



Achieving work-life balance



RON LAWFORD Sole Principle, Ron Lawford Solicitor

Ron Lawford, Solicitor from Darwin, internationally awarded Aviator and Rotarian, on how he manages his work-life balance.

I was asked to pen a few words on how I keep my work and my life outside of work in balance. This arose out of the British aviation award of Master Air Pilot I received on a visit to London in October 2018.

This raised the question in my mind as to **'what is my work'** and **'what is the rest of things'** I do.

To explain—I have four areas of activity that could be called work, yet I don't regard any of them as work because I thoroughly enjoy all of them. 'Do what you love', they say.

1. I practice as a lawyer in Darwin;
2. I teach people how to fly aeroplanes;
3. I manage our real estate holdings; and
4. I do 'work' as a committee member within the ADF, chair an advisory committee on aviation airspace, do pro bono legal advice for Darwin Community Legal Service, do things with Rotary on a weekly basis, and recently joined one of the committees of the Law Society Northern Territory.

As a lawyer, I keep my stress levels well down by focussing my legal practice on those areas of law with which I am knowledgeable and comfortable; business law, aviation law, commercial law and all facets of personal legal representation including wills, probate and what used to be called enduring power of attorney.

As a flying instructor I limit myself to basic instruction, teaching people how to fly and navigate. When I have time I take my other aeroplane and do aerobatics, formation flying, and night flying and use it to fly myself and my wife to aviation events down south and to Perth in December each year.

I manage our various real estate properties around Darwin—organise leases, arrange maintenance, and so on. Not a great stress producing activity.

My community work is fairly low level in terms of stress, although advising the RAAF, Army, Navy and the Office of Airspace Regulation in the Civil Aviation Safety Authority on aviation airspace matters does occasionally get stressful, although after doing it for 34 years I have a good handle on any problem areas and who to talk with to fix problems.

My working week varies greatly from week to week, depending on what needs to be done. I generally only fly on weekends and keep Saturday morning free regardless so I can read The Weekend Australian. Occasionally I might fly five or six days in one week. I usually do about 300 hours flying each year, which is one-third of a full-time flying job.

I do a minimum of 10 hours of physical exercise each week Monday through to Thursday I start at 4:30 am with two hours of aerobics by pedalling my bicycle and walking, and three times a week I do 45 minutes of strength work at the gym. I believe in getting a good night's sleep, and hit the sack by 8 pm.

I am 80 years old and maintain a trim fit body by eating healthy foods, without overeating and I have been known to drink red and white wine regularly. My wife Annabelle and I join the Society's annual Walk for Wellness in October, and I recently attended the breakfast to launch the Society's Health & Wellbeing Program. I have an annual health check up with my GP. All good so far.



TIGER MOTH FLYING OVER DARWIN APPROX 1972-73

I'm a strong believer in the importance of having activities outside of the law and to be involved in doing good things in one's community. I reckon everyone needs to have variety in their life—be active in two or three areas of society apart from the law.

Every few years, Annabelle and I plan an exotic holiday, to help keep our relationship alive and give us perspective. We have travelled on the Trans-Siberian Railway once, visited Russia as a guest of the Russians in 1992, flown around America in light aircraft on five occasions—including a flight from Los Angeles to Chicago to Fort Yukon in Alaska and back to Los Angeles, flown along the Skeleton Coast in Namibia, and flown from Darwin to Queenstown in New Zealand and back to Darwin.

I went to primary school in Mosman Park and high school Fremantle, WA. I have been married to Annabelle for 54 years and we have two sons who are pilots of executive jets, Lachlan in Hong Kong and Scott in Perth, WA.

Who has been the biggest influence in my life?

I would have to say my mother. She was orphaned at age two in 1913 and was raised in Salvation Army institutions in WA. Perhaps because her formal education stopped when she was 12 years old, she recognised the value of education and insisted that all her children were educated to the full extent of their abilities and

ensured each of us had a firm moral compass to guide us.

As to influence in flying—Richard Williams, Charles Kingsford Smith, Douglas Bader and Ernest Ghan immediately come to mind. Douglas Bader is the only one of those I have met—in Darwin in 1975. And I recognise the influence that my five flying instructors had on my flying abilities.

I have been asked why I have a beard?

I had to shave every day as an Air Force Officer, so I grew a beard as soon as I left the RAAF! It has saved me thousands of hours that I would have spent shaving every day, and has minimised skin cancer problems on my face.

As flying high above one's problems and looking down at one's life on the ground gives you a better perspective on those problems, please call me if you'd like to learn how to fly or simply to get a 'new perspective'! ■

Contact Ron

0408 853 236
ronlawford@bigpond.com



NO BEARD! 16/09/1959



↑ Check out the February 2019 Edition of Australian Sport Pilot where Ron speaks in depth about his life, aviation career and being awarded the certificate of a Master Air Pilot at a ceremony in London—a fantastic and well-deserved achievement.

Managing your work day

- Understand your job role and responsibilities
- Take regular breaks—go for a short stroll or do some basic stretching
- Try not to take work home as tempting as it is to 'catch up'
- Limit working extra hours
- Set realistic deadlines
- It's not always easy to say 'no' but it's ok to say 'no'
- Take your holiday leave—you're entitled to it
- Detox from that tech and have a technology switch-off—even if it's just during breaks
- Make use of the LawCare employee assistance program available to Law Society NT members if you find yourself struggling
- **Remember to breathe!** Tomorrow is a new day and it will be ok