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# Knoxville NEWS SENTINEL

THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2026 | KNOXNEWS.COM

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## 'A WOMAN OF CONTRADICTION'



Trees and plants are beginning to bloom on the grounds of the Eugenia Williams House. The trails and gardens around the house will be open for public previews on specific dates later in March, and after the April 11 grand opening.  
PHOTOS BY BRIANNA PACIORKA/NEWS SENTINEL

### Restored house may shed light on Eugenia Williams

Hayden Dunbar  
Knoxville News Sentinel  
USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

Once the grand home of a reclusive heiress, more recently a deteriorating, overgrown artifact, and now a restored cultural gem, the Eugenia Williams House has sparked Knoxville's curiosity and imagination for decades.

What's inside has long been a mystery, as has the woman who had it built.

The interior might have been concealed, but the lore of the iconic Lyons View Pike property is known to many in Knoxville. Eugenia Williams' story is less so - in large part because she preferred it that way.

Eugenia was "a woman of contradiction," according to a Knoxville News-Sentinel article that ran following her death in 1998. She notoriously hated photos of herself, but she adored clothes and shoes. She built a home for entertaining, but after its construction, was rarely seen.

That privacy has made her legacy a relatively unknown one, but through the years, it's been pieced together bit by bit, collected from newspaper accounts and rumors. The few who were close to Eugenia have guarded her secrets, too, even after her death.

But as the Aslan Foundation, which

See WILLIAMS, Page 11A



The restored grand staircase from the foyer of the Eugenia Williams House features the original Art Deco ironwork.

### Striking Knoxville property features huge kitchen, pink Tennessee marble



Scan to see inside the Eugenia Williams house after years of restoration.



Want an early first look at the Eugenia Williams House? Scan to watch the video!

Hayden Dunbar  
Knoxville News Sentinel | USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

You've heard about the secrets and lore behind the walls of 4848 Lyons View Pike. But what will you actually see when visiting the Eugenia Williams House?

The stunning property - which opens April 11 - is an architectural feat with its impressive rooms and ornate details. An enormous retro kitchen and sophisticated, wood-paneled library are just

See HOUSE, Page 11A

### UT case offers a model to lawmakers

Firing of UT professor bypassed faculty shields

Keenan Thomas  
Knoxville News Sentinel  
USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

Chancellor Donde Plowman has fired University of Tennessee professor Tamar Shirinian after initiating the termination process in September, bypassing faculty protections Tennessee lawmakers are now considering weakening statewide.

The assistant professor of cultural anthropology is requesting to appeal her firing with a trial under the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act. This means an administrative judge - appointed by Plowman, per UT policy - would decide Shirinian's fate. Her federal lawsuit against the university continues as well.



Shirinian

A Facebook comment made by Shirinian following the assassination of Charlie Kirk, part of which said the "world is better off without him in it," sparked online outrage and what UT System President Randy Boyd described as a "firestorm" of emails and voicemails from UT students, alumni, donors and the public calling for Shirinian to be fired.

Sen. Marsha Blackburn and U.S. Rep. Tim Burchett called on UT to take action after the comment was shared widely by a prominent conservative social media personality.

Wider debates between faculty members and administrators over academic freedom are ongoing. And Kirk's assassination has initiated a wave of attempted legislation aimed at removing protections professors rely on to ensure academic freedom and that political pressures do not influence research.

A bill that would strip protections granted via academic tenure is rapidly

See FIRED, Page 10A

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Volume 100 | No. 116  
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