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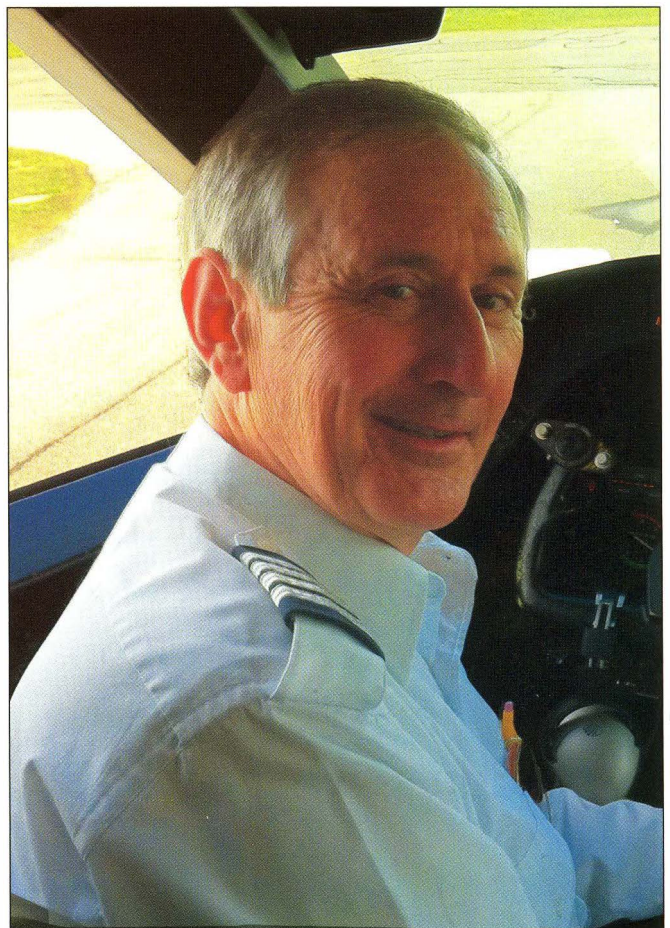
Merging Law, Largesse and Aviation Into A Meaningful Career

by Bonne Davis Cella

Dubbed “Air Marshal and Commander of Bar Force One” by State Bar Past President Ken Shigley, Randall H. “Randy” Davis is a Cartersville attorney who volunteers his time, his Beechcraft Duke and his aviation acumen to save State Bar leaders hours of travel time. Taking the “Duke” from Atlanta to the Henry Tift Myers Airport¹ in Tifton takes about one halcyon hour above the fray rather than almost three hours of negotiating the endless work zones of I-75.

Representing the Cherokee Judicial Circuit, Davis has served on the Board of Governors for five years. He took the seat formerly occupied by State Bar Past President Lester Tate, who is a valued colleague and frequent flyer of Davis’.

“Randy is an excellent lawyer and Phoenix Air is fortunate to have him as their general counsel,” said Tate. “He is a skillful pilot who flew me all over the state during my year as president. More than that, he is an outstanding human being ready to help where there is a need. He is a kind and generous friend.”



Davis in the Phoenix Air Gulfstream III cockpit after having landed in Abu Dhabi from Cartersville.

Photos provided by Randy Davis

Davis is vice president and general counsel of Phoenix Air Group, Inc., in Cartersville. Phoenix Air is a worldwide provider of specialized jet aircraft services to government and industry clients.² His colleagues at Phoenix Air have been great in their support of his State Bar activities. "I am proud to be associated with Phoenix Air and consider it to be one of the best and most unique aviation companies in the country," Davis said. An active pilot, with more than 15,000 hours of flight time, Davis holds FAA Airline Transport and Flight Instructor Certificates as well as a helicopter rating. He is qualified as an international captain for the Learjet, Citation and Gulfstream aircrafts. He made his first transoceanic flight as a sophomore at Amherst College delivering a small twin-engine aircraft from Boston to London.

Prior to joining Phoenix Air, Davis was a partner with the firm of Neely & Player, focusing on aviation defense. He speaks warmly of his former colleagues and worked closely with his senior partner, the late Ned Neely. "Ned was a first class human being and he taught me, early on, how to be a lawyer. I continue to miss him and I still think of him almost every day." Davis also practiced with David Boone, an Atlanta attorney and pilot. "He is another fine and compassionate lawyer who means a great deal to me."

Aviation plays a significant role within Davis' family. His father, Lester Davis, built a small airfield on their farm on Long Island, N.Y., in the 1950s and passed on his love of flying to his children—and to their children. Last year, Lester Davis received the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award for completing more than 50 years of safe flight operations.

"Between his children and grandchildren, some of us are flying small propeller planes and some of us are flying jets, but regardless of the type of airplane, my father's profession-



The Phoenix Air Gulfstream III sits at the Gibraltar Airport, with the Rock of Gibraltar as an impressive backdrop, after Randy and crew made a record-breaking seven-hour nonstop flight from the Cartersville-Bartow County Airport.



The Phoenix Air Learjet, which Randy flew on 9/11, sitting on the ground at an Air Force base (military C-17 in the background).



Randy and daughter Bethany on a CDC humanitarian relief mission to Haiti with the Phoenix Air Gulfstream III in the background.



Randy in the back cabin of the Phoenix Air Gulfstream III with his penguin passengers, somewhere over the Pacific.

alism and safety consciousness continues to be an example to all of us," Davis said.

Davis' brother, Lee C. Davis (Atlanta attorney) enjoys recreational and business flying as does their brother Whitney Davis. Lee's 17-year-old daughter Lane received her FAA Sport Pilot License in a 1946 Piper Cub. Davis' daughter Bethany learned to fly on her father's lap. During college breaks she flew as co-pilot with him on many Phoenix Air international missions. After obtaining dual degrees from Georgia Tech (an MBA and a Master's in Aerospace Engineering), Bethany is a sales engineer with Gulfstream and is married to Savannah attorney, Tyler Love, who is also a private pilot. Davis' daughter Amelia is an elementary school counselor in North Georgia. "She does a wonderful job helping her students through difficult times in their young lives and works hard to maximize their future potential," Davis said. Amelia's husband, Dmitri Kouznetsov, is a student pilot and is completing his MBA at Georgia Tech.

"My wonderful wife Deborah has been most gracious over the years to put up with my travel schedule, as well as to travel with me when circumstances permit." Deborah works in disability management for Georgia Power and is a veteran of the "Pinch-Hitter" course that teaches instruction in aircraft control, navigation and radio usage.

When asked about some of his more memorable missions with Phoenix Air, Davis cited his flight on 9/11. It is possible that he and his co-pilot were the only civilian pilots in the air on that horrific day. Without hesitation, Davis accepted the duty when Phoenix Air was asked to fly emergency management officials from various locations across the southeast to New York's Stewart Air National Guard Base (about 60 miles north of Ground Zero).

While the Learjet 35 was prepared for takeoff, Phoenix Air obtained a unique transponder code from the North American Defense Command (NORAD) providing clearance for the special flight. "When you're up in a sophisticated or high performance aircraft, usually you're told what altitude and what routing. It's certainly highly unusual to be told 'any altitude, any direction,'" Davis said. He covered more than 2,000 miles between the evening of Sept. 11 and the early morning of the next day delivering emergency response teams who worked in logistics, counseling and mortuary services. On the way home to Cartersville, he heard the friendly voice of an Atlanta air traffic controller: "There are 20 of us down here doing nothing but watching you folks return to Cartersville. Good to have you back." Of the experience Davis said: "The desire to take practical and immediate action to help out was strong on the afternoon of Sept. 11. I am grateful that our company could do something meaningful on that terrible day."

Davis has flown into at least 50 countries and at one point transported a long-deceased Catholic saint in a sarcophagus on a world

tour. He delighted in flying a Gulfstream III across the Pacific with a cargo of penguins. "We had to keep the cabin temperature below 40 degrees to keep them happy. Their handlers took turns taking care of the penguins in the back, and then coming up to the cockpit for a few minutes to get warm." Davis flew rocket and satellite parts to space centers in Cape Canaveral, Kazakhstan and Cayenne (French Guyana). He crewed Phoenix Air's first three flights through the new Russian Federation and was able to use his language skills in Russian. However, Davis said his most rewarding Phoenix Air missions are providing Air MedEvac services to injured U.S. troops and flying home other Americans who become ill or injured in foreign lands. In the Southeast, he donates his time flying indigent patients and abandoned pets seeking new homes.

While not on missions like these, Davis, the attorney, stays busy working in the highly regulated area of aviation law. "I find that after being in town for a week or two, working at my desk and doing legal work, I am happy to then go off on a flight mission for one or several days.

After that, though, I am happy to be back at my desk doing lawyer work again. Flying and legal work both require attention to detail, and it is important to remain diligent."

While you are having a pro-saic day at the office, look out the window and you may see a Phoenix Air Gulfstream or Learjet bound for exotic places, carrying unusual cargo and piloted by an accomplished aviator, lawyer and humanitarian, Randall H. Davis. CBJ



Bonne Davis Cella is the office administrator at the State Bar of Georgia's South Georgia Office in Tifton and can be reached at

bonnec@gabar.org. She is the author of *Fixing the Moon: The Story of The First Presidential Pilot and Aviation Pioneer Lt. Col. Henry Tift Myers*.

Endnotes

1. Henry Tift Myers of Tifton was the first Presidential Pilot.
2. To view the services offered at Phoenix Air, view their website at www.phoenixair.com.



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