

Business aviation people away from the airport

Run, Nick Vedeo, Run!

How to put one foot in front of the other for 26.2 miles.

NO, REALLY. NICK VERDEA HAS RUN IN almost a dozen marathons even though he only started running from scratch in January 2007. As the director of aviation for the Midland Financial Co. in Oklahoma City, he oversees four pilots, two techs, a Challenger 601 and a Citation X. He says he started running because of two promises he made

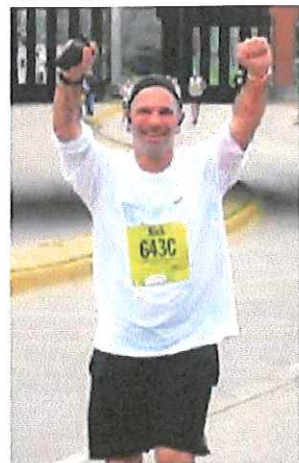


to himself back in college: "I promised myself I'd never marry a girl I met in a bar, and I didn't; I married my best friend's sister, Tina. And then I said if I ever hit 200 pounds, I'd change my lifestyle." On Jan. 2, 2007, after gorging on Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners, he hit 201.

On Jan. 3, he joined the Aspen Athletic Club and started running. "I'd tried

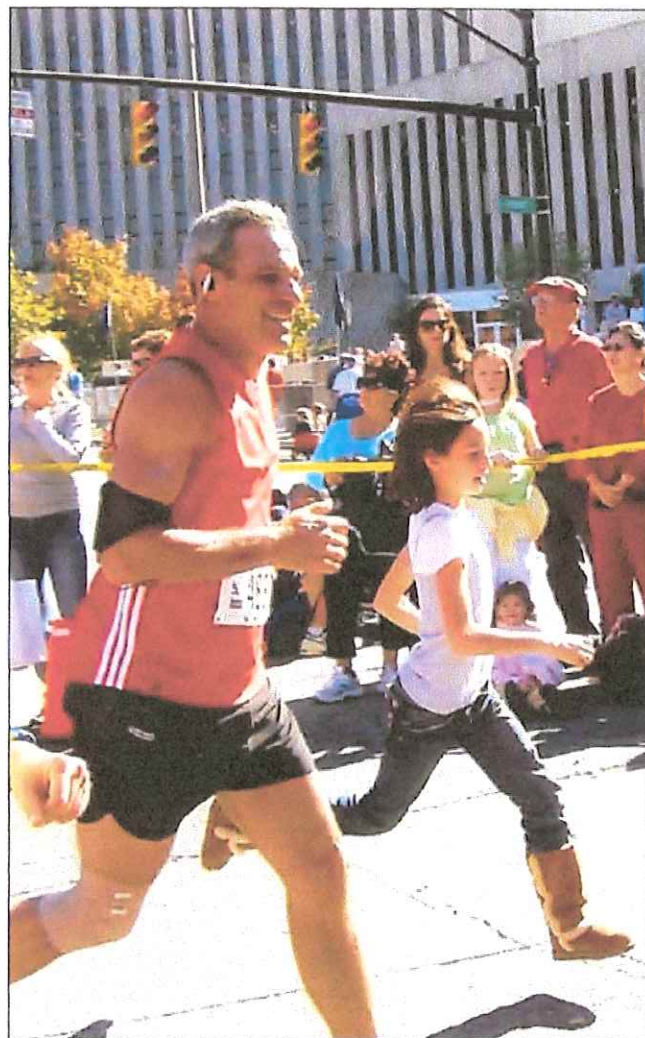
running before," he says. "I'd last about two months and give it up — shin splints, all sorts of excuses. But this time it stuck." His town of Edmond, Okla., holds a five-mile run called the "Frigid 5" in the middle of February, so six weeks after he ran his first step he found himself finishing a five-mile run in 54 minutes. And best of all, the weight started dropping off. And then it started.

"Somebody would say to me, 'Hey, if you can run the five mile you can do a 10K. It's only another mile longer.' So two months later I ran the 10K." That's how he progressed to 10 miles to half marathon (the Oklahoma City Memorial three weeks later, which he ran in 2:02) to his first marathon, in October 2007 at Ohio State University. His two sons and two daughters went with him and wife, Tina, and about 200 yards from the finish, his 10-year-old daughter slipped through the fence and finished beside him.



Finishing a race

Now he's a member of the Oklahoma City Land Runners, which trains together as a group on Saturdays. "During the week, you're on your own," he says. "Our long runs are 10 or 20 miles with a hundred or 150 people. It's good camaraderie, and I always run better when I run with other people." His times weren't fast enough to enter the world-famous 26.2-miler in Boston in spring 2008 so he got a charity exemption. To run for MS, he needed pledges totaling \$3,000, and friends Barry Justice, an aviation consultant, and Kenny



Nick running with his daughter who slipped into the race to finish beside him.

Dichter, inventor of the Marquis Jet Card, stepped up. The family didn't accompany him to Boston, but a nephew attending Boston College ran it. "I beat him by 10 minutes. Got lifetime bragging rights," he says, laughing.

He prefers Adidas Supernova Glides. "They seem to work for me," he says. After pushing a little too hard, he experienced tendon problems and took some time off. In a month, he started running again. "No problems since," he says. He did Dallas in November 2008, then five more in six months.

"One of the neat things about running is you pay more attention to what you eat," he says. "More fish, chicken, turkey, fruits and vegetables. I look at it as fuel. And I always start on the carbs, packing in spaghetti two days before a run." Lucky thing Tina's Italian. **George C. Larson**