



## Richard Abruzzo

### Notable – Achievements/Contributions, Montgolfier, Records, Shields Trauger

Early on, Richard's passion was less ballooning than it was skiing. As a member of the University of New Mexico ski team he was a four-year letter winner, a four-year NCAA academic All-American, a three-time Western Athletic Conference scholar athlete, and a NCAA championship participant as a freshman and top-20 finisher in the slalom and giant slalom in the NCAA final. He was really good at going really fast downhill. Along the way Richard earned his hot-air balloon license and dabbled in ballooning, but his high adventure career began as a casual interest until he was asked to co-pilot with Troy Bradley in the Chrysler Transatlantic Challenge. It was the beginning of a stellar round of ballooning feats in both gas and hot air balloons. With *Peak Express*, his hot-air balloon promoting his family businesses (the Sandia Peak Tram and Sandia and Santa Fe Ski Areas).

Richard was captivated on the world of adventure ballooning. He was a high achiever who set many world records for distance and duration, as well as a focused competitor who won two Balloon Fiesta key grab events. Richard is the only five-time winner of the America's Challenge gas balloon race and won the Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett in 2004

### Honors:

- 1992 First flight from North America to Africa, Absolute Duration Record for Balloons (previously held by Double Eagle II and Richard's father Ben Abruzzo), Longest Distance Award in the Chrysler Transatlantic Balloon Race, 24 World Records for Distance, Duration and Altitude for Roziere Balloons
- 1994 1<sup>st</sup> Place, National Gas Balloon Championship, St. Louis, Missouri
- 1994 3<sup>rd</sup> Place, U.S. Gordon Bennett Qualifier, Greeley, Colorado
- 1995 1<sup>st</sup> Place, America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 1996 2<sup>nd</sup> Place, National Gas Balloon Race, St. Louis, Missouri
- 1996 Won a new car in the Key Grab at the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta
- 1997 1<sup>st</sup> Place, America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 1998 3<sup>rd</sup> Place, America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 1999 1<sup>st</sup> Place, RE/MAX Cup National Gas Balloon Race, Denver, Colorado
- 2000 2<sup>nd</sup> Place, Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett, Saint Hubert, Belgium
- 2000 2<sup>nd</sup> Place, America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 2001 2<sup>nd</sup> Place, America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 2001 Solo Flight from Albuquerque, New Mexico to Crawfordville, Georgia, World Duration Record for AA-6 (previously held by Ben Abruzzo), 80 hours, 18 Minutes
- 2002 1<sup>st</sup> Place, America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 2003 First Solo Transcontinental Balloon Flight, San Diego, California to the Georgia Coast, World

Distance Record (AA-6/AA-7),  
2003 2<sup>nd</sup> Place, Coupe Aeronautique Gordon Bennett, Arc et Senans, France  
2003 1<sup>st</sup> Place, America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race, Albuquerque, New Mexico  
2004 1<sup>st</sup> Place, Coupe Aeronautique Gordon Bennett, Thionville, France  
2004 1<sup>st</sup> Place, America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race, Albuquerque, New Mexico  
2005 1<sup>st</sup> Place 2005 Gordon Bennett in France, Richard and Carol Rymer Davis

**Awards:**

1992 FAI's De La Vaulx Medal for an Absolute World Record  
1999 Recipient of the Montgolfier Diploma  
2001 Recipient of the Harmon Aeronaut Trophy  
2003 Recipient of the Harmon Aeronaut Trophy  
2005 Recipient of the Harmon Aeronaut Trophy