

ED YOST MASTER PILOT AWARD
Balloon Federation of America Award Program

APPLICANT:

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PERSON MAKING THE SUBMISSION:

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BALLOONING BACKGROUND:

One of Albuquerque's pioneer balloonists, Tom "Doc" McConnell was involved with the first World Championships in 1973, obtaining his commercial pilot rating in July 1973. As the owner and pilot of the Zia balloon, the yellow balloon with red zia symbol NM state flagship, he has been traditionally one of the first balloons to launch during Fiesta, generally with a VIP guest. His famous balloon now belongs to son Tom II.

AIBF INVOLVEMENT/MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS:

Tom has served on the Board of Directors since 1979 and as President in 1991-92. His most important work is the innumerable hours he spends each year as a volunteer helping to make Balloon Fiesta successful. He was Chair of the Calendar Committee for eight years and has been a member of the Heritage Committee since its inception. Much of Tom's work has been in the thankless activities related to finances, by-laws, staff evaluation, and strategic planning. While these are not the jobs that awe spectators, they are essential for the overall sound operations of Balloon Fiesta and have resulted in a professionally run organization. A physician educator by profession, Tom has made significant contributions in areas of pilot and crew education, having made about 75 presentations on balloon safety issues, culminating in the book "Balloon Safety Seminars." He has written several articles for the AIBF annual programs, and is co-editor of the official history book "The World Comes to Albuquerque - The Dream Takes Flight" published to celebrate the 40th Balloon Fiesta.

This year will mark Toms' 40th year flying the Zia hot air balloon. He is one of Albuquerque's earliest balloon pilots, part of the second "class" of balloon pilots trained through the Albuquerque Aerostat Ascension Association (AAAA) in 1973.

Tom was the second President of AAAA in 1974. He has served on the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta Board of Directors since 1979 and was President of the Board in 1992. Tom McConnell has been actively participating in balloon safety seminars since 1979.

HONORS INCLUDE:

- The Snowmass Trophy Sid Cutter Award
- AIBF Heritage Pin
- Balloon Fiesta Hall of Fame Thomas McConnell, MD 1995

ACHIEVEMENTS:

Author: *Balloon Safety Seminars*: "Balloon Safety Seminars is not light bedside reading. It is a compilation of seminar subjects and accident reconstructions all with one common theme, safety. It is not a book to be read in the common sense, i.e., from front to back cover. Instead it is, like its author, an educational resource. Pick a subject of interest, find the chapter that discusses it, then read and learn. ... any balloon club or other group of aeronauts could easily use this guide to create a quality safety seminar.

Co-Author: *The World Comes to Albuquerque*: The story behind all your favorite Balloon Fiesta events: the Balloon Glow, the Special Shapes Rodeo, the Dawn Patrol, the America's Challenge, and more! Hundreds of stunning color photographs of Balloon Fiestas past and present! From Albuquerque's very first balloon flight in 1882, to the present day, *The World Comes to Albuquerque*.