

A Short History of the Kyle Franklin & The Franklin Legacy

A third-generation pilot and second-generation airshow pilot, Kyle was born and raised in the airshow business. The Franklin aviation legacy began with Kyle's grandfather Zip Franklin, a World War II veteran, a rancher, and a self-taught pilot. Zip's oldest son Jimmy Franklin started flying on his dad's lap while he was still in diapers. 12 years later, Jimmy snuck out and soloed himself in the family PA-14. By age 19, Jimmy was performing airshows in his stock Waco UPF-7 after teaching himself aerobatics by reading Harold Krier's book "Modern Aerobatics".

Kyle grew up around airplanes and airshows. Taking his first airplane ride at just two weeks old, Kyle quickly learned to fly and by the time he was just 10 years old he was a competent pilot.

At age 12 Kyle began traveling with his father to airshows every summer – he learned how to maintain the Waco biplane and honed his flying skills and showmanship under the watchful eye of his parents. At age 14, Kyle took to the outside of the now highly modified Waco Mystery Ship and began learning the art of wingwalking.

At age 17, and still a junior in high school, Kyle became the world's youngest professional wingwalker and launched the industry's only father and son wingwalking team. Over the next nine years Kyle became an accomplished airshow pilot, flying the Waco Mystery Ship and performing his now famous Ben Whabnoski comedy act in the Super Cub he learned to fly at age 8. Kyle expanded his skills and became a stuntman, performing the world's only motorcycle to airplane transfer with his father piloting - an act the Franklin's developed in 1972.

The Franklins always considered themselves showmen first and pilots second. True to their commitment to showmanship and innovation, they launched the original Jet Waco in 1999. As if the unprecedented airplane and its jaw dropping performance weren't enough, Kyle became the world's first jet wingwalker – an act he continued to perform until the tragic loss of his father and Bobby Younkin in 2005. Kyle was also the only other person to ever pilot the original Jet Waco.

Despite the loss of both their father's, Kyle and his new bride and business manager Amanda Younkin Franklin continued in the airshow business. Kyle performed his comedy act and motorcycle to airplane transfer with his brother-in-law Matt Younkin as the motorcycle driver. With Amanda's business skill and Kyle's showmanship, Franklin's Flying Circus thrived.

In 2008, Kyle and Amanda created and debuted one of the most iconic airshow acts ever - Pirated Skies! Kyle's wife Amanda became the wingwalking pirate Scandalous Scarlet, and with their costumes, their beautiful story line, and their showmanship, they thrilled crowds everywhere until early 2011 when Amanda was tragically lost in an accident.

Despite Kyle's loss he continued to perform and in 2013 he debuted a new, one of a kind biplane – Dracula! This airplane combined the look, style, and appeal of the 1930's racing airplanes with 21st century aerodynamics and systems. Originally conceived by Kyle and his father 10 years earlier, Dracula was completed in late 2012. Kyle performed in Dracula across the U.S through 2019.

In 2016 Kyle met Liz Demond at EAA AirVenture, where they would cross paths again a year later. Kyle and Liz fell in love when she came to visit Kyle's airport for tail wheel instruction and they have been married since 2019. Ever since Liz has become an essential part in the family's flying business. Most notably her part as the pilot that Kyle steals the airplane from, in his comedy act.

Today, Kyle and Liz continue to wow and amaze crowds across the country and the world with their unique style of flying and showmanship. Over Kyle's career he has created and performed over 12 different airshow acts in 6 different aircraft including, wingwalking, solo aerobatics, comedy acts, motorcycle to airplane transfers, stunt driving, ariel dogfight routines and many more. Kyle Franklin has become known as the "King of themed air show acts" and a legend in the airshow world. He has been flying airshows full time for over 25 years, and has won the coveted Bill Barber Award for Showmanship. Kyle with the help of Liz continues to re-invent himself to bring something new to the airshow industry and to keep up with ever changing pop culture.

2022 marks Kyle's 26th season as an airshow professional and his family's 55th year as airshow performing legends.

For additional information, please visit:

www.franklinairshow.com

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If you'd like to book Kyle for an airshow or a speaking event, you can reach him at franklinairshow@aol.com.