



Randy Rawls

Career

After graduation I attended college for two years and also got my private pilot license. I loved flying so I decided to try to fly for a living. This was almost a bad idea as I lost my student deferment.

I got lucky and joined the Air Force Reserve just before getting drafted. By 1967, I was able to get my commercial instrument and multi-engine ratings. I was hired by a small airline in Tyler, Texas flying Cessna 402's, Beechcraft Queen, King Air and what I thought was a big airplane, the Beech 99. With a crew of two and fifteen passengers, I was getting valuable flying time but not much money. I was like Roger Miller's song...at the end of the month I lacked \$14.00 having \$0.27.

In 1969, I was hired by Texas International Airlines flying Convair 600's and DC9's. In 1982, Texas International merged with Continental Airlines. Then came bankruptcy in September 1983 and strike in October 1983. I crossed the picket line in January 1985. The next twenty years were spent flying Boeing 727's, MD80's, and they always save the best for last... the Boeing 777 to London, Paris, and Tokyo. The 777 was a great carrier and I would have continued had it not been for hitting the magic age of 60 when the FAA declared airline pilots too old to fly and puts them out to pasture. I knew this as I was hired, but I didn't know it would come so fast. My best friend, also a Continental pilot, and I bought a farm in 1994 so we would have a pasture to go to. I continued to play farmer and rancher until the drought of 2011. I sold my 32 cows and Fernando, the bull. I still play at farming.

Family

I met my beautiful young bride (a Continental stewardess) in October 1966. After a whirlwind courtship, we married two years later. She continued to fly for six months after I retired. In February 1977, our daughter, Kim, was born. As we could not improve on perfection, she is our only child. Kim married her kindergarten classmate, Ryan, (just about the best son-in-law a fella could ask for) in 2000. In July 2005, our granddaughter was born.

In June 2008, Kim proved you can't improve on perfection, but you can equal it as our second granddaughter was born.

I thought I had the perfect life with very few hiccups, almost bullet proof, until May 2012. My beautiful wife was diagnosed with Stage IV Inflammatory Breast Cancer. I told her I have seen her naked and never saw an expiration date on her anywhere. We have taken one step at a time through chemo, mastectomy, and radiation. We are now facing forward still taking one step at a time. Her hair is growing back, she is gaining weight and her cute little tush back.

In May 2013, my best buddy took his final flight West. As Sacher Page said, "Don't look back. Something might be gaining on you!" You know what? I still have had and am having a great life.

