



Don Anthony and Bill Harra retired early from their primary careers to co-found Jet U.S., a charter jet service based out of the New Castle County Airport.



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by Shaun Gallagher**



Not So Retiring

If 1974 hadn't been a bad time for a young college grad to get a job flying airplanes, Bill Harra's career might never have taken the detour it did. But with Vietnam just ending, the military had no need for more officers, and swarms of its pilot came home to look for work in the private sector. Harra, though he

Personal Jet Service

had some flying experience, couldn't compete against pilots who had flown in wartime.

Harra struck up a Plan B, founding a small specialized printing company in New Castle. The business fell into the market at the perfect time. "DuPont was right in [my] backyard, and their need was just tremendous," he says. So began career No. 1, which kept Harra busy for a good 28 years.

In the mid '80s, Harra began flying again as a hobby and by the early '90s he had earned his flight instructor rating and became co-owner of Sky Safety, a flight school based out of the New Castle County Airport, where he taught part time. There he befriended head flight instructor Don Anthony.

Anthony, like Harra, had flown during his growing-up years. He entered the New Castle County Police in 1972 and used his free time to fly, eventually obtaining a commercial pilot's license and a flight instructor rating. When he met Harra in 1991 at Sky Safety, he was still working full time on the police force and giving flying lessons during his free time.

Eventually, though, both men hit a point in their careers when they could no longer ignore the allure of flying full time.

"I had the printing business to the point where I could leave for a day, or a couple of days, and go flying," Harra says. "I found myself enjoying that a heck of lot more than printing." After 28 years in business, he sold the company to join Anthony in founding a charter jet service.

Anthony, who in 27 ears had climbed the ranks at the New Castle County Police to become a major (the second in command), felt like his career in law enforcement had "topped out," while his possibilities in aviation were still sky high. "I really enjoyed my career," he says, "but it was a good time to make a change."

Harra and Anthony formed Jet U.S., a charter jet service based out of the New Castle County airport. They are now in their second year of business, and demand has been steady. The men, both in their early 50s, see their second careers as an active alternative to traditional early retirement. "I don't want to go play golf all day or go fishing," Anthony says. "I would feel like there's a big void in my life if I didn't have flying."

For both men, this new career is all about enjoying their work. "We're only here so long — starting career No. 2, you really start to realize that," Anthony says. "If it stops being fun for me, that's when I'll pull the plug."

Harra says he can look back at his previous career, and his decision to leave it to pursue his original dream, with no regrets. "I haven't second-guessed myself," he says.

"Me neither," Anthony says. "We like to look at each other and say, 'We have the best office view in the world.'"

And, Harra adds, "We've got no place to go but up."

—S.G.

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