

**ED YOST MASTER PILOT AWARD**  
***Balloon Federation of America***  
***Award Program***

**Applicant Information Form**

**APPLICANT:**

Name: Dr Clayton Lay Thomas M.D. M.P.H.  
Address: 14 Sutcliffe Road  
City, State, ZIP: Brimfield, MA 01010  
Telephone: 413-245-7013  
E-mail: c.thomas7@13echarter.net

**Letters of recommendation:** Attach two letters of recommendation from holders of FAA LTA pilot certificates who attest to the applicant's 40 or more years of LTA piloting experience.

**Provide documentation:** Provide proper documentation describing the kind of certificate(s) held by the applicant. Attach copies of documents indicating the original date of the pilot's LTA solo flight or original LTA flight certificate.

**Resume:** Please provide a detailed and complete ballooning biography for the applicant that includes the candidate's history and involvement in ballooning.

**PERSON MAKING THE SUBMISSION:**

Name: Mick Murphy  
Address: 115 Townline Highway S  
City, State, ZIP: Watertown, CT 06795  
Telephone: 203-910-4955  
E-mail: Info@AenBlarney.com

**Return the Applicant Information Form to:**

Balloon Federation of America  
PO Box 400  
Indianola, IA 50125  
[bfaoffice2@bfa.net](mailto:bfaoffice2@bfa.net)

Dr. Clayton Lay Thomas, M.D., M.P.H. Aerospace Medicine, of Brimfield, MA, started flying in 1968 where he trained with Charles MacArthur in hot air and Ed Yost taught him how to fly gas. He earned his license in 1970 two years later with 1.5 hours of free flight, the majority of his training was on tether with Bob Waligunda.

Clayton went on to open the Balloon School of Massachusetts, Inc. because he believed training needed to be improved. He actively developed safety programs and spoke at seminars to advance and reinforce training techniques to make the sport safe as possible. He has provided flight instruction to over 128 licensed pilots, logged over 2400, and all four of his children hold ItA ratings.

Served as a Designated Pilot Examiner for lighter-than-air free balloons from 1971-2011 (39 years). One of his favorite lines prior to a check ride was "If you don't kill me you have a pretty good chance of passing."

He served as Bobby Sparks ground crew for Atlantic crossings,

Dr. Thomas was a U.S. Navy Flight Surgeon and Instructor in the U.S. Naval School of Aviation Medicine, was active in and wrote articles for publication on sport parachuting, holds a fixed wing and helicopter pilot's licenses and started but never finished taking lessons in sailplanes.

1950-60 Medical Consultant, Parachutes Inc

1965-73 Members U.S. Olympic Medical & Training Services Committee

1970 – Present President Balloon School of Massachusetts

1972 – 2011 FAA Designated Pilot Examiner (39 years)

1980 Balloonmaster of Lake Placid Olympic

1983 Bicentennial of Manned Flight, when he won the Trophy Montgolfier

1993 NAA Certificate of Honor for significant contribution to the development and advancement of hot air ballooning and safety and for his life- long contribution to aviation medicine.

2003 State Award for Massachusetts from the Aero Club of New England for recognition of his significant contributions to the development and advancement of hot air ballooning and ballooning safety in the New England and Northeast United States.

Dr. Thomas' background includes a B.S. from the University of Kentucky, an M.D. from the Medical College of Virginia, an M.P.H. from Harvard University School of Public Health, Fellow, and American College of Physicians, American Public Health Association, and the Aero Space Medical Association.

Notes:

The Aero Club of New England was established in 1902. In 2003,

Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award 10-2012



I thought I'd share some news that marks a unique accomplishment by a friend, and a man who has been such a great influence on so many people in aviation.

Yesterday, surrounded by family and many friends in a ceremony at his home, Dr. Thomas received the prestigious Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award, granted by the Federal Aviation Administration. Nominated by Jim Adams of the Windsor Locks FSDO, the Department of Transportation issued the award effective October 22, 2012.

Presented by Beth Babb, Windsor Locks CT Regional FSDO Manager, among her remarks she said "We are here to honor you today because you have been a true pioneer in aviation and modern day ballooning and you really do share in the spirit and the determination that the Wright Brothers showed when they first took flight. This Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award is to recognize all of your 50 years of service to safe aviation. Thank you for all you have done over the years. And a special thank you to your wife, Peggy, because you could not have done this without a partner like her." Back in 1963, Doctor Thomas got into ballooning, as he said in the ceremony, "when my wife made me give up parachuting, I took up hot air ballooning".

In summarizing his fascinating ballooning career, Ms. Babb shared some stories and recalled his unique role as the balloonmeister for the 1980 Winter Olympics at Lake Placid, his role as an FAA Designated Examiner (certifying more than 100 LTA pilots), his founding of the Balloon School of Massachusetts, and the training he received in fixed wing, rotor and glider aircraft. She also cited his participation in several balloon races and his winning the competition at the Bicentennial of Manned Flight in 1983 in Anomay, France.

As the FAA web site states "The Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award recognizes pilots who have demonstrated professionalism, skill and aviation expertise by maintaining safe operations for 50 or more years." The Master Pilot Award Honor Roll is listed here: <<https://www.faasafety.gov/content/MasterPilot/RecipientList.aspx>>  
<https://www.faasafety.gov/content/MasterPilot/RecipientList.aspx> . (Doc's name is not yet posted but is in process.)

Doc said to extend his "hello" to you...

Bob Martel  
Sterling, MA