

Recent nomination from Larry Simburger (former student for commercial rating, current repair customer)

Re: Nomination of Mandy Johnson – Balloon Federation of America Maintainers Award

Dear Members of the Awards Committee,

It is my great honor to nominate **Mandy Johnson**, owner and operator of Columbia Balloon Repair, for the **Balloon Federation of America Maintainers Award**. With over three decades of unwavering dedication to the maintenance, service, and safety of hot air balloons, Mandy embodies the highest standards of technical expertise, professional integrity, and commitment to the ballooning community.

Mandy has held an FAA Repairman Certificate (#2450604) since 1991 and has continually advanced her skills through factory training, recurrent seminars, and in-house instruction. Her career began in 1986 at Go Lightly Inc. in Auburn, WA, where she developed a foundation in hot air balloon inspection and repair that has grown into a lifetime of service. Since 1991, she has owned and/or operated first Go Lightly Inc, renamed in 2013 to Columbia BalloonPort, a certified repair station (HT6R599N), where she continues to maintain, inspect, and repair hot air balloons while training others in best practices.

Her credentials reflect both longevity and currency: attendance at Aerostar, Lindstrand, Cameron, and Kubicek manufacturer seminars; ongoing recurrent training; and experience as both an instructor and recognized industry expert. Mandy's influence extends beyond the repair shop—she has presented at national balloon safety seminars, authored articles in *Ballooning* and *Balloon Life* magazines, and organized major safety events for pilots across the Northwest.

Mandy's service has been recognized through multiple honors, including the FAA Seattle FSDO "Instructor of the Year" Award, the "Friends of the FSDO" Award, the Northwest Balloon Association's "Pilot of the Year," and the BFA "Directors Award" for contributions to the sport. She has served in leadership positions within regional ballooning clubs, acted as Secretary for the Balloon Repair and Maintenance Association, and remains a dedicated FFAST Team member promoting safety nationwide.

Her unwavering commitment to precision, safety, and the education of others exemplifies the very purpose of the Maintainers Award. Through decades of technical excellence and community leadership, Mandy has safeguarded the integrity of the ballooning fleet while inspiring a culture of professionalism and care.

For these reasons, I strongly recommend Mandy Johnson for the Balloon Federation of America Maintainers Award. Her qualifications meet and exceed every criterion, and her lifelong dedication to balloon maintenance is both exceptional and inspiring.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Larry Simburger