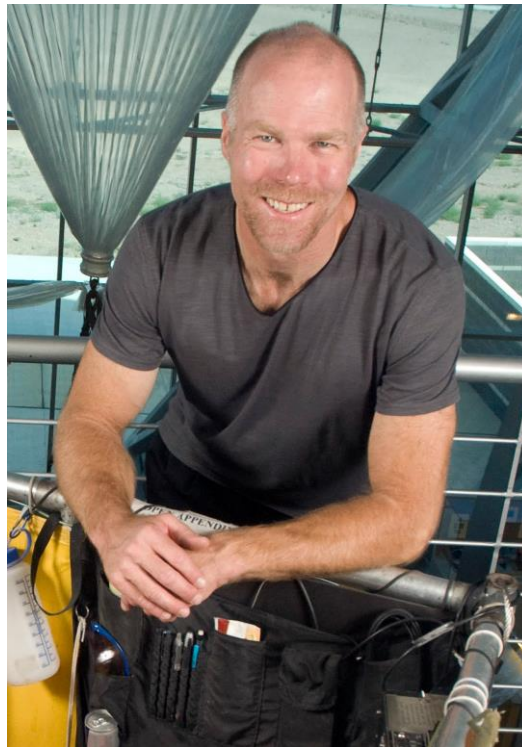




**FÉDÉRATION AÉRONAUTIQUE  
INTERNATIONALE  
Ballooning Commission**

**Hall of Fame Nomination**

**Richard Abruzzo**



Nationality: USA

Date and place of Birth: 1963/May/1964

Year and place of Death: 2010/September/29

Early on, Richard's passion was less ballooning than it was skiing. As a member of the University of New Mexico ski team he was a four-year letter winner, a four-year NCAA academic All-American, a three-time Western Athletic Conference scholar athlete, and a NCAA championship participant as a freshman and top-20 finisher in the slalom and giant slalom in the NCAA final. He was really good at going really fast downhill. Along the way Richard earned his hot-air balloon license and dabbled in ballooning, but his high adventure career began as a casual interest until he was asked to co-pilot with Troy Bradley in the Chrysler Transatlantic Challenge. It was the beginning of a stellar round of ballooning feats in both

gas and hot air balloons. With Peak Express, his hot-air balloon promoting his family businesses (the Sandia Peak Tram and Sandia and Santa Fe Ski Areas).

Richard was captivated on the world of adventure ballooning. He was a high achiever who set many world records for distance and duration, as well as a focused competitor who won two Balloon Fiesta key grab events. Richard is the only five-time winner of the America's Challenge gas balloon race and won the Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett in 2004

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

#### **Honors:**

1992 First flight from North America to Africa, Absolute Duration Record for Balloons (previously held by Double Eagle II and Richard's father Ben Abruzzo), Longest Distance Award in the Chrysler Transatlantic Balloon Race, 24 World Records for Distance, Duration and Altitude for Roziere Balloons

- 1994 1st Place, National Gas Balloon Championship, St. Louis, Missouri
- 1994 3rd Place, U.S. Gordon Bennett Qualifier, Greeley, Colorado
- 1995 1st Place, America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 1996 2nd Place, National Gas Balloon Race, St. Louis, Missouri
- 1996 Won a new car in the Key Grab at the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta
- 1997 1st Place, America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 1998 3rd Place, America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 1999 1st Place, RE/MAX Cup National Gas Balloon Race, Denver, Colorado
- 2000 2nd Place, Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett, Saint Hubert, Belgium
- 2000 2nd Place, America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 2001 2nd Place, America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 2001 Solo Flight from Albuquerque, New Mexico to Crawfordville, Georgia, World Duration Record for AA-6 (previously held by Ben Abruzzo), 80 hours, 18 Minutes
- 2002 1st Place, America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 2003 First Solo Transcontinental Balloon Flight, San Diego, California to the Georgia Coast, World Distance Record (AA-6/AA-7),
- 2003 2nd Place, Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett, Arc et Senans, France
- 2003 1st Place, America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 2004 1st Place, Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett, Thionville, France
- 2004 1st Place, America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 2005 1st Place 2005 Gordon Bennett in France, Richard and Carol Rymer Davis

#### **Awards:**

- 1992 FAI's De La Vaulx Medal for an Absolute World Record
- 1999 Recipient of the Montgolfier Diploma
- 2001 Recipient of the Harmon Aeronaut Trophy
- 2003 Recipient of the Harmon Aeronaut Trophy
- 2005 Recipient of the Harmon Aeronaut Trophy