



Peter Goetz of Goetz Fitzpatrick LLP stays on the cutting edge of construction and R.E. law

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Peter Goetz, both a graduate civil engineer and practicing attorney, was for the last two consecutive years listed by New York Magazine as a "Best Lawyer" and by the New York Times as a "Super Lawyer" in the fields of construction, surety and real estate law. Goetz, commenting on these honors, said, "I am glad to see after all these years of practice that some people think that I've got it right."

Goetz started out as a construction engineer after graduating from RPI as a civil engineer. During his engineering career, he worked in construction during the day and went to Brooklyn Law School at night, his intention being to become a contractor who understood the law. His biggest construction project was the construction of the Throggs Neck Bridge where he worked as an assistant to the resident engineer for the designers Ammann and Whitney. This assignment gave him the opportunity to experience walking high steel girders, midnight tremie concrete pours under water for the tower caissons and working atop of the high towers during cable spinning operations. Goetz described this time in his first career, "Fortunately for me, my boss was a nurturing person who helped me navigate through the vagaries of the tough and rumble construction superintendents who had names like 'Hard Nosed Harrigan.'"

Describing his transition from construction engineering to law, he said, "By the time I graduated law school and passed the Bar, I discovered that the study of law was the most exciting thing I had ever experienced in the world of academics. I actually looked forward to going to class throughout the 3½ years of law school, a marked difference than my prior educational experiences."

That is not to say that Goetz does not keep his finger in the world of civil engineering as he has been for many years now a board member of the RPI Civil and Environmental Engineer Advisory Committee.

As described later, Goetz has had a love affair with aviation. He has been a licensed pilot since the age of 21 years and only this year he and his pilot wife flew their relatively small twin engine propeller plane all the way from New York to Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Goetz co-founded the Goetz Fitzpatrick LLP law firm 40 years ago and grew the firm from two lawyers to over 25 lawyers today. Goetz's career has been entrenched in developing a practice where he and the Goetz Fitzpatrick attorneys stay on the cutting edge of their expertise in construction and real estate law. As Goetz says, "Goetz Fitzpatrick is the law firm to retain if you want the best lawyers who can solve your problems, win your case in court, negotiate your contract to closure and still pamper you as a client with personal and caring attention."

Goetz is not only an experienced construction and real estate litigator, he is also an accomplished and respected arbitrator. He is equally comfortable representing clients in the arbitration forum as in the court system. Some years ago, representing the owner of a high rise Park Avenue office tower

in arbitration, he won an award of over \$137 million for his client in a real estate valuation case which at that time was the largest award rendered in an American Arbitration Association proceeding. Goetz has represented international clients and he has arbitrated in the Far East, Europe and Iceland. As an arbitrator, he sits on both domestic and international cases. He sits on the American Arbitration Association Large Complex Panel composed of prominent attorneys and retired judges.

Goetz comments, "Arbitrating internationally can be exciting and sometimes risky. About five years ago I was selected as chairman in an international arbitration conducted in Costa Rica. The arbitration involved a dispute between a Canadian contractor and a Costa Rican owner relating to the construction of a large hydro-electric plant and waterway system in the jungles of Costa Rica. After six months of hearings which were held one week a month, I found out at a hearing that the owner had persuaded the local bar association to write to the attorney general of Costa Rica to prosecute me and the Canadian arbitrator as felons for acting as arbitrators under the guise that Costa Rican law required all arbitrators to be licensed Costa Rican attorneys. I heard about this on a Thursday and on Friday, the Canadian and I were winging our way back to the USA. As it turned out, the owner started an action in New York Federal Court to stay the arbitration. Fortunately, the court dismissed the case for lack of merit. I have not yet revisited Costa Rica although my friend and Costa Rican co-arbitrator, who is a former Supreme Court judge and vice president of Costa Rica, assures me that it is perfectly safe to visit him there. I truly believe him, but still lack the courage."

Throughout his career, Goetz has written and lectured throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and South America on the myriad topic of construction law and arbitration. He writes featured articles in a national construction trade publication on a regular basis since 1974.

To keep his pulse on the construction and real estate industries, he has membership in a number of trade organizations. For many years, he has been an active member of the Board of Directors of the New York City Building Congress.

Goetz Flies the Skies

Goetz's second love after law is aviation. He was involved in aviation from an early age. His father, who was a well-known New York City builder in the '40s and '50s was a World War I fighter pilot who, before World War II, would take his two children flying around New York City in his Stearman open cockpit bi-plane. As Goetz recalls, "He would take us out to Floyd Bennet Airfield in Brooklyn and plop me and my eight year old sister into the front cockpit. I was so young, I could hardly see over the cockpit edge. We would fly around New York City and he would do steep turns for our amusement. We shouted through the gas port - more, more! Of course, my father, my sister and I were forbidden by our mother to ever go flying with Dad so we always had our air adventures on the Q.T.!"

Goetz now keeps two airplanes at the Dutchess County Airport which is near his weekend home in Cold Spring. His wife Barbara, a relatively new pilot, flies a single engine Cessna. Goetz flies in a twin engine. Two years ago they flew commercially to Johannesburg, South Africa and rented a small single engine Cessna which they literally flew all around South Africa, landing at important cities, dirt strips at game reserves and historic sites. In order to fly in South Africa, Goetz had to take a government test to be provisionally licensed as a South African pilot. Goetz remarked, "We flew a lot at an average altitude of 300' above the ground and water so we could see the wild animals, fish and whales - it was spectacular! When over the land we had to pull up for high-tension electric

lines. I felt like a crop duster without insecticide!"

This year, Goetzout did himself and flew from New York to Buenos Aires, Argentina in their twin engine plane. On the way back, after a 2½ month stay in Buenos Aires to become proficient in Spanish, they flew over the Andes and returned via the Pacific and the Gulf of Mexico. As Goetz said, "It was by far the best adventure so far in my life. However, Barbara and I are considering next summer to fly the Big Pond and visit our pilot friends in England."

Presently, Goetz is involved in representing his alma mater RPI in a court case involving construction and design problems of a new campus building and he is representing a major developer in Maryland who is building a one half billion dollar hotel and conference center located between Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Goetz says, "As long as I can practice law, I never want to retire - I am having too much fun working!"

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