

Alan Blount

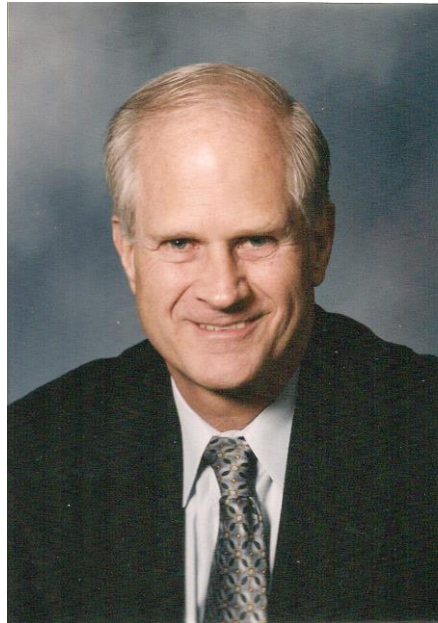
Inducted into the US Ballooning Hall of Fame

July 29, 2018

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



Alan throwing baggie from
Sarah's Skylight balloon in 1993
at Wisconsin Dells



Alan Blount: hot air balloon pilot,
family man, and realtor



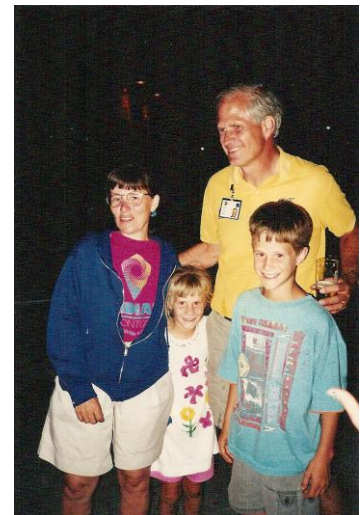
The Kinsinger Trophy awarded to
Alan in 1993



Director of Mission Control in St.
Louis for two Solo Spirit attempts
For Steve Fossett in 1997



Solo Spirit launching in St. I



1993 World's in Luxembourg



1993 U.S. World Team with families celebrating in
Luxembourg



A Dutch observer had Alan wear the hat
and hold the FAI card from a
distinguished aeronaut in 1918. He said
he would only let a World Champion
hold the card.

Alan Blount



*Alan was a U.S. Coast Guard
Auxiliary member.*

Alan Blount was born on September 30, 1946, in the Beverly area of Chicago, Illinois. Alan attended Ripon College in Wisconsin, but was interrupted by the Vietnam War and joined the U.S. Coast Guard. He served four years, including two years at the Loran Station in Estartit, Spain. After completing his honorable service, he received a B.A. in English from Northern Illinois University. Upon graduation he joined his brother and father as a partner and broker in the L. T. Blount Realtors, located in Palos Park, Illinois.

A highly successful Realtor, Alan received numerous awards and accolades for innovation and sales. He was a well-known and highly respected figure within the community, both as a professional and for his participation in numerous community organizations. He served on the local school board (Palos District 118) and Palos Historical Board for 18 years. He was a District Staff Officer and Career Counselor for the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 4 states and a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. Among his many personal interests and hobbies, including his dynamic tuba playing, his heart was really in hot air ballooning. Alan received his Commercial Pilot's License on October 30, 1974.



Alan playing his tuba

Although ballooning started out as a hobby, when a fellow pilot recommended competition, it quickly became a passion. His first race was the 1978 Wisconsin Dells Balloon Rally, and thereafter Alan was hooked on competing almost exclusively. As a method for testing and continually looking for ways to improve his abilities as a pilot, it fed an innate competitive spirit. Throughout his competitive career, Alan participated in, and won, many local and regional competitions, attending numerous national and international level competitions.

Ballooning was most importantly a family activity for Alan, his wife, Char, and his two children, Trevor and Sarah, who grew up as part of the crew. Alan said "He wouldn't have stuck with ballooning unless it was a family sport". The family traveled wherever Alan competed, including large areas of the U.S., visiting Canada, Europe, and Asia several times as well. These experiences were an enriching feature for both Trevor and Sarah, who became exceptionally close to their dad as a result.

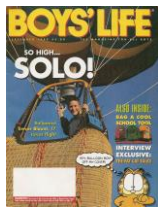
In 1985 an accident occurred, the results of which plagued him physically for the rest of his life. In the World Championship in Battle Creek, Michigan, another balloon plunged through the top of Alan's balloon, causing it to collapse and rapidly descend over a 1,000 feet. His miraculous recovery took nearly a year, and throughout, Alan displayed his characteristic determination to overcome obstacles. Tom Sheppard, Championship Director, said "What it (the accident) does is reflect on the skill and professionalism of the pilot (Blount), who had the presence of mind and coolness on the way to the ground to clear his lines (of propane) so there was no chance of a fire. He showed tremendous professionalism in a dire emergency". Robert E. Kinsinger wrote "To your everlasting credit you managed to turn a possible set-back to public image of ballooning into a positive review of the relative safety of ballooning and the focus we all try to put on safety.

Your emphasis on the joys of this family sport, at a time of your own personal suffering, is a great credit to you and your family. Naturally, we are all in awe of your handling of the accident itself”.

While recuperating from the accident, Alan decided the accident would not define his life, and set goals to fly and compete at the highest levels again. Good friend and former student, Allen Yost, took Alan on his first balloon flight a year later. Alan started competing again later that year. In 1993 he achieved a long desired goal to win a World Championship, doing so in Luxembourg. It was a pinnacle of a lifetime of competition and contribution to the sport, and a triumph over a near fatal balloon accident.

Over the course of his involvement in ballooning, and for substantial achievements within the sport, he received the Montgolfier Diploma for “BEST SUPPORTING PERFORMANCE OF A HOT AIR BALLOONIST” (Highest international ballooning award), the “National Certificate of Honor Award” from the National Aeronautics Association (NAA) at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. (Highest NAA award for balloonists), and the Shields Trauger Award for his service to Ballooning (Highest national ballooning award).

Alan was also heavily interested and involved in the record breaking circumnavigation attempts, and in 1988, served as Crew Chief for John Petrehn’s attempt from Argentina. In 1997 & 1998, Alan performed as Steve Fossett’s Director of Mission Control in St. Louis for two “Solo Spirit” world circumnavigation attempts; and in 1998 at the Operation Center in Morocco for Steve Fossett, Richard Branson and Per Lindstrand’s ICO Global circumnavigation attempt.



*Trevor on the cover
of Boys' Life*

Both of Alan’s children were influenced by his love for Ballooning and Competition. Trevor and Sarah both are licensed pilots. In 2013, Trevor attended his first U.S. National Championship, placed 11th and was named Rookie of the Year.

Alan served in many capacities within the ballooning community, among them, Great Lakes Region representative on the Balloon Federation of America (BFA) Board, served two terms as the President of the BFA, Board Liaison to the BFA Events Committee and Competition Division Chairman of the BFA. As Jury Member for many international competitions and attending CIA meetings as Chairman of Competitors Sub-Committee (CSC), Alan reveled in the opportunity to travel all over the world and influence the sport in a positive way.

Alan passed away on January 10, 2012. Alan always believed the ballooning community was an extended part of his family. He was a man who succeeded in his desire to always be an expert and successful within his field; as a Realtor, a hot air balloon pilot and as a family man. He left a legacy through his volunteerism to the Ballooning community, and as a lifelong supporter of ballooning’s competitive efforts, competitive spirit and safe flying practices.

Ballooning:

Licensed: October 30, 1974

Rating: Commercial

Total hours PIC in Hot Air Balloons: 2,200

Total number of students fully licensed: 9

BFA Membership: Continuous since 1977, LIFE MEMBER since 1983

BFA Pilot Achievement Award Program: Level 7

Dealer for the Balloon Works: 1977 -2002

Distributor/Dealer for Ultra Magic: 2002 – 2009

BFA related activities:

August, 1980 to August, 1983

*Board Member, Great Lakes Region

August, 1981 to August, 1983

*BFA President (2 terms)

1979 to 1985

*Served either a committee member / BFA Board Liaison to BFA Events Committee, including rules subcommittee

1981

*Fifth Annual Midwest Hot Air Balloon Safety Seminar (Speaker: Competitive Flying)

1982

*Sixth Annual Midwest Hot Air Balloon Safety Seminar (Speaker: The Pleasure and Benefits of Competition Flying)

1982 to 1983

*Wrote the first modern comprehensive BFA Board Operating Manual with job descriptions and guidelines

1982 to 1986

*BFA accident investigator, Great Lakes Region

* Helped implement the purchase of the first Directors and Officers insurance policy for the BFA

* Helped get the BFA Pilot Achievement Award Program completed, approved and activated



1983 Nationals

BFA COMPETITION DIVISION related activities:

1987 (April)

*Elected board member (Pilot Board Member, Great Lakes Region) of newly formed BFA Competition Division

April, 1987 to November, 1989

*President, BFA CD

1987 to 1990

*wrote BFA CD operating manual with descriptions and responsibilities of BFA CD committees

NATIONAL and INTERNATIONAL AWARDS/ HONORS:

1982

- *Received special Certificate of Recognition from Illinois Division of Aeronautics Robert Donahue, Director

1990

- *Received the Shields Trauger Award for service to Ballooning. (Highest National Balloon Award).



Receiving the "National Certificate of Honor Award"

1994

- *Received the National Certificate of Honor Award from the National Aeronautics Association (NAA) at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington DC. (Highest NAA award for balloonists)
- *Designated a Level II Jury member for international FAI Category I events
- *Received the Montgolfier Award for significant flight. (Highest International Ballooning Award).

2012 World Championship in Battle Creek, Michigan

- *Organizers dedicated the 20th FAI World Championship to Alan. "You should know that this sentiment has 100 percent support of the World's Committee" said Andrew Baird, BFA President.

OTHER BALLOON RELATED ACTIVITIES:

March, 1988

- *Served as Crew Chief for "Project Share", John Petrehn's World Circumnavigation Record setting attempt from Mendoza, Argentina

9th Hot Air Balloon World Championship, Saga, Japan

- *Crew Chief for Harold Graves, WI January, 1996

- *Served as member of Steve Fossett's "Solo Spirit" Loyola Chicago tracking team for world circumnavigation attempt from St. Louis.

January, 1997

- *Served as Steve Fossett's Director of Mission Control in St. Louis for "Solo Spirit" world circumnavigation attempt from St. Louis.

- * Jury President for 1997 Gordon Bennett Gas Balloon Race, Warsteiner, Germany

August, 1998

- *Served as Steve Fossett's Director of Mission Control in St. Louis for "Solo Spirit" world circumnavigation attempt from Mendoza, Argentina

October 1998 through December 1998

- *Served in London England Ops Centre in Morocco for ICO Global circumnavigation attempt. Pilots: Steve Fossett, Richard Branson and Per Lindstrand

2001

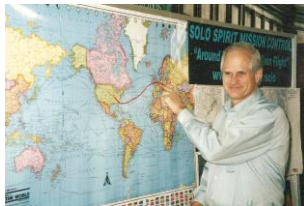
- *World Air Games in Seville, Spain, Jury Member

2003

- *Budapest CIA meeting. Intermediate Level Juror on CIA Jury List



Saga, 1989



Solo Spirit Command Operations

2004

*Debrecen, Hungary CIA meeting. CSC Committee Chairman

2005

*Lausanne, Switzerland – Chairman of Competitors Sub-Committee (CSC) Member of the STATUES, BY-LAWS & SC Working Group

2006

*Attended CIA meeting in Dmitrov, Russia. Member of the CIA EDS Sub- Committee (Event Development Services)

2007

*Luxembourg FAI Ballooning Commission meeting

*Brussels, Belgium, Gas Balloon World Championship, Jury Member

*First Gas Balloon Flight from Germany to Austria, with Cheri White and Mark Sullivan

2008

*World Honda Tochigi Hot Air Balloon Championship, Jury Chairman

*Salzburg, Austria, CIA Meeting, CSC Chairman

2009

*European Championships, France, Jury Member



First gas balloon flight

In 1986 – The Balloonworks announced “The availability of the ‘Blount Window’, a semi-transparent port in the valve and/or upper panels of the envelope which allows a pilot to spot other balloons directly above. Named in honor of our friend and good pilot Alan Blount, this device gives you upward vision through that 55 foot umbrella which is over your head. Ends forever the feverish hope that ‘somebody up there likes me!’”

COMPETITIONS:

1978

*Aurorafest, Aurora, IL (4th place)

*U.S. Nationals Hot Air Balloon Championship, Indianola, IA (First Nationals attended)

1979

*Wisconsin Dells Balloon Race, WI (4th place)

*North Judson, IN (1st place)

*Chicago Tribune Charities Star Fest (1st place)

*Balloonmeister for the 1st Annual Hot Air Balloon Rally, Frankfort, IL

*U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championship, Indianola, IA

*Wings Over Keokuk, IA (2nd place).

1980

*U.S. Nationals Hot Air Balloon Championship, Indianola, IA (2nd place)

*Wings Over Keokuk, IA (3rd place)



Using a compass

1981

- *Wisconsin Dells Balloon Race, WI (4th place)
- *Fifth World Championship in Battle Creek, MI (5th place)
- *Aurorafest, Aurora, IL (1st place)
- *The Great Green Bay Race, WI (4th place)
- *Alpine Valley Oktoberfest, WI (2nd place)

1982

- *Festival Aerostatico de la Ciudad de MEXICO, Mexico City, Mexico Participant.
Invitation only and sponsored by Government.
- *Rocvale Children's Home Balloon rally (1st place)
- *WMRO, 1280 Radio Balloon Rally (3rd place)

1983

- *North American Hot Air Balloon Challenge Cup, Battle Creek, MI
- *U.S. Nationals Hot Air Balloon Championship (9th place)

1984

- *Calgary Stampede Race, Canada (1st place – First American to win this race)
- *U.S. Nationals Hot Air Balloon Championship (9th place)

1985

- *Lake Geneva Race, IL (1st place)
- *Molson Canadian High Flying Weekend (1st place)
- *World Hot Air Balloon Championship, Battle Creek, MI
- *Fall Festival of Flight, Morris, IL BALLOONMEISTER

1986

- *Midwest Balloon Safety Seminar. Tom Sheppard and Alan Blount, Speakers Balloon
Accident Analysis
- *Molson Canadian North American Hot Air Balloon Championship (9th place)
- *Rocvale Children's Home Balloon Rally (1st place)
- *Fall Festival of Flight, Morris, IL (5th place) And BALLOONMEISTER

1987

- *McGregor Balloon Rally, Iowa (1st place)
- *Rocvale Children's Home Balloon Rally (4th place)

1988

- *XV WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES/ Kodak Balloon Festival Calgary, Canada.
(4th place out of 127 pilots)
- *Kodak Great American Balloonfest – 3 city tour/10 days: Lisle, IL, Kansas City and St.
Louis, MO
(3rd place)

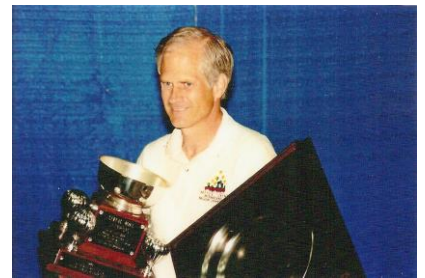
*Rocvale Children's Home Balloon Rally, Rockford, IL (1st place)

1989

- *Midwest Balloon Safety Seminar, IL. Alan Blount, Speaker on Crewing and Preparation for Major Flight
- *BFACD Illinois Champion
- *Oldsmobile Balloon Classic Illinois, Danville, IL (5th place)
- *Battle Creek International Balloon Championship (2nd place)
- *U.S. Nationals Hot Air Balloon Championship, Baton Rouge, Louisiana (2nd place)
- *McGregor Balloon Rally, IA (1st place)
- *Morris Fall Festival of Flight (1st place). Also BALLOONMEISTER.

1990

- *Battle Creek International Balloon Championship, MI (1st place)
- *U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championship, Baton Rouge. (8th place)
- *Rocvale Children's Home Balloon Rally (5th place)
- *North American Championship, San Antonio, TX
- *Stouffer Emerald Resort Hot Air Balloon and Polo Festival, Palm Springs, CA
- *Morris Fall Festival of Flight, Morris, IL (1st place)



Battle Creek Championship Trophy

1991

- *Oldsmobile Balloon Classic Illinois (9th place)
- *BFACD Illinois State Champion
- *U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championship (4th place)
- *Saint-Jean-Sur-Richelieu Hot Air Balloon World Championship, Quebec, Canada (8th place)
- *Rocvale Children's Home Balloon Rally, Rockford, IL (1st place)

1992

- *Battle Creek International Balloon Championship (8th place)
- *Great Lakes Regional (3rd place)
- *U. S. National Hot Air Balloon Championship, Middletown, OH (9th place)

1993

- *18th Annual Great Wisconsin Dells Balloon Rally (2nd place)
- *Oldsmobile Balloon Classic Illinois, Danville, IL (5th place)
- *Battle Creek International Balloon Championship, MI (3rd place)
- *11th Hot Air Balloon World Championship, Luxembourg (1st PLACE)

1994

- *Heinen's Blossom Time Festival, Chagrin Falls, OH (7th place)
- *Battle Creek International Balloon Championship, MI (3rd place)
- *US. National Hot Air Balloon Championship, Middletown, OH (5th place)
- *Lincoln Art and Balloon Festival, Lincoln, IL (2nd place)

- *Rocvale Children's Home Balloon Rally (1st place)
- *BFACD Illinois State Champion

1995

- *12th World Hot Air Balloon Championship, Battle Creek, MI (6^h place)
- *Summerfest Heat, Great Lakes Regional Balloon Championship, Muncie, IN (2nd place)
- *BFACD Illinois State Champion

1996

- *Heinen's Blossom Time Balloon Rally, Chagrin Falls, OH (1st place)
- *World Balloon Invitation of Battle Creek, MI (3rd place)
- *BFACD Illinois State Champion

1997

- *BFACD Illinois State Champion

1998

- *U.S. Team Nationals, Battle Creek, MI (Team members Alan Blount, Capt., Gary Britton and Mike Murphy. (2nd place)

2000

- *Holiday Balloonfest, Battle Creek, MI (3rd place)



Battle Creek and Tony the Tiger

2001

- *U.S. Team Nationals, Battle Creek, MI (Team members Alan Blount, Capt., Harold Graves and Peter Fay)

2002

- *U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championship (4th place)
- *U.S Team Nationals (3rd place)

2004

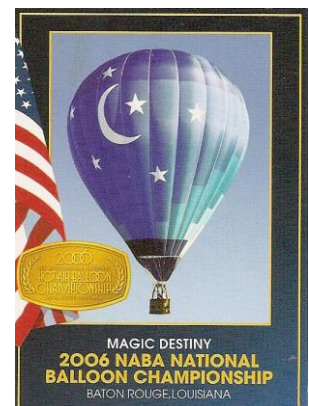
- *World Hot Air Balloon Championships, Mildura, Australia

2006

- *NABA National Balloon Championship, Baton Rouge, LA

2008

- *Debrief at Hot Air Balloon Honda Grand Prix, Tochigi, Japan



2009

- *BFACD Illinois State Champion

2012

- *Honored by the Holiday Balloonfest at Battle Creek



*Alan's family at the 2012 World Champion
(Tom Cooper, Sarah Blount, Trevor Blount, Char Blount, Andy Baird-BFA President, AJ Blount and Jessa Blount)*

