

When Angels Fly

We often wonder what the people we graduated high school with are doing now. Local author Joe McDaniel has written a book about it. *31206* tells about the people he knew in high school and the amazing things they have done since then. In one chapter, McDaniel talks about his lifelong friend, Jim Lambert, and his amazing work with Angel Flight.

"Joe likes to say we were prenatal friends," says Lambert. "I can't remember a time when I didn't know Joe." The parents of the two men knew each other and went to the same church. McDaniel moved away briefly, but soon returned, and the two went to grammar and high school together. Now Lambert is the owner of Allen & Lambert Insurance, which he started in May of 1980. Allen & Lambert offers property insurance primarily to commercial entities, but also helps individuals. Lambert's true passion however, is flying. Flying since he was 16, Lambert had actually stopped for many years, but took it up again just a few years before the death of his first wife.

During her treatment for complications from a kidney transplant, Lambert drove back and forth between Macon and Emory Hospital, where his wife was being treated. While at Emory, Lambert met a young couple from Virginia whose child was being treated at a nearby children's hospital. Lambert was surprised at how far the couple drove to the hospital, but the two explained that no driving was involved – Angel Flight, which arranges transportation for any medical need, provided a pilot and plane for them.

Lambert became very interested in learning more about Angel Flight and how he could help. "I felt that God had blessed me with so much," Lambert said. "I'd been able to fly a helicopter in the military, own my own business and buy my own

plane, and I wanted to give back," he explains. Lambert bought a Beech Barron twin-engine plane in 1989, and this plane afforded him the opportunity to help others. "I bought it not knowing my wife would die," says Lambert. "But God knew I would need something to get me through it." Lambert is quite proud of his aircraft. "It's the finest airplane ever made," he says.

Lambert got in touch with Angel Flight and went to work, carrying patients to hospitals for treatment and sometimes even transporting organs for transplant. Angel Flight is very important to Lambert. "It gives me purpose," he says. "I really enjoy the aspect of helping others, which God commanded us to do." Whenever something goes wrong in his life, Lambert thinks about the troubles he has seen in other people's lives, as well as his own. Lambert himself deals with a benign form of Leukemia, and his wife is an oncology nurse who sees cancer patients every day. But Lambert's faith in God and love of flying never let him down. "I never have a bad day," he says. "I'm still a blessed person." Through his work with Angel Flight, Lambert seeks to pass on his blessings to others.

James Palmer

