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Family History in Murray Hill

Price: \$6,500,000

Location: Midtown East, NY

This almost 5,780-square-foot Murray Hill townhouse has been in the same family for almost 60 years, and houses the law practice of the current owner, as it did for his father before him.

A. Edward Major's father, also A. Edward Major, purchased this townhouse on East 38th Street in 1957 to live in and use as a base for his real estate law firm. Almost 60 years later, the junior Mr. Major lives in the property and continues to run the firm in the home's commercially zoned ground floor office, which has a private entrance.

The front office of the law firm's office is shown. Mr. Major was 3½ when he moved into the home with his family. He joined his father at the firm in 1987 and moved back into the home with his family in 1990. 'Because it was a mixed-use building, it's always been a blessing to us,' said Mr. Major. 'No matter how long my father had to work, or I had to work, we always had supper with our family,' he said.

The four floor townhouse is approximately 5,780-square feet with a total of six bedrooms, five full bathrooms and one half bathrooms spread across the ground floor office, and two duplexes that each have one-and-a-half floors, one occupied by the Majors and another by tenants. A view of the approximately 1,300-square-foot office is shown.

The home has a balcony and back patio, pictured. Mr. Major, 60, and Deirdre Major, 59, retail president of Castagna Realty Co. on Long Island, have a 29-year-old son stationed in Anchorage, Alaska with the U.S. Army. 'With the backyard and the little terrace we had, we felt we had the luxury of space [here]," Mrs. Major said.

Mr. Major said his father worked as an attorney for a bank when he left to set up his own practice in this home in his early 40s. He recalls his father paying approximately \$30,000 to \$35,000 for the home, a 'princely sum' in those days, he said. His father did a gut renovation of the home, taking some walls out and adding others, realigning the floor plan,

redoing the stairs, putting in a new stairwell from the top floor to the roof and adding some skylights.

The living room of the tenant-occupied apartment is shown. Mr. Major said he has fond memories of being taken to Central Park and the Metropolitan Museum of Art as a child, both short subway rides from the home. 'Just having the luxury of being able to do that at a drop of the hat... that's one of my main memories,' he said. 'I didn't feel like I was missing anything.'

The bedroom of the tenant-occupied apartment is pictured. Mr. and Mrs. Major, married 31 years, met in the home in 1976 at an engagement party given by Mr. Major's mother for mutual friends. Mrs. Major was invited over after her future in-laws saw her portrait in the home of friends and invited her with the purpose of introducing her to their son. Growing up in Queens, 'I had dreamed of living in Manhattan' Mrs Major said. 'My father worked in Manhattan and it captured my imagination when I would go into the office with him. It seemed like an exciting place.'

Mr. Major believes the fair market value rent of the office and one of the home's duplexes could be around \$7,500 a month each. The kitchen of the tenant-occupied duplex is pictured. The Mayors moved into the house in 1990 after Mr. Major's father died and his mother decided she didn't want to live in the home. While they loved their previous home in Stuyvesant Town, Mr. Major was drawn to the idea of living in his childhood home. 'It sounds trite, but it was magical to walk through the house again and see my bedroom where I grew up as a boy,' he said.

The living room of the apartment is shown. The couple did their own work on the home after moving in, redoing plumbing, wiring, adding a new furnace, resurfacing the roof and reopening the chimney to restore the two wood burning fireplaces in the building. They also repainted the home's concrete facade and repointed the sides, done in brick. Mr. Major estimates they spent approximately \$300,000 to \$350,000 in improvements to the home.

The main dining room is pictured. Mr. Major joined his father as a partner in his firm in 1987 and gradually took over his clients, working together for three years in the office before his father died. 'It wasn't always easy but for the most part it was a great learning experience for me,' he said. 'He had this lifetime of wisdom which he was happy to give me.' Mr. Major said he still deals with some transactions and attorneys from when his father ran the firm.

The main kitchen of the Major's duplex is pictured. The couple are selling because they would like to move to Long Island but they will miss being in the 'heart of the city,' they said. 'For me it was just a seasonal change,' said Mr. Major. 'It just seemed to be the right thing, the way our future was unfolding.'

A master bedroom is pictured. The home is decorated with antiques and family heirlooms as well as artwork, some of which survived the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, Mr. Major said. In rooms such as the home's parlor, which has 11½ feet ceilings, 'you can't just put a tiny little picture onto a wall,' said Mr. Major. 'You need something a good deal larger to suit the sale of the house,' he said.

The roof of the home has views of the Chrysler Building as well as the Empire State Building and offers 1,725-square-feet of buildable space for an extra floor, according to listing broker Patrick Lilly of CORE. The property was listed in March with CORE for \$6.5 million.