

## SUGDEN TO BE INDUCTED INTO WYOMING AVIATION HALL OF FAME



Richard G. Sugden, M.D., of Jackson, who played a pivotal role in establishing aviation assisted emergency medical services in the Jackson Hole area, is the 2017 inductee into the Wyoming Aviation Hall of Fame.

An induction ceremony in his honor will be held 6 p.m., Sept. 19 at the Teton Aviation/Warbirds Restaurant at the Driggs, Idaho, airport.

After starting Jackson Hole Air Ambulance in 1980, Sugden served as medical director, trained more than 20 flight nurses and EMTs, and he and other pilots flew more than 1,000 flights without incident. Sugden also served as medical director for Grand Teton National Park for 25 years.

In addition to improving emergency air service in the region, Sugden was heavily involved in a program to encourage youth to enter the aviation industry. As part of the Experimental Aircraft Association Young Eagles program, more than 2,000 people between 8-17 years of age took their first flying lesson. Sugden also established a scholarship to help high-school students earn their private pilot license. Many of those young pilots went on to careers in aviation and the military.

Sugden, who served in the Navy as a flight surgeon, also volunteers for wounded veteran programs, including the Veterans Airlift Command, which provides free air transportation for post-9/11 combat-wounded veterans and their families, and the Honoring Our Veterans program, which offers transportation to Jackson for veterans to enjoy outdoor recreation.

But Sugden has served his community in many other ways as well. In addition to his contributions to aviation, he has practiced family medicine in the region for more than 40 years, delivering more than 1,000 babies.

Despite these efforts, Sugden remains humble about being honored and, saying that what has meant most to him was his wife's recognition of his efforts, saying only, "It's personally rewarding to be able to help others."

Sue Sugden was involved in nominating her husband for the award. The high-school sweethearts were married in 1966 and have two children.

Billy Walker, a retired pilot for Frontier Airlines, put the nomination together with the help of Sue and others, including a little star power. Actor Harrison Ford, who is involved in promoting aviation in young people's lives through the Young Eagles program, wrote a letter supporting Sugden's nomination.

Sugden encourages others to get involved as he has.

"If you're not living on the edge, you're taking up too much space," he said. "Chip in. Win! Win!"

As a pilot, Sugden has logged nearly 11,000 hours of flight time in numerous categories, such as backcountry flying, aerial dog-fighting, formation flying and air racing. He also has restored many vintage military aircraft that he shows at airshows across the nation.

He took his backcountry pilot experience with the Wyoming-built Aviat Husky to Kenya and trained wildlife service pilots. He also donated a new Husky to the service to assist in efforts to reduce elephant and rhinoceros poaching.

Sugden is a licensed FAA Class I, II and III medical examiner. He is the author of aviation safety articles and has presented to the Flying Physicians Association. He has served on many boards, including the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum Board of Directors, Naval Aviation Museum Foundation, EAA Warbirds

and the Bird Aviation and Invention Museum Board of Advisors. He also has served on numerous local boards, including the Jackson Hole Search and Rescue, Quiet Birdmen Jackson Hangar and the Teton County Experimental Aircraft Association.

Sugden was born in Orinda, California, in 1942, but moved to Jackson Hole in 1947 where the family owned a dude ranch for several years. In high school he began flying and earned his private pilot's license at the age of 16. After graduating from Baylor College of Medicine, he joined the United States Navy as a flight surgeon in 1970, and was the flight surgeon for the Navy's test center and Test Pilot School at Patuxent River, Maryland. He retired from the military in 1975, and he and his family relocated to Jackson where he established his medical practice.

The Wyoming Aviation Hall of Fame is a nonprofit organization operating in conjunction with the Wyoming Aeronautics Commission to identify and select individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the establishment, development and/or advancement of aviation in Wyoming.

For more information, or to nominate an individual for induction, contact board chairman John Waggener at 307-766-2563.