overlook. Kilgore said their packages include decor and linens, a DJ, a photo booth and an event coordinator who helps plan and run the event.

"We've held intimate dinner parties of 12 all the way up to 550-person weddings. We move furniture seven days a week," Kilgore said.

Kilgore said the average cost for a Houston-area wedding runs about \$30,000-\$35,000, while the average cost for a wedding at The Overlook is between \$15,000-\$25,000.

"Comparatively, dollar for dollar, we will give you about 130 percent value," said Kilgore. Catering at The

Overlook is provided either through a vendor of the client's choice, or by one of the caterers Kilgore has aligned with including: Hometown Chef, Raffas, Tin Roof BBQ and Taco Flores. Alcohol is also available from The Overlook.

The Overlook hosts about 250 events representing over 25,000 guests each year, including weddings, quinceaneras, anniversaries, private parties, corporate events, memorial services and any other type of gathering requested. There are four main event spaces, each one named for one of the granddaughters of Kevin and his wife, Sandy.

"Our first grandson was just born, Harrison, so we are trying to figure out what to name for him," said Kilgore.

The Overlook property is a sentimental place for the couple.

"When Sandy and I started dating, we both worked at JC Penney, and she also worked here at the Atascocita Country Club on weekend nights. At that time, all JC Penney

boys married JC Penney girls, because we didn't have time to go socialize," said Kilgore.

Kilgore grew up in Shreveport on the family's farm in Ruston before moving to Austin in his teens and then returned to Louisiana to attend Louisiana Tech for college. Right out of college, he began working for JC Penney. He stayed with them 16 years until he left to open the first Texas location of a Kids R Kids nationally accredited preschool, on Upper Lake and W. Lake Houston Pkwy. He and Sandy eventually opened a second Kids R Kids on Timber Forest Drive. He spent 21 years running those locations with Sandy helping raise a few thousand children in the Lake Houston area along with his children Lori and Sam, while watching his oldest son Kevin open three other Kids R Kids locations (Lakeshore, Fall Creek and The Woodlands) before deciding to sell his locations this past year.

His long-term connection to the community caused him to want to help out when he was approached by residents living in homes surrounding the defunct 300-acre Atascocita Golf Course. The golf course had been shuttered around 2008 and lawn maintenance had fallen to local residents. Kilgore was considering purchasing the clubhouse, but local residents urged him to purchase the 300-acre golf course as well.

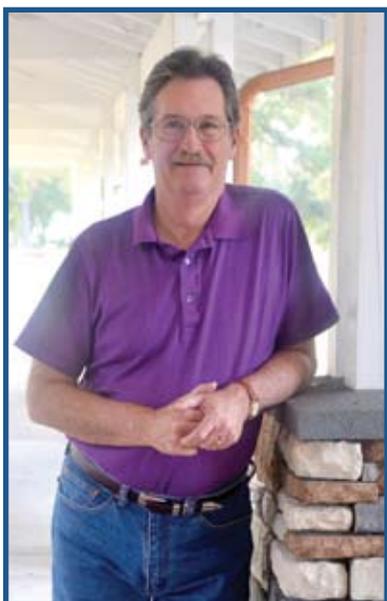
Residents raised half the capital needed for the purchase (\$375,000) and Kilgore put up the rest.

"When I bought it, there were sections of the golf course that had grass that was 10 feet tall and it was full

of coyotes and all sorts of other animals. Other sections of the golf course were mowed and maintained by the local residents. Some of the homeowners bought a zero-turn lawnmower and would take turns going to get the mower and mowing a large area," said Kilgore.

"After the purchase, we initially thought the golf course would just be a 300-acre pocket park. Then, we were approached by developer Jack Mitchell, who owns the Old American Golf Club and country club in Dallas. Once he got it up and running, we sold it to him earlier this year. Sandy and I did not make a dime, we were custodians of the golf course property only. My only requirement was that the course remain open to the public and not be private.

"It looks great now. This community has supported us for many years with our businesses, and we just wanted to help," said Kilgore.



OWNER:
Kevin Kilgore


The Overlook

OPENED DOORS:
May 2013

FAVORITE QUOTE:
"Practice the Golden Rule"