

ART (OZZIE) DAVIS LIFE SINCE HIGH SCHOOL

I got a late start in pursuing my present career as a CPA. Since I was not sure what I wanted to do, and at the insistence of my Father, I joined the Army Reserve before I graduated from high school. Within a couple of weeks of graduation, I found myself at Ft. Polk, La for two months of basic training, and the remaining four months of active duty at Ft Eustis, VA, learning train brakeman skills, as well as how to move trains from one place to another without running them into each other. Unfortunately, I also learned the bad habit of smoking cigarettes (but see next to last couple of paragraphs). Thereafter, I attended meetings and two weeks of summer-time active duty for several years. While this was not the greatest post-high school career path, it probably kept me out of Vietnam and provided some skills that I did use a short time thereafter. Like most of my fellow Burges classmates, I was pretty ignorant of the Vietnam situation when we graduated, so my intent was not to avoid the situation, but simply try to take my Father's advice, and see what I wanted to do with my life. I just happened to luck out, and avoid the brunt of deployment to Vietnam, voluntarily or otherwise. I have all the respect in the world for Burges classmates who weren't so lucky.

Actually, I kind of liked military life, and, as a result of aptitude testing they gave me during basic training, should have taken advantage of the opportunity they offered me to stay active longer because, unfortunately, I only goofed off at odd jobs after my six-month active duty tour. I worked as a service-station attendant at several places (remember those full-service fueling stations of years gone by) and also furniture moving and storage operations. In late 1965, I eventually wound up with a job as an extra-board telegrapher-clerk with the Southern Pacific Railroad. We really did not have to know how to use a telegraph key anymore, but that was still the official job title. I worked at virtually every small-town depot between El Paso and Santa Rosa, NM for a little over two years.

I finally got motivated, quit the railroad, enrolled at UTEP in January, 1968, and pushed out in two and one-half years in the Summer of 1970 with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree, with an emphasis in Accounting. I think taking elective courses in bookkeeping and typing with Mrs. Williams during my senior-year at Burges probably helped point me in this curriculum direction.

After several years with a couple of national CPA firms in Odessa and El Paso, and a two-year stint as Controller for a closely-held holding company controlled by the Feinburg family in El Paso, I came to the conclusion that I was never going to make a very good "Organization Man." I moved to Alamogordo, NM in 1975 with a small, local CPA firm, became a partner in 1976, and eventually pulled out on my own in 1981. I have been here ever since. I turned over the bulk of my practice to a CPA associate in 2006, and am now working out of my residence in what I refer to as a "semi-retired" status. Actually, I still have about 270 clients, but my practice is limited to individual, business, estate and trust tax planning and preparation. No more bookkeeping, payroll processing and reporting, or audit services. It is approximately a 70-hour work-week, with half-time clerical help, between February 1 and April 15, but pretty much a true "semi-retired" life thereafter, with 15-hour(+/-) work-weeks, no employees, and plenty of time off for travel and adventure. I also still have to help several clients clean up their QuickBooks bookkeeping software every now and then.

Life as a CPA in Alamogordo, NM has not been the road to great fame and fortune, but it has been rewarding, nonetheless. Smaller town life appeals to me as long as I can steer clear of local politics, which I go out of my way to do. I am active with a local civic club, and have served in the past on the Board of Directors of the local chapters of the Boys and Girls Club and Red Cross. I learned to fly airplanes while working for the railroad, and am still active with the White Sands Soaring Association,

flying and aero-towing gliders. I owned my own older (it cost less than a good quality car, at today's prices) "go somewhere" airplane until 2007 when it just became economically unjustifiable to hangar, maintain, insure, and fuel in order to go somewhere in it two or three times a year. I will admit, however, that it is a lot more fun to avoid the TSA hassle at big airports, and fly yourself somewhere rather than let somebody else do it for you. Until three years ago, I owned a one-half interest in an open-cockpit biplane, which is about as much fun as you will ever want to have if you just want to fly around the local area. Just ask Joe Eddie Trujillo, Pat Riordan, Bob Salcedo, and Ed Page, all of whom have had a ride in it. I still retain my high school infatuation with hot rods, and have a 1923 Ford T-Bucket (presently for sale) and a 1934 Ford 3-Window Coupe (the ones I always wanted in high school, but couldn't afford until I was in my 60's). Both are custom built as opposed to originals. They both have horsepower ratings greater than what I should now be messing around with at my age. However, I am a die-hard who still considers a senior citizen to be somebody older than myself. It, at least, helps you keep thinking young regardless of reality.

I have also tried to stay physically active, and even participated in some mini-triathlons (aka, emerging old-age denial undertakings) between 1994 and 1998. I don't remember ever finishing in the top three in my age group in the triathlons, although I had pretty good luck in placing in local area fun-runs between September 8, 1985 (the day I quit my 3-pack-a-day cigarette habit) and 2007. I had to give up running in early 2008 because my lower back would not take the pounding anymore, but still bicycle as often as I can squeeze it in between other activities. This past July, I completed my third year of participation in the Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa (check it out at ragbrai.com), and plan on doing it again, probably for the last time, in 2015 when I am 70 if I am so fortunate enough to stay physically able to do so. People in their 80's and 90's have done it, so I definitely won't be setting any precedents.

Family-wise, I never married. Age tends to solidify our individual life-styles, which makes such a move a little more difficult to deal with the older we get. I had a few pretty good opportunities with some pretty fine ladies, but, being too preoccupied with work, building a CPA practice, and other activities, I let them slip away.

That's about it. Hope it was not too boring.

If any of you are ever get this way, my cell is 575-491-2568. artdavis1040@yahoo.com.

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