

SKY-HIGH THRILLS

How a Houston attorney's high school job led to a world of aerial adventure.



Scott Rozzell displays his 1930s Beechcraft C-45 during a Galveston air show.

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SCOTT ROZZELL GREW UP SURROUNDED BY REMINDERS OF WORLD WAR II IN THE EAST TEXAS TOWN OF WAKE VILLAGE, which was created in the early 1940s as a home for workers in area army ammunition plants.

“All the streets were named after WWII heroes and WWII battles,” said Rozzell, who serves as executive vice president and general counsel to CenterPoint Energy in Houston. “When I was a youngster, a lot of children had pilots, and particularly fighter pilots, as their heroes. There were books and movies about them. I’ve been interested in being a pilot for as long as I can remember.”

Rozzell got his chance at the age of 16, when he took a job at a Texarkana airport, washing aircraft, pumping gas, and doing other odd assignments. His payment came in the form of flying lessons, which enabled Rozzell to earn his wings just a year later.

Although initially interested in flying for the military, his less-than-perfect vision led Rozzell to the field of law. After a few years of work and with a growing family, he revisited his aviation roots and purchased his first plane, a Cessna 172.

“I was married with two small children, and I asked my wife, ‘Would you rather drive for seven hours with two screaming kids to go see Grandma, or would you rather fly for an hour and a half with two screaming kids to go see Grandma?’ and she agreed that an hour and a half was better than seven.”

Through the years, Rozzell never lost his passion for WWII-era planes, and on his 40th birthday, he bought a North American T-6, a 1944 single-engine trainer aircraft with yellow wings and a cherry-red nose and tail. Once accustomed to the plane, he started flying it in air shows across the nation.

In the late 1990s, Rozzell added another vintage plane to his collection: a Beechcraft C-45, designed in the late 1930s. Rozzell purchased the orange and white twin-engine plane from a California movie studio. Additionally, his skills and commitment to the Commemorative Air Force have allowed him to fly one of the museum’s fighter planes, a Bell P-63 Kingcobra.

“I’ve had so many great experiences,” said Rozzell. “Having a chance to fly in air shows alongside some of the great airplanes has been a thrill.”

Rozzell has met aviation aces like Col. Donald Blakeslee, Lt. Col. Francis Gabby Gabreski, and Gen. David Lee “Tex” Hill, as well as some of the Doolittle Raiders and Tuskegee Airmen. In 2007, he was asked to be part of the “welcoming committee” for the USS Texas, a naval submarine, when it had a commissioning service in Galveston.

“One of the things that I’ve always enjoyed is when you’re flying, you cannot really think of anything else,” he said. “You can’t be worried about what your next court appearance or next meeting is going to be like. You have to concentrate on what you’re doing. Because of that, it’s a great way to get away from the rigors of the law practice.” HANNAH KIDDOO

To see more images of Rozzell’s planes, go to texasbar.com/rozzell.

Renovation on Wheels

How a Plano-based attorney nurtures his Airstream obsession.

PAUL N. JONES HAS HAD ALUMINUM FEVER since he started commuting from Plano to serve as general counsel to the Texas Workforce Commission. As a child, Jones always admired Airstreams, and seeing the shiny ovals on wheels all around Austin—as cupcake shops, vacation rentals, and tax offices—put them back on his mind.

“The stats say that anywhere from 60 to 70 percent of all Airstreams ever made are still on the road,” said Jones. “So they’re incredibly well built. The second thing is the unique look of an Airstream. There’s no other RV or travel-trailer that iconic.”

When Jones couldn’t shake the desire to own an Airstream, he went looking online for an old one at a decent price. About three years ago, he bought his first, a rundown 1971 Globetrotter, for \$3,000. At 21 feet long and about 8 feet wide, it amounts to approximately 150 square feet of interior space.

“It was in pretty bad shape,” said Jones. “The floor was rotted through to the ground. And it had shag carpet from 1971—just awful. It smelled like smoke. The shower in the bathroom was never used, I assure you.”

With his “new” Globetrotter being in such poor condition, Jones set out to completely renovate it. After watching how-to videos on YouTube, he stripped out the old flooring, carpet, cabinets, built-in features, and bathroom and kitchen fixtures. Then he repaired the frame, which had been rusted from a water leak, by sanding the damaged metal, welding on new pieces, and painting it with a special rust-preventative coating. He built the interior back up by replacing the plumbing and electrical features. Currently, a friend is creating the Globetrotter’s solid wood

custom cabinets.

“I didn’t know anything about welding, plumbing, or electrical,” said Jones. “So this gives me an opportunity to learn and to work with my hands and an excuse to buy tools that my wife can’t argue with.”

The next step is a rebuild of the interior—from the flooring and walls to the plumbing fixtures and cosmetic details. Jones is aiming to create a nautical design for the Globetrotter, similar to one of the three Airstreams renovated and auctioned for charity by designer Ralph Lauren.

“There are two schools of thought,” Jones said about Airstream renovation. “One is to make it just like it was off the assembly line, which is more difficult because you have to find the exact parts for that vintage year. Or, you just pick it up and make it your own and you upgrade everything. And that’s what I’m doing.”

Although the Globetrotter is not yet finished, Jones has bought and flipped two other Airstreams to finance the larger project. And, to feed his obsession, he purchased two additional Airstreams—a 1951 Cruisette and a 1965 Caravel—to restore once he’s done with the Globetrotter.

“It’s a lot longer process than I thought,” he said. “And of course, I’m only able to work on it on the weekends and when I have time.”

Jones hopes to have the Globetrotter finished by late this summer so that he and his wife and two children can do some traveling. In the meantime, he enjoys having a hobby that is much different than working at a desk.

“My favorite part of the whole process is learning something completely new,” he said. “It’s the same reason I love being a lawyer. And then when it’s done, it’s something I created. And the fact that you get to have a little studio apartment that you can take anywhere you want. In Port Aransas, you can park it on the beach. You open up your door—and the ocean is right there.” *LINDSAY STAFFORD MADER*

TEXAS PEOPLE



Brandon Hurley

*Kelly Hart and Hallman,
Fort Worth*

Appointed to the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Compact Commission by Gov. Rick Perry.



Anna C. Dragsbaek

*The Immunization Partnership,
Houston*

Received the Community Health Leadership Award from St. Luke’s Episcopal Health Charities.



Selim Fiagome

*Hartline Dacus Barger Dreyer,
Dallas*

Presented with the Amos T. Hall Award by the Northeast Oklahoma Black Lawyers Association.



Judge Barbara Hervey

*Texas Court of Criminal Appeals,
Austin*

Appointed by the U.S. Justice and Commerce departments to the National Commission on Forensic Science.