



Jim Thompson

Notable – BFA President, Shields Trauger Award, Contributions

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Involved in Ballooning since 1975. Started as crew person for son Jeff. Obtained his private balloon pilots license and his commercial license in 1980. Served as President of the Iowa Balloonists Association, President of National Balloon Championship Inc. and President and three term Board Member of the Balloon Federation of America. Served as the National Aeronautic Association representative on the BFA Board from the year 2000 through 2013. Served as the Chair of the BFA Competition Committee from 2000 to 2006 and was a member of Board of the Hot Air Competition Division at the time it was formed. Received the BFA President's award in 2000 and 2013 and was presented a Certificate of Gratitude from the Federation Aeronautique Internationale for his activities as an Observer for International gas balloon events. Is rated at Level 8 in the BFA Pilot Achievement Program, the highest achievement possible.

In 2007, was presented the Shields Trauger Award for his service to the Balloon Federation of America. This is the highest award presented by the BFA.

Along with wife Connie, were selected as Iowa Balloonists of the Year in 1996. Organized, along with wife Connie, three Iowa Balloonist Association BFA Sanctioned Safety Seminars and has presented many topics at various seminars.

Has competed in the BFA National Hot Air Balloon Championships since 1980 and has been a top ten finisher six times; was the BFA National Competitive Points Leader 1988. Has competed in four North American Hot Air Balloon Championships:

- 1986 - Barrie, Ontario, Canada
- 1988 - St. Jean, Sur Richelieu, Canada
- 1990 - San Antonio, Texas
- 1992 - Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Was on the United States Team for two World Hot Air Balloon Championships:

- 1989 - Saga, Japan
- 1991 - St. Jean, Sur Richelieu, Canada

Finished first in 1991, sixth in 1993, eighth in 2001 and third in 2004 at the National Balloon Classic in Indianola. Was the Iowa Balloon Association 1994, 1999 and 2004 Hot Air Balloon Champion and the Balloon Federation of America 1995 and 1996 Iowa Hot Air Balloon Champion. Winner of many local and National Balloon Events, including: Indianola National Balloon Classic, Altoona Balloona Fest, Ottumwa Pro Balloon Race, Creston Annual SW Iowa Balloon Race, Mason City Balloons and Tunes, Great Plains Balloon Race, Corn Palace Balloon Race, Quad City Balloon Race, Great Pershing Balloon Derby, My Waterloo Days Balloon Event,

Chagrin Falls Blossom Time Balloon Race, Riverton Rendezvous Balloon Rally, Dubuque Balloon Race, Quad City Balloon Race, Great Galena Balloon Race, among others.

Has served as an observer and official for many hot air and gas balloon races, including six Coupe de Gordon Bennett races and two World Gas Balloon Championships. Was Chief Observer for the 1999 Albuquerque Coupe de Gordon Bennett race. Was Assistant Balloonmeister in 1995, Balloonmeister in 1996 and 1997 and Safety Officer in 2000, 2001 and 2002 for the National Balloon Classic in Indianola, Iowa. Served as the Balloonmeister for the 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2014 Great Pershing Balloon Derby in Brookfield, Missouri.

Most Interesting Flights: Flew in a gas balloon with pilot Bucky Brown and co-pilot David Harwell in June 2002. Launched at 9:15 P.M. from Helen, Georgia. Flew northwest near Brasstown Bald, at 4,784 feet, the highest mountain peak in Georgia, then over North Carolina and Tennessee. Performed contour flying over pastures and landings near Russell Springs, Kentucky. The flight lasted about 12 hours and covered about 200 miles. Received logbook endorsement by Bucky for a gas rating. In 2012, along with son Jon, made two flights from the Stratosphere Bowl in the Black Hills of South Dakota.