PIA Standard Operating Procedure 322 v.4 Attachment A

Parachute Industry Association Publications

August 22, 2026

Parachute & Skydiving awards presented by The Parachute Industry Association (PIA).

The PIA Awards Committee shall recommend nominees for PIA consideration for PIA awards, medals and other special recognition.

PIA Don Beck Memorial Achievement Award

The highest PIA award is often a surprise and may be presented at the International Parachute Symposium. “Don Beck Memorial” was added to the title of the award in 1988.
Eligibility: For parachute or skydiving achievements that have withstood the test of time.
Awarded by:
Parachute Industry Association (PIA).
6499 S. Kings Ranch Road #6-12, Gold Canyon, AZ 85118
480-982-6125; hq@pia.com
http://www.pia.com
Click here for information on the award recipients.

Past Recipients:
1981: Russ Gunby
1982: Ken Coleman
1983: Bill Booth
1984: Bill Ottley
1987: Don Beck (posthumously)
1989: Ted Strong
1990: Dan-San Abbott
1993: Lowell Bachman
1999: Helmet Cloth
2001: Paul Thompson
2003: Elek Puskas
2005: Dan Poynter
2007: Dave DeWolf
2009: Floyd J. Smith, (posthumously)
2010: Col. Joe W. Kittinger, Jr.
2011: Leslie Irvin (posthumously)
2012: Ralph (Rags) Raghanti
2014: Domina Jalbert (posthumously)
2015: Johnny Higgins
2016: Bourdon Forge
2017: Bill Coe
2021: Cliff Schmucker (posthumously)

2025: Ed Vickery

Submission procedures:
Submit form to the chair of the PIA Awards Committee. Click here for downloadable Awards form.

Names selected will be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval. This can be done via e-mail, text or delivered by-hand in writing. The exception would be a member of the Executive Committee whose name might be submitted for an award. That name would be submitted to the balance of the Executive Committee.

Deadline date: None.

PIA Distinguished Leadership Award

PIA's second most prestigious award was created in 2001.
Eligibility: In recognition of individuals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in the parachute industry or the Parachute Industry Association.

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Past Recipients:
2001: Bob Sinclair
2003: Erwin Weuster
2005: Jean Beck
2007: Sandy Reid
2009: Bill Gerrow
2010: Vinny Salatino
2011: Cliff Schmucker
2012: Dori Bachman
2016: Manley Butler
2018: Roger Walker
2019: Jim Crouch
2020: Ed Scott
2021: Randy Ottinger
2022: Elizabeth Johnson
2025: Mike Beck

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Names selected will be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval. This can be done via e-mail, text or delivered by-hand in writing. The exception would be a member of the Executive Committee whose name might be submitted for an award. That name would be submitted to the balance of the Executive Committee.

Deadline date: None

PIA Member of the Year

This award was created by majority vote of the plenary session in 1993.
This award was eliminated by majority vote of the plenary session in 1995.
Re-established in 2003.
Eligibility: Presented to the PIA member who has been instrumental in promoting projects for PIA.
Awarded by:
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Past Recipients:
2003: Mo Gionfriddo
2005: Wendy Plummer Staley
2007: Pat Wilson
2008: Pat Thomas
2010: Karen Dean
2011: Casimer (Cas) Manczuk
2014: Robert Feldman
2018: T.K. Donle
2019: Travis Flint

Submission procedures:
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Names selected will be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval. This can be done via e-mail, text or delivered by-hand in writing. The exception would be a member of the Executive Committee whose name might be submitted for an award. That name would be submitted to the balance of the Executive Committee.

Deadline date: None.

Dave DeWolf Mentor Award

The PIA Mentor Award, established in February of 2016, recognizes people throughout the parachute industry who have contributed to the knowledge base and skill sets of other individuals within the industry by investing in other people through the sharing of their time, knowledge, education and skills over extended periods of time. This investment may have been in a classroom environment, seminars, on-the-job training or on an individual basis. In February of 2020 the award was named after Dave DeWolf.

The Award will be presented to living recipients at a parachute industry event. It could be presented at a regular PIA meeting, the international parachute symposium or other related industry event. Other event locations, for example, might be a USPA event at a local drop-zone or meeting or an International Skydiving Museum event providing prior approval from the hosting organization is obtained. The Award itself will be in the form of an engraved medallion or coin in a presentation

box. Once approved, presentation of the award can be made by any member in good standing of the Parachute Industry Association or any previous recipient of the Award.
To recommend a recipient you must fill out and submit the attached form. The form must be complete and submitted to the Awards Committee of the Parachute Industry Association. The nomination must be accompanied by a completed form from at least two other individuals who support the recommendation, for a total of three nominations minimum. Incomplete forms or submissions received not on the official nomination will be returned.

Submissions can be made at any time. Submissions will be considered at the bi-annual meeting of the PIA Awards Committee. Only submissions received 30 days prior to the meeting date will be considered in that meeting rotation. Submissions received under the 30 day deadline will be pushed to the next meeting rotation. Submissions can be submitted via mail, fax, e-mail or hand delivered at a meeting to the Awards Committee Chair, Co-Chair or the PIA Administrator. (Note: hand delivered nominations would not be considered until the next meeting rotation.)

Selection is made at the discretion of the awards committee. There would be a maximum total of 10 awards per year. If less than 10 awards are presented in one year the balance will not rotate over to the next year. The award is presented to living recipients and will not be presented posthumously unless the recipient passes after the award is approved.
Click here for downloadable Mentor form.

Past Recipients:
2019: Sandy Reid
2019: Melanie Curtis
2021: Derek Thomas
2021: Scott Lazurus
2023: Barbara Magee
2024: Wendy Lekas

Honorary Lifetime PIA Membership

Awarded to a celebrity with a parachute or skydiving connection that has brought attention to the industry. Often awarded to the keynote speaker at the PIA Symposium. First created in 1997 to honor President George H.W. Bush in Houston.
Eligibility:

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Past Recipients:
1997: President George H. W. Bush
1999: Theo Knacke
2001: Col. Joe W. Kittinger, Jr.
2003: Lew Sanborn & Bill Ottley
2005: Dick Rutan

Submission procedures:
Submit form to the chair of the PIA Awards Committee. Click here for downloadable Awards form.
Deadline date: July 1.

Lifetime Advisory PIA Membership

Established in 2015 to recognize members who are retiring or moving on to another industry but still have an interest in keeping up with the activity of the PIA. Also, past members who might have some insight and advice that would lead to the success of the organization. This is an advisory membership and has no voting capacity. This award is accompanied by a plaque.
Eligibility: Can be nominated by any active PIA member with approval made by the Executive Committee.

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Past Recipients:
2015: Bill Gerrow
2019: Trudy McComsey
2021: Mike Turoff
2022: Elizabeth Johnson

PIA Roll of Honor

This award was created at the September 2007 meeting.
The Roll of Honor will be a permanent display at the International Skydiving Museum once the museum is completed. We anticipate the exhibit to be more than just a plaque with the names. A permanent piece of art or statue with the names of Honorees engraved as a permanent record of their service to the organization. The Honorarium is to be $1000.00. The start-up funds set aside will be used to cover the initial cost of the exhibit. Future funds are to be used for the addition of names and as they accumulate to help with the operation of the Headquarters/Museum.
Eligibility: Honorees shall include both civilian and military members who have been active supporters of the organization.

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Honorees:
2007: Jim Bates, Clarke Bourdon, Danny Page and Don Yahrling.
In addition Ian Bellis, Ellen Bussemaker and Richard Charter were included in the initial list. These three names had been submitted prior to the official "naming" of the Honorarium.
2008: Lowell Bachman, Don Beck, Patti Chernis, Shorty Janousek, Allen Levinson, and Joe Smith.

2010: Gary Douris, Joe Andrzejewski, Erwin Weuster
2011: Ted Strong
2012: Howard White
2013: Cliff Schmucker and Mike Truffer
2015: Dori Bachman
2016: Dan Poynter
2017: Lofty Thomas and Paul “Jyro” Martin
2018: Marge Bates
2019: Mike Fury and Dave DeWolf
2021: Mo Gionfriddo, Paul Culliver, Dennis Crocket and Richard Lewis
2022: Catherine (Cathy) Kloess and Tom Noonan
2023: Kenneth Gajda, Col. Joe Kittenger, President George H.W. Bush, Theo Knacke and Bill Ottley
2024: John Sherman
2025: Shawn Conley and Jay Baly
2025: Jean Beck
2026: Dr. Jen Lallo Sharp and Billy Weber.

PIA Officer Plaques

The plaques were created in 1986.
Eligibility: Perpetual plaques shall be awarded to the PIA president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. Each officer shall have his or her plate engraved. Each officer shall pass the perpetual plaque on to his or her successor.
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Past Recipients:
PIA president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer.
Submission procedures:
None. These officers are elected by the membership.
Deadline date: None.

Certificates of Appreciation

Certificates of Appreciation shall be submitted to the Awards Committee Chair on an as needed basis.

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Best Symposium Exhibit (Best Booth Award)

Eligibility:
Exhibitor at the PIA International Parachute Symposium.
Awarded by:
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Past Recipients:
1993: Para Sport Italia
1995: Jump Shack
1997: Rigging Innovations
1999: Parachutes de France
2001: Airtec
2003: Aerodyne Research
2005: Precision Aerodynamics
2007: Sky Systems
2008: CIMSA
2009: Larsen & Brusgaard
2011: Larsen & Brusgaard
2013: Rigging Innovations
Systems Technology
2015: Performance Designs, Inc.
2017: United Parachute Technologies
2019: Performance Designs, Inc.
2023: Performance Designs, Inc.
2025: Flight-1

Submission procedures: Judged by a committee selected by the Symposium Committee Chair and/or their designee.
The winner is announced at the closing symposium banquet.
Deadline date: Last day of the PIA Symposium.