

Austin Douglas

Word Count: 241

Waco couple killed in house fire

A devastating fire took the lives of Ron and Rita McCummings at their historic home in Waco early Tuesday morning.

The Waco Fire department received a call at 1:35a.m. and sent three units to the scene. The fire took three hours to extinguish. No nearby homes were damaged, but water runoff from the fire hoses emptied onto Franklin Avenue.

“It appears to have been a faulty electrical cord in the living room,” said Chief Fire Marshal Susan Allman. “I just feel so sorry for those poor people and their loved ones left behind.”

The couple’s dog, Sparky, survived by escaping through a doggy door while the flames consumed their house at 18 N. 30th St.

Neighbor Dana Dans, who witnessed the fire, said, “There was thick black smoke pouring from the back of the house when I heard Sparky barking. I’m grateful he made it out, but it’s heartbreaking that Ron and Rita didn’t. They were dear friends.”

The home, built in the 1890s, was part of the historic McSwain neighborhood. Neighbor Petey McSwain expressed grief over its destruction.

“That house had original stained glass windows and hand-carved moldings,” McSwain said. “I’m going to buy the lot and rebuild it exactly as it was.”

The fire has shaken the community, leaving residents mourning both the loss of the McCummings and their historic home that stood for more than a century.