



# National Balloon Museum

## Hall of Fame Nomination Form

First Name: Raymond Last Name: Johnson

Nationality: USA

Date and place of Birth: (Year/Month/Day): 1925

Year and place of Death (Year/Month/Day): \_\_\_\_\_

### Short Biography (250 words):

His entry into hot air ballooning was a charter member of the Chicagoland Balloon Club. Prior aeronautical experience was as a Commercial Pilot with Airplane & Glider ratings. The Club acquired a new Piccard AX-6 Balloon in which I received my balloon rating in October 1975. Subsequently, 3 of us chartered "Balloons & Things" and purchased a Barnes AX-7.

Attended the National Championships at Indianola, IA from 1975-1990 as a non-competitive pilot. Participated as a competitor in upper mid-west competitions until 1995 when he moved to Northern Arizona. Several trips to participate in the Barnes Balloon factory related events as well as the Albuquerque Fiesta.

After serving in the Army Air Corps during World War II, he took up a 34-year career (1960-1994) in Chicago as manager of the local office of the Illinois Division of Aeronautics. In that capacity, he worked with the Illinois Wing of the Civil Air Patrol and developed a plan to help teachers introduce aviation in public schools. In 1965, he organized the first CAP Cadet Flight Encampment, which has continued annually ever since and is now named the Raymond J. Johnson Flight Encampment

To date it's estimated 1,800 CAP Cadets & 142 Swiss International Air Cadet Exchange students have earned their FAA solo certificates at this annual activity.) IL State and Civil Air Patrol officials made several visits to the encampment and we assisted both organizations to accept ballooning as a responsible air sport activity. The Illinois Aeronautics Agency subsequently began to sponsor/support balloon safety seminars....the CAP Headquarters endorsed the acquisition of some 40+ balloons for Cadet Orientation and training nationally.

### BFA Service

Served with the Events Committee (1979-1983) and was the principal designer of the Pilot Achievement Award Program. It was adopted by BFA Board in 1982 to encourage the non-competitive pilots to enhance their knowledge and flight activity.

During 1979-1989 served on the staff of several World & North American Championships at Battle Creek, MI & Barrie, Canada.

Ray was the 1988 International Jury Member, of the Gordon Bennett Gas Balloon Race. He accompanied the Events Committee Chairman to France in 1983 to clarify the organization, rules and site inspection for the US team participation in the 1983 World Hot Air Balloon Championship.

Organized, participated and supported numerous safety and operations seminars/courses. (Note: beyond the obvious safety, operational and landowner issues, the negative publicity given to accidents by the media was a serious threat to the future of the sport.)

He actively participated in discussions with the aviation insurance industry and made presentations in 1984 & 1985 on ballooning before the National Association of State Aviation Official's Board and Annual Conference. Also gave presentations to the NAA Executive Committee and Board.

Served as chairman of NAA's Aviation Education Committee and as president of the Education Commission of the Federation Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), Mr. Johnson devoted himself to promoting aviation through numerous organizations both in the United States and elsewhere

Ray served as president of the Balloon Federation of America, where he designed the Pilot Achievement program to encourage members to upgrade their piloting skills. He presently sits on the board of the Soaring Society of America. He has also written extensively about aviation, serving as general editor of the Illustrated Encyclopedia of Aviation & Space and as aerospace editor of the Young People's Science Encyclopedia

#### **PAST BFA President**

#### **Achievements, honors and awards:**

- 1982 Master Pilot Achievement Award
- 1987 FAI Paul Tissandier Diploma
- 1994 NAA Frank G Brewer Award
- NAA Companion of Honor Certificate
- BFA Presidents Award

**Please send this form to the BFA Hall of Fame Selection Committee.**

**Submitted by Debbie Spaeth, Comments by Jim Winker: August 11, 2008**