

Married Delta Air Lines Pilots Retire

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There isn't much left of this world for Joe and Margrit Fahan to see.

Like many married couples in their 60s, they have traveled extensively together and share wonderful, heartfelt stories and memories.

Unlike many married couples, however, the Fahans did it from a unique perspective.

Inside the cockpit of a jumbo jet.

Joe and Margrit Fahan are pilots for Delta Air Lines, working together for the last six years, who decided to retire together on August 13 after their final flight.

For Joe, it was the end of more than 36 years in the air as he was nearing the mandatory retirement age for commercial airline pilots of 65. Before he reached that, he took an early retirement package. Margrit, who still has eligibility to fly left, decided to join him.

"With Joe it made a lot of sense," Margrit told CNN Travel in a fun story, "but I have five more years that I could fly. It was a tough decision. One day I'd feel like, yes, it's the right thing to do. The next day, it made me really sad to think that this could be it."

"It's more than a job. It's a lifestyle," Joe said. "It's what we've done for most of our lives, and it's definitely a different way to live. This kind of becomes your life, so when you're looking at giving it up, especially early, and you didn't have time to mentally prepare for it, it's tough. I said it's like losing your senior year of high school."

It's not only their lifestyle, but their family's as well. The Fahans have two adult sons who are both pilots—Peter Fahan is deployed in Bahrain with the US Navy, while Billy Fahan is a recently furloughed commercial pilot for a regional airline.

Several years ago, they started an Instagram account known as the @flyingfahans, which has become well-known in aviation and travel circles.

"People come up to us in airports. It's flattering and embarrassing at the same time, but it's a lot of fun," Joe said. "I always say it's because of her, because I'm just another typical pilot. But when she's with me, it becomes something a little bit unique."

After raising two children and spending years apart, the two began flying together. For Joe, his last 17 years in the air were on an A330.

“We flew other planes, but we’ve been on this airplane for 17 years. I’ve never gotten tired of it,” Joe said.

“[The Airbus] is totally made for a pilot,” Margrit said. “It’s comfortable in the cockpit. It’s quiet. It just has all the little creature comforts that you really like to have.”

In a statement, Delta said: “It’s a wonderful privilege for Delta to have been a part of Capt. Joe Fahan and First Officer Margrit Fahan’s story. Their passion for aviation and dedicated service to our customers was evident throughout their combined 71 years flying, and we’re excited to see where this next adventure in retirement takes them.”

