



Rob Schantz

Notable – BFA President, Shields Trauger Award

Rob Schantz began his aviation career at 18 when he became a fixed wing pilot. He then started his hot air balloon career in 1976 in Cincinnati, Ohio where he earned his private and commercial ratings and soon was flying for Coca-Cola, Slush Puppy and Firestone. This activity took him around the country flying at various events and in 1980 he was invited to fly on the professional balloon tour sponsored by KOOL Cigarettes.

He then moved to Jacksonville, Florida and became a full-time balloonist and a dealer for Raven Industries (now Aerostar), the oldest and largest manufacturer of balloons. In 1982, he became a financial consultant with Merrill Lynch, and introduced the Merrill Lynch Hot Air balloon program. In 1986, Rob again made ballooning his full-time profession as he became the Director of Public and Pilot Relations for the National Balloon Racing Association.

Rob is a BFA Level 8 Aeronaut, Master Instructor, a FAA Accident Prevention Counselor, as well as serving as a past President of the Balloon Federation of America. In 2002 he was presented the Balloon Federation of America Shields Trauger award for his outstanding service to the BFA. Rob's oldest son Adam is also a commercial balloon pilot and is now a Navy Commander and P8 pilot.

Rob and his wife Jetta, operate Skysigns Unlimited, Inc. which currently manages the Seagram's Crown Royal, Johnson Controls, and Pfizer corporate hot air balloon programs. They also run their own balloon events consulting firm and professional balloon racing circuit Balloon Tour America. Together Rob and Jetta have organized over 100 hot air balloon races across the country. In addition, Rob owns and operates The Schantz Agency, an aviation insurance company specializing in hot air balloon insurance.

Rob was the Flight Coordinator for all three of Jetta's world record flights where she set 27 national and 27 world aviation records in distance, altitude, and duration.

Rob also served as the Search and Rescue Director for the "J. Renee" global balloon expedition attempt by Kevin Uliassi. When Kevin encountered structural failure of his balloon system early in the flight, Rob was instrumental in Kevin's safe landing and immediate rescue.

Rob and Jetta have been honored to participate in the Forbes balloon event at the Chateau Balleroy in France, the Puerto Rico Challenge, the New York City Central Park Balloon Race, and in the Kent Horizon's balloon event in Malaysia.