

William E. Bussey, DDS

Inducted into the U. S. Ballooning Hall of Fame on July 31, 2016

By the Balloon Federation of America at the
National Balloon Museum in Indianola, Iowa



Bussey's first balloon
"Quest".



Bill Bussey being inducted into
Texas Aviation Hall of Fame.



Chuck Norris & Bill Bussey in the episode "Sons of
Thunder" on *Walker, Texas Ranger* in 1997.



AX-6 World Record Duration
flight from 1997 Okema, OK.



Bussey with son Kelly at 26,400 ft. while on
oxygen.



Bill's "Sundance" AX-8, at
Breckenridge, CO 1999.



"Tequila Sunrise I" at Lake
Cherokee in Longview, TX 2008.



"Tequila Sunrise II" AX-9
140,000 cubic feet in 2013.

William E. (Bill) Bussey, DDS

Longview, Texas

William “Bill” Bussey was born on February 27th, 1943 to David Cole Bussey and Grayce Will Black in Dallas, Texas. While living in Grand Prairie, Texas William’s father David worked at Chance Vaught Aviation. Later, Chance Vaught became Ling Temco Vaught Aviation, producing fighter planes. David was an inspector in quality control of the AT6 trainer and the P51 Mustang, the famous fighter plane of WWII.

In 1946 the family made the move to Longview, Texas where Mr. Bussey originated. As a young boy Bill parked cars in a lot next to his house for ten cents. During his school years in Longview Bussey was active in baseball and lettered in the sport. In addition to sports, Bussey was active in many areas. He was VP of Key Club, a member of the National Honor Society, a member of Student Council, was Senior Class Editor, involved in the Latin Club, and made the top 10% of his class.

When Bussey received a model airplane for Christmas in 1955 he couldn’t stop flying it. His uncle Leon Bussey had given him a model plane with a Cox .049 engine and remote control guy wires. At age 12 Bill Bussey became hooked on flying.

During his years at the University of Texas in Austin, Bussey attended the pre-dental program and became a member of the Sigma Chi Fraternity. He graduated in 1965 with a Bachelor of Arts in history and a minor in microbiology. Bussey married Nancy Todd Bass in 1962. In the following years they had two children: Kelly and Casey. Bussey then attended the University of Tennessee College of Dentistry in Memphis, Tenn.

While receiving his doctorate in Dental Surgery he became the President of the Student American Dental Society and a member of the Zeta Psi Phi dental fraternity. He received multiple awards in dental achievement before graduating with a DDS in December 1968. In January of 1969 Bussey became a Captain in the U.S. Army Dental Corps at the Brook Army Medical Center. He attended the Medical Field Service School at Fort Sam Houston. He was then assigned to Madigan General Hospital at Ft. Lewis, Wash.

The U.S. Army was Bussey’s ticket to flight. On March 1st, 1969 Bussey took his first fixed-wing flying lesson in Ft. Lewis, Wash. His first solo flight was in May later that year. Just two months after that Bussey achieved his private fixed wing pilot license. Then after purchasing his first plane, he was certified as a commercial fixed wing pilot in 1973.

While in Ft. Lewis Bussey’s dental office had a view of Mt. Rainier, a view that inspired him to climb the mountain successfully four times. In Washington Bussey became a true adventurer. He joined the Army Dental softball team, hunted elk and bear, caught salmon and trout, and spent time snow skiing, camping, hiking, and climbing. In 1970 Bussey even acquired his SCUBA license through the army.

In 1971 Bussey and his family moved back to Longview, Texas. There he opened his first dental office. He became very successful in dental surgery and dental implants. While in Longview Bussey acquired a second home on Lake Cherokee, where he had spent time growing up. There he sparked an interest in boating as well.

The year 1976 brought Bussey to his first balloon sighting. Bussey was taking hang gliding lessons in Aspen, Colo. There he saw two balloons tethered at the rugby field. Soon after the sighting Bussey took his first balloon ride in Longview. Ballooning quickly became Bussey’s next adventure. He began flying lessons later that same year. By July 31st Bussey had his first solo flight in a hot air balloon. In August he came to watch ballooning at the U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championship in Indianola, Iowa. By September of 1977 Bussey was a proud co-owner of a new balloon named “Quest”.

Bussey then attended his first Albuquerque International Balloon Race as a spectator later that year. In November he finally decided to partake in a balloon race. Bussey's first race was "Valley Rally" in Alamosa, Colo. In one year Bussey had gone from a novice to placing fourth in his first ever balloon race. He later placed first in his second balloon race.

Bussey began the first advertised Balloon Glow in 1981 at the Great Texas Balloon Race. In 1982 Bussey married the smart and talented Debra Lyn Sellers, and they have a son named Zachary. Since the 80's Bussey competed in many ballooning competitions and set multiple records including 30 U.S. National NAA records and 15 World FAI records for distance and duration in a hot air balloon. With the help of Tom Hamilton he even created a fake balloon race with the first prize as a Harley Davidson limited edition motorcycle. His wife Debbie later found out that it was all an April Fool's hoax and that the race was fabricated so that Bussey could purchase his Harley. However by that time Debbie had ridden on the bike and like it.

In the early 90's Bussey developed an interest in NASCAR driving as well, becoming an instructor and part owner of the company called "The Racing Experience". Throughout the decade Bussey competed in multiple competitions, received many awards, broke records, and created the prestigious Rudy Bresie memorial award in honor of his best friend. Bussey helped organize and fly five balloons underground in Marvel Cave near Branson, Mo. This was the first ever underground competition. Bussey was even selected to represent the United States in the "International Race of Champions". There he flew for Sir Richard Branson, King Hussein and Queen Noor, as well as King Ferdinand and Queen Sophie of Spain.

In one flying incident Bussey and his son Kelly flew to 26,400 feet on oxygen. Bussey almost lost consciousness. That is to say, he almost lost consciousness until Kelly told him he would feel better if he just plugged his oxygen back in. Bussey also was among the first balloons to fly in Malaysia. There he discovered that the monkeys in the treetops did not particularly like the sound of the burners. They would scatter every time the sound occurred!

During the late 90's Bussey was awarded the Montgolfier Diploma for his historical flight from Kansas to Georgia totaling 892 miles. After being shown in the episode "Sons of Thunder" for *Walker, Texas Ranger*, Bussey then played a role in the ABC made for TV movie "Sons of Thunder," a spinoff movie of the earlier episode. Bussey then became an instructor for the Team Texas High Performance Driving School for Winston Cup Cars. At this point Bussey has accomplished 20 years of ballooning.

As Bussey pursued his passion for adventure into the next century, he set one more world record and competed in eight ballooning competitions. He also continued to be an instructor and 50% owner of The Racing Experience where you can race a real stock car. Additionally, Bussey was inducted into the Texas Aviation Hall of Fame in 2007. He is the only balloonist to be inducted. Bussey and his brother, Bruce, tied to receive the Balloon Federation of America's award for most improved pilot. Although he was involved in numerous pursuits, Bussey persisted in his passion for dentistry.

Bussey created and continues to enhance an academic and general knowledge blog on dentistry, written in layman's terms for the average patient. Since the creation Bussey has become an "Authority Author" and is now ranked as a "Google Plus" author. He plans to have both a layman's division and a professional division of the blog.

Bussey went on to receive multiple awards in the 2000's. These were well deserved for his commitment, dedication, and achievements in ballooning. These awards included the Tom Southern Leadership Award, the BFA President's Award, and the BFA Shields-Trauger Award for the second time. Throughout his life Bussey has strived to live life to the fullest and explore every adventure. On his way here he has continuously helped others including donating to charities, starting a flash mob balloon glow for the children of Longview, donating previous chase vehicles to orphanages, and completing random acts of kindness wherever he goes.

Timeline of Life

EDUCATION:

- 1961— National Honor Society
- 1961— Sigma Chi Fraternity
- 1965— University of Texas—Bachelor of Arts
- 1968— Zi Psi Phi Dental Fraternity
- 1968— Dean's Honor Society in Dental School
- 1968— Doctorate of Dental Surgery (DDS) at the University of Tennessee College of Dentistry
- 1969— Medical Field Service School at Fort Sam Houston
- 1969-1970— Rotational Dental Internship
- 1970— Graduated from US Army Medical Field Service School
- 1984— Emeritus Fellow at Academy of General Dentistry

AWARDS:

- 1968— American Academy of Roentgenology (X-Rays) Award
- 1968— Outstanding Dental Student Award from the International College of Dentistry
- 1977— Sid Cutter Award for outstanding contribution to hot air ballooning
- 1988— Ranked No. 1 in the National Balloon Racing Association
- 1989— Ranked No. 1 in Balloon Federation of America
- 1989— "The Ernie" a one-time award given to a competition pilot over a 3 year period who most emulates the true spirit of ballooning in his relationship with competition, sponsors, media, public, and fellow balloon pilots.
- 1990— Bronze Medal in North American Championship
- 1993— Shields-Trauger Award
- 1993— NAA Award— one of ten most memorable flights
- 1994— Al Desmond Award for contributions to competitive ballooning
- 1996— Montgolfier Diploma
- 2007— Only balloon pilot inducted into the Texas Aviation Hall of Fame
- 2009— Most Improved Balloon Pilot, BFA
- 2010— Bob Bullock Museum of Texas History for 100 years of Aviation
- 2011— Longview, Texas Tourism Partner of the Year
- 2011— Distinguished Alumnus Award, Longview High School
- 2012— Director's Award from BFA
- 2015— Tom Southern Leadership Award for Outstanding Commitment and Dedication
- 2015— President's Award from BFA
- 2015— 2nd Shields-Trauger Award for Dedication to Competition
- 2016— Scheduled to be inducted into the Ark-La-Tex Sports HOF
- 2016— Scheduled to be inducted into the U.S. Ballooning HOF
- *100+ Silver and Bronze finishes
- *International Awards include Silver Badge and Gold Badge with Two Diamonds

RECORDS:

- 1985— AX-5 Distance World Record
- 1993— AX-8 Amarillo, TX to Milbank, SD 7 World Records, Distance (755 miles) and Duration (29 hrs and 14 mins)
- 1996— AX-6 Duration
- 1996— AX-6 Distance Chanute, KS to Savannah, GA (892 miles), Top Speed 108 mph, avg. Speed of 82 mph
- 2000— AX-6 Duration Record
- 1985-2002— Achieved 29 United States National Records for Distance and Duration
- *15 total World Records



World Record flight AX-6 Chanute, KS to Savannah, GA 1995.



Bussey and the Schlitz balloon 1989.



Bussey with his Shields-Trauger awards.



The Virgin Airlines balloon on a record flight from Texas to South Dakota.



Bruce Bussey, Kathy Aldrige, and Zachary Bussey lay out a balloon for a test in 1995.

ORGANIZATIONS:

1968— President of the Student American Dental Society
1971-2001— Board of Good Shepherd Hospital
1971-2014— Gregg County Dental Society
1971-2014— East Texas Dental Society
1971— Current Life Member of Texas Dental Association
1971— Current Life Member of American Dental Association
1972-1982— Quest Dental Study Group
1972-Present— Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Great Texas Balloon Race
1974— President of Kiwanis Club
1975— President of Ducks Unlimited
1975— United Way Board of Directors
1977-Present— BFA member
1977-Present— Competition Division, BFA
1978-Present— American Academy of Implant Dentistry member
1979-1981-- President of the BFA
1984-Present— Emeritus Fellow of Academy of General Dentistry
1999-2006— Founding Board Member of the North American Balloon Association

*North American Balloon Association
*National Aviation Association member
*Sporting Division of NAA member

BALLOONING:

1971— First balloon flight
1971— Received pilot's license for ballooning.
1972— One of 13 pilots to fly at the first Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta
1972— Participant in the first Texas Hot Air Balloon Race in Manor, Texas
1975— Founding member of the Tejas Aeronauts, the first balloon club of Houston, Texas
1975— Helped organize the Houston Balloon Pilots Association
1979-1980— Kool Pro Balloon Tour, 4th in 1979
1980— XIII Winter Olympic Games opening ceremonies in Lake Placid, N.Y.
1981— World Hot Air Balloon Championships in Battle Creek, Mich.
1985, 1989, 1995— United States World Team
1986— Over 2,300 balloon hours
1986— Championship Director for U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championship
1991— Lindstand and Branson Trans-Pacific Recovery Team from Japan to Northwest Territories
1992-2009— Balloon Tour America
1994— Organized and flew in the 1st Underground Balloon Glow and the 1st ever Underground Competition in Marvel Cave, Silver Dollar City, Mo.
1997— Host of 6 one-hour TV Specials for the Travel Channel and Outdoor Life Network featuring Hot Air Ballooning
2009— National Balloon Classic attendance after 21 year absence
2012-2015— Hosted United States National Championships in Longview, TX

*35 Championships
*Guest of King Hussein of Jordan for the Champion of Champions Race
*Guest of Sultan of Malaysia for the first ever Balloon Flights in Malaysia

DENTISTRY:

1968— Graduated with a Doctorate of Dental Surgery (DDS)
1969— Captain in U.S. Army Dental Corps
1969— Medical Field Service School at Ft. Sam Houston
1969— Madigan General Hospital at Ft. Lewis, WA
1971-2014— Gregg Dental Society
1971-2014— East Texas Dental Society
1971-Present— Life Member of Texas Dental Association
1971-Present— Life Member of American Dental Association
1972-1982— Quest Dental Study Group
1978-Present— American Academy of Implant Dentistry member
1984-Present— Emeritus Fellow of Academy of General Dentistry
2013— www.todaysdentist.org: an academic and general knowledge blog written by Bussey



Bill Bussey and Bruce Bussey in the Stroh's and Schlitz balloons.



Bussey's 2nd Balloon "Wildfire".



Inflating balloons underground at Marvel Cave Glow competition.



The logo for www.todaysdentist.org, Bussey's blog about dentistry.

FIXED WING AVIATION:

1969— 1st fixed wing solo flight on May 4
Commercial Rating
Instrument Rating
Airplane Single Engine
Airplane Multi-Engine

BALLOON ACHIEVEMENTS:

1977— 1st Solo Balloon Flight on July 31
1980— Originator of the Balloon Glow
2016— Achieved 40 Years of Experience and 3,400 hours
Flown 59 Different Balloons
Commercial Rating for Balloons
FAA Examiner
Safety Seminar Instructor
Level VIII Pilot Achievement Award
Distinguished Aeronaut
U.S. National Championship Safety Officer
U.S. National Championship Assistant Champion Director
Championship Director for 22 Events
Organizer of The Great Texas Balloon Race

ADVENTURES:

5 trips, 4 successful summits to Mount Rainier
Climbed many Colorado Fourteeners
Summited the Grand Tetons
1992-2010— Racing Achievements with son Kelly Including:
Instructed racing at 24 Different NASCAR tracks across the nation
Member of Team Texas High Performance Driving
Member of the California Racing Experience
Member of Skip Barber Racing Adventure
Member of Dale Jarrett Racing Adventure
Member of The Racing Experience
Driven 68 Different Race Cars including Winston Cup, Sprint
Cup, Busch, Nationwide, Trucks Craftsman, Camping
World, and Formula 4

Boating
Hunting
Mountain Climbing
Snow Skiing
SCUBA Diving
Harley Davidson



Bussey with a Piper Twin Seneca in 2010.



Bussey on the summit of Mt. Rainier.



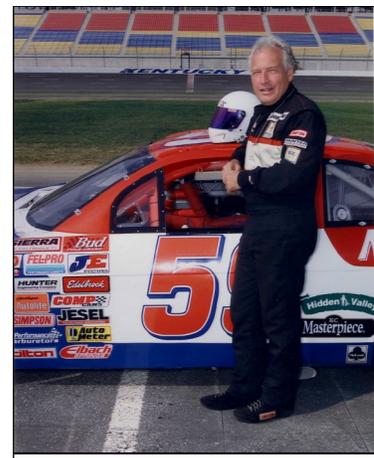
Bussey's son Zachary on the summit of Mt. Rainier.



Bill and Bruce Bussey fishing.



Bussey at Kansas Speedway 2008.



Bussey at Kentucky Speedway 2006.