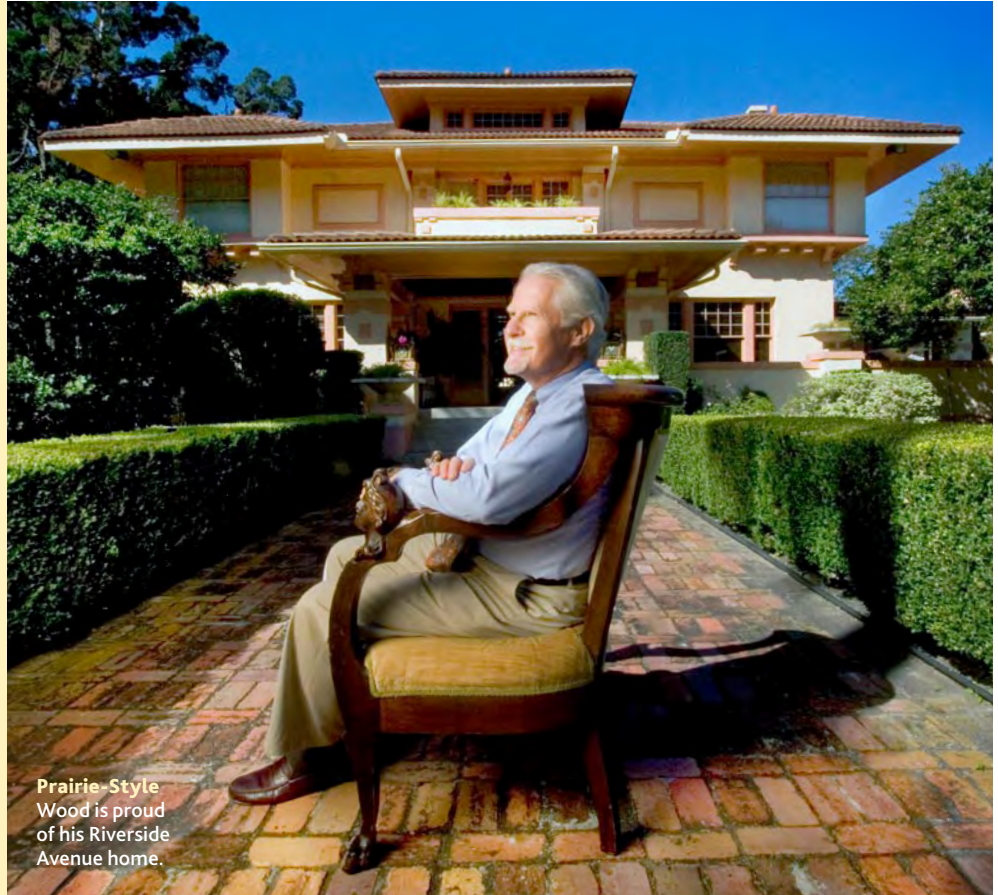


Live

Wayne Wood, author and founder of Riverside Avondale Preservation, works to keep history alive.



Prairie-Style
Wood is proud of his Riverside Avondale home.

I SPENT MY CHILDHOOD summers at my grandparents' wonderful old house in Jacksonville's Riverside neighborhood. When I moved to town in 1971 to practice optometry, local hospitals were expanding by leaps and bounds. They were buying up the adjacent properties and tearing down the fabulous historic homes.

Some friends and I were sitting around one night and thought, "Why don't we see if there's any interest in saving them," and Riverside Avondale Preservation was born. We became the chamber of commerce for historic homes. We organized arts festivals, bicycle parades, concerts in the park, restoration dinners, anything we could do to build interest in the neighborhood. We knew that

if people cared about them, they wouldn't let the historic homes be wantonly destroyed.

I'm proud of what we've accomplished: Riverside Avondale (riverside-avondale.com) is the largest historic district in the state, with a variety of architectural styles that are unequaled: Tudor, Prairie-style, Queen Anne, Mediterranean Revival, bungalow. These homes are part of our history. I've found that urban environment is every bit as fragile as the natural environment. It's where we live.

For years, Jacksonville has been a place to drive *through*, not a place to drive *to*. We have an incredible quality of life here. It's in a great location on the ocean, a moderate climate, beautiful river views, and a great sense of community.