



HOME PROFILE:

BYERS' DELIGHT IN FORT DUPONT

southeast," says the new homeowner. "This section of the Fort DuPont Park neighborhood took shape in the late 1950s, not long after this portion of Massachusetts Avenue was first paved!" As more and more homebuyers rediscover the quiet charms of Southeast, home prices have increased dramatically. "I paid just over \$250,000 for this brick rambler in 2003, and it was recently appraised for more than \$520,000," Byers adds as an example.

Built in 1962 on a corner lot nestled between Fort DuPont Park and Pope Branch Park, Byers' home sits on a hill affording multi-season views of the Capital Dome and the Washington Monument. "I can see most of the fireworks from my back yard above the summer foliage," he adds.

Prior to moving to Fort Dupont, the 38-year-old Northern Virginia-raised resident was an elected ANC Commissioner in Ward 7's Hillcrest neighborhood. There, he worked with other young, professional residents to illuminate the socio-economic diversity to be found in some Southeast neighborhoods. The group garnered feature articles in the *Washington City Paper*, the *Washington Post* and *Washington Times*, as well as on TV channels WUSA TV 9, WTTG Fox 5 and WRC TV 4. Their work is credited with helping in the effort to spur long-stalled economic development interest in Ward 7, including current plans for a new Target store in long-neglected Skyland Shopping Center.

Now Byers wants to show the world that Fort Dupont is another southeast neighborhood that makes

Fort Dupont resident Jim Byers has seamlessly mixed 1950s and contemporary furniture and collectibles for a unique mid-century modern appeal.

BY ROSEMARY REED

Events aren't successful on their own. Someone has to do the hard work of getting the event publicity in the newspapers and on television. That's the job of Jim Byers, who lives on 37th Place, SE in Ward 7's Fort DuPont



Park neighborhood. Not only does he have a lovely house outside, but the inside is full of collectibles and mementoes of his busy, varied life.

After living in the Hillcrest area for over six years, Byers just moved to the Fort DuPont area in 2004. "It's important for people throughout the region to be reminded how many great residential areas there are in



a great home.

Byers' taste runs to a clean, airy 'Mid-Century Modern' look, mixing 1950s and contemporary furniture. "I found my vintage barrel chairs and floor lamps at Eastern Market, and the new mahogany and leather bench at Vassu on 14th Street. I am using mellow greens in the living room, Ralph Lauren's Willow

Hedge, and Oatlands Gold Buff from Lowe's. It was nice to start fresh with a 'new' house. I've added a new roof, a new air conditioning and heating system, and a new bathroom that my father helped install. I am working on decorating my full basement. I am almost getting there."

Beyond the paint and furniture, the interior of the house is decorated with diverse touches, from bold contemporary artwork to classic photographs. The success of the design reflects Byers' own intensely varied interests.

Byers has worked as Marketing Director for Arlington Cultural Affairs Division since 1996, where he provides marketing assistance for over 30 theatre, music and dance organizations supported through Arlington County's 'Arts Incubator.' The Arts Incubator is the first arts program ever to win Har-

connoisseur was called "a rare creative gem on local airwaves" by *Washington Post* radio critic and columnist Marc Fisher. He is one of several national authorities interviewed for the fall, 2005 BET cable TV documentary on jazz, *Pasos Latinos: a Mambo-mentary*.

Byers also enjoys and studies other mid-century popular music genres. In collecting music, he ran across the story of vocalist Joyce Bryant, America's first dark-skinned African-American love goddess, known in the early 1950s for her five-octave voice, metallic silver hair and skin-tight gowns. Byers first began work on a documentary film about Joyce Bryant, but found it impossible to find vintage film clips. He is now focusing on a book as authorized biographer for Bryant. "Bryant is especially powerful because it speaks to our capacity to re-invent ourselves. She



