



Above | Native American prints are among Oxendine's most precious possessions.

"When I was young we had a mule pulling a crate just like that one. And we kids built play houses out of tobacco sticks, just like they are in the print."

Oxendine has been able to combine these memories of growing up in the country with loft living to give his home a relaxed, warm feeling. Thanks to some help from Leath, city and country have been brought together.

"LaVern had a great collection of American Indian art and earth-colored upholstery that was incorporated to give a calm and natural setting for a busy executive," Leath said. "The interior is set in the midst of gorgeous windows and streetscape views and treetops."

That city view is what he has become most fond of in his new surroundings. The views from his three balconies include each end of Hay Street, the Airborne & Special Operations Museum, and historic buildings of downtown.

"I am able to sit on the balcony and have a fantastic view of the fireworks on the Fourth of July, the Veterans Day Parade, and the Christmas celebrations that take place downtown. It's the best seat in the house and on Hay Street," he says and smiles. "And my friends know it, they love coming here and sitting on the balconies."

And should those friends tire of the view, all it takes are a few steps to a wide choice of restaurants, bars, coffee shops, plus a movie theater and library.

Loft living has another nice surprise: a built-in neighborhood.

"We see each other getting the mail and going to work in the morning," Oxendine says. "One of my neighbors is elderly, and we all pitch in to help her if she needs it." An excellent cook, the neighbor repays the favor by making homemade cakes. Maybe country customs have arrived in the city after all. **CV**

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