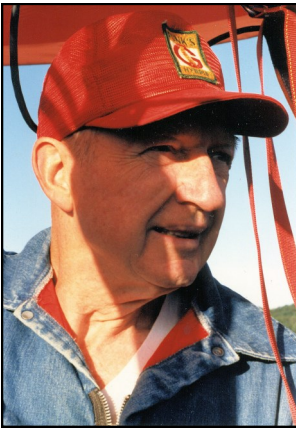


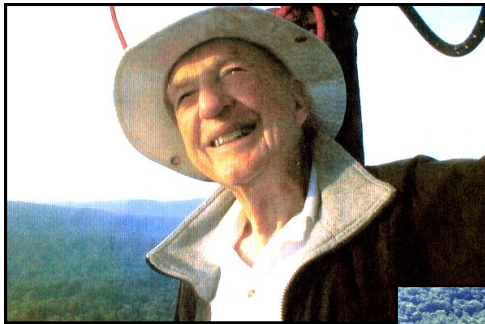
DR. CLAYTON LAY THOMAS

Inducted into the U. S. Ballooning Hall of Fame on July 28, 2013

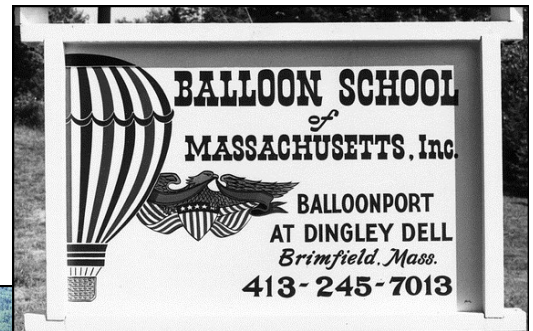
By the Balloon Federation of America at the
National Balloon Museum, Indianola, Iowa



Clayton flying at Indianola



Clayton, happy as can be in the air



Aerial view of Clayton's Dingley Dell
BalloonPort



Clayton flying at 1980
Winter Olympics



Clayton with Montgolfier
Trophy he won in 1983
in France



Flying over the water at
Dingley Dell Balloonport



Relaxing after a flight



Clayton dressed as Santa in his annual
Christmas flight with wife and daughters



Ode to Joy flight 1981



Clayton at age 83 lifts off on his first
hopper flight at Amherst, Massachusetts



Clayton (wearing the hat) landing at
home with his instructors while
receiving his helicopter rating



Making repairs



Clayton & passenger in June of 1973

DR. CLAYTON LAY THOMAS

The Dare-Devil Doctor of Dingley Dell, Brimfield, Massachusetts

Born December 23, 1921

Clayton Thomas was born December 23, 1921 in Metropolis, Illinois. He grew up in Paducah, Kentucky where he was raised by a single mother along with one brother during the Depression. He received his B.S. degree from the University of Kentucky at Lexington in 1944 and his M.D. degree from the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond. He also holds the M.P.H. degree from Harvard University School of Public Health in Boston.

His interest in aviation started in 1943 while in the Navy and in medical school. He was allowed to go to the Richmond VA Air-base and hitch-hike rides on military aircraft. During his military career, he was stationed in China, Guam, Hawaii, and Pensacola, Florida where he was an instructor at the Naval School of Aviation Medicine. He learned to parachute and went on to free fall, which meant leaving the aircraft and being responsible for pulling the ripcord. This was in preparation for writing "Medical Aspects of Sport Parachuting", an article published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

He became interested in sports medicine while he had a football scholarship at the University of Kentucky. This interest continued and he was fortunate in being part of the medical administrative committee of the U.S. Olympic Committee. This involved participation at the Mexico City and Munich Olympics Games. And later he became the balloonmeister for the opening ceremonies at the Winter Olympics at Lake Placid, New York in 1980; and he also worked at the Calgary Olympics in 1984.

Clayton was married December 15, 1950 to Margaret Ann Gellner from Montreal, Canada; who was a stewardess for TWA out of New York. They have 4 children: Robert, Clayton J., Wendy, and Gwynne. All of their children became certified commercial balloon pilots. Their son Robert owns Balloons Unlimited in Middleburg, Virginia and he owns the airport in New Market, Virginia. Son Clayton is an active world-wide competitor with his sail plane, flying out of The Black Forest Soaring Club in Colorado. He is an investment banker in Denver, Colorado. Wendy still manages the balloon repair station for the Balloon School of Massachusetts, and also became a nurse and works as the school nurse for a regional high school. Gwynne is now retired, but has served as Executive VP of Buena Vista Productions, a Disney division. Previously she was awarded a Daytime Emmy while working for Martha Stewart and has been a Senior Producer at Dr. Phil.

Dr. Thomas first became interested in aviation when, standing in a farm field as a small boy, he saw a plane fly overhead, and he immediately asked himself, "how can I get involved in that?". He had his first balloon flight June 29, 1969 With Bob Waligunda. He took up ballooning that same year after a stint of parachuting. Clayton said, "when my wife made me give up parachuting, I took up hot air ballooning". He was trained for hot air ballooning by Bob Waligunda and for gas ballooning by Ed Yost. Clayton was certified as a balloon pilot in 1970. At that time, every balloon pilot was an instructor. The private-commercial distinction came later. His wife Peggy became his ground crew chief and his sons Robert, Clayton Jeffery, and daughters, Wendy and Gwynne became crew members. The family took up residence in an old house which was formerly part of an estate that was once a country resort and inn, which they named Festiniog Farm, named after the Welsh village where Peggy's grandparents were born. Dr. Thomas, Peggy and the 2 girls are shown in the picture to the right with their home is shown in the background. There they established a balloonport and the Balloon School of Massachusetts for training balloon pilots at Dingley Dell at Brimfield, MA, which is named after a fictitious place out of a Charles Dickens novel. The balloon repair station was established in 1980.



Beginning in 1969 in the infancy of modern hot air ballooning, he participated in the development of techniques, which brought hot air ballooning from a risky and impractical aerial endeavor to the beautiful, enjoyable, and safe flying experience that it is today. As an expert in aviation medicine Dr. Thomas has been uncompromising in his approach to flying safety. Through a firm and disciplined approach to instruction of an entire generation of commercial balloon pilots and flight instructors and to the administering of flight check rides, he has aggressively promoted the adoption of techniques and procedures which have advanced the beauty and enjoyment of ballooning while consistently demanding flight safety practices. He developed safety programs and seminars, which advanced and reinforced the lessons he had taught to those who have flown with him and extended his experience, wisdom and knowledge to others. His efforts have resulted in New England having the best ballooning safety record in the U.S., despite it's being one of the most difficult areas in the country for ballooning. He has been a balloonmeister at a number of New England/northeast U. S. balloon rallies and events. Some have even referred to him as the "Father of New England Ballooning".

He demonstrated his capabilities as a world-class aeronaut in 1983, the Bicentennial of Manned Flight, when he won the coveted **Montgolfier Trophy** flying a borrowed balloon over the unfamiliar French countryside. He overwhelmed the competition in that event earning score of 4,586 with the second place pilot receiving a score of only 664.

In addition to his efforts in the development and advancement of lighter-than-air flight, Dr. Thomas served as a U.S. Navy Flight Surgeon and Instructor in the U.S. Naval School of Aviation Medicine; was active in and wrote articles for publication on sport parachuting; holds a fixed wing and helicopter pilots license; and took lessons in flying sailplanes.

Dr. Thomas also became certified as a pilot of gas balloons, in which the lifting gas is helium. This was done in order to be prepared to take long distance and long duration flights. Clayton has piloted balloons in various places in the U.S., as well as Canada, Switzerland, Germany and France.

In 2003 Clayton Thomas was awarded the first annual **Aero Club of New England Massachusetts State Award** in recognition of his significant contributions to the development and advancement of hot air ballooning and ballooning safety in New England and the Northeast United States.

Clayton has logged approximately 1,800 hours as a commercial balloon pilot. As Chief Pilot at the Balloon School he has taken over 7,000 individuals for a balloon ride. He is also qualified as a commercial pilot of helicopters, and as a private pilot of fixed wing aircraft. He retired as the operator of the Balloon School of Massachusetts in 2001 after having licensed 102 students. His daughter Wendy now operates the school.

Clayton has had many adventures during his varied careers. In 1983, after attending a medical convention in Vienna, Austria, he and his wife were on a plane which was hijacked by terrorists on a flight to Paris. After stops in Geneva, Catania, Sicily, and Damascus, the plane was forced down in Teheran. Dr. Thomas is the passenger kneeling on the runway with the armed terrorist behind him pointing a gun at him, in the picture to the right.



Dr. Thomas became known as a High Altitude Physician. He is certified as a specialist in preventive medicine in the subspecialty of aerospace medicine by the American Board of Medical Specialists. For thirty years, he served in various capacities at the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, ending as the visiting scientist in the Department of Population Sciences and International Health. He is a Navy veteran, having trained as a flight surgeon and then instructing at the School of Aviation Medicine at Pensacola. Clayton is President of Balloon School of Mass. He was a FAA designated Lighter-than-Air pilot examiner until he retired in 2011. He holds certifications in Commercial Lighter than air (both hot air and gas), Private. Rotorcraft, helicopter, and Private Pilot for Single Engine Land.

His article, "Parachuting and Skydiving" was published in the 1965 Journal of the American Medical Association.

Biographical Timeline

Medical Career

- 1921 Born December 23, 1921, Metropolis, Illinois
- 1944 B.S. University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky
- 1946 M.D., Medical College of Virginia at Richmond, Virginia
- 1958 M.P.H. Harvard University School of Public Health. Boston, Massachusetts
- 1946 - 47 Intern, Montreal General Hospital. Montreal, Canada
- 1947 - 54 Medical Officer, U.S. Navy (China, Guam, Hawaii, U.S.A.)
- 1950 - 51 Student Flight Surgeon, U.S. Naval School of Aviation Medicine. Pensacola, Florida.
- 1953 - 54 Instructor U.S. Naval School of Aviation Medicine. Pensacola, Florida.
- 1954 - 55 Assistant Resident in Medicine. Salt Lake County General Hospital & U. S. Veterans Administration Hospital. Salt Lake City, Utah
- 1955 - 56 Chief Resident in Medicine, Salt Lake County General Hospital and U. S. Veterans
- 1956 - 57 Clinical Assistant in Medicine.. Second and Fourth Harvard), Medical Services. Boston City Hospital. Research Associate, Mallory Institute of Pathology, Fellow in Gastroenterology. Boston City Hospital, National Cancer Institute, Postdoctoral Trainee at Boston City Hospital
- 1957 - 58 U.S.P.H.S. Trainee, Harvard School of Public Health
- 1958 - 59 Assisted Professor John E. Gordon, Harvard School of Public Health
- 1958 - 69 Medical Director, Tampax Incorporated. Palmer, Massachusetts. He contributed to the design and manufacture of Tampons.
- 1959 - 60 Assisted Associate Professor E. H. Kass, Harvard Medical School.
- 1960 - 66 Deacon, Wilbraham United Church, Wilbraham, Massachusetts
- 1961 - 62 Research Associate, Cornell University Medical School
- 1961- 62 Assistant Attending Obstetrician & Gynecologist, New York Hospital
- 1963 - 68 Member, Elementary School Committee. Wilbraham, Massachusetts
- 1963 - 73 U.S. Olympic Medical & Training Services Committee
- 1965 - 74 Committee on Health Guidance in Sex Education. American School Health Association.
- 1966 - 71 Consultant, Center for Population Studies, Harvard School of Public Health
- 1969 - 83 Vice President Medical Affairs, Tampax Incorporated. Palmer, Massachusetts
- 1971- 92 Consultant on Human Reproduction, Department of Population Sciences, Harvard School of Public Health
- 1983 - 87 Tambrands Incorporated., Palmer, Massachusetts
- 1987 - 94 Director Emeritus Medical Affairs, Tambrands. Inc. Palmer, Massachusetts
- 1992 - 94 Visiting Scientist in the Department of Population and International Health Harvard School of Public Health,

- 1965 - 75 Sports Medicine Committee, Amateur Athletic Union of U.S.A.
- 1967 Fellow, American Public Health Association
- 1968 - 72 Editorial Board, Medicine & Science in Sports and Exercise
- 1969 Member Hampden County Medical Society. Springfield, MA
- 1970 - 78 Committee on Protective Equipment for Sports, American Society for Testing and Materials.
- 1970 - 74 President, Board of Directors, Wing Memorial Hospital Mental Health Clinic, Division of the South Central Massachusetts Mental Health Clinic

Medical Affiliations

- 1957 Special Consultant, Flight Safety Foundation. New York City & Washington, DC
- 1957 Member, Massachusetts Medical Society
- 1959 - 60 Medical Consultant, Parachutes Incorporated, Orange MA
- 1970 President and Chief Pilot, Balloon School of Massachusetts, Inc. Brimfield, MA
- 1971 - 79 Fellow, The Royal Society of Health London, UK
- 1972 Pilot Examiner, Lighter Than Air Free Balloon, Designated by the Federal Aviation Administration
- 1972 Medical Staff Boston Marathon. Boston, MA
- 1973 - 87 Member Board of Health, Brimfield, MA
- 1988 Member Board of Health, Brimfield, MA
- 1974 - 83 President, Population Research Foundation- Boston, MA
- 1974 - 83 Editorial Board, The Physician and Sports Medicine.
- 1975 Associate Fellow,, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- 1975 - 78 Member, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Corporation Visiting Committee for the Medical Department
- 1975 - 82 Section Editor, Medicine & Science in Sports and Exercise
- 1978 - 81 Member U.S. Olympic Committee's Council on Sports Medicine
- 1979 Associate Fellow, American Academy of Physical Education
- 1979 - 82 Treasurer, American College of Sports Medicine
- 1979 Fellow Aerospace Medical Association
- 1985 Fellow, American College of Physicians.
- 1985 - 88 Regent, American College of Preventive Medicine
- 1992 - 98 Board of Trustees, American Social Health Association

Medical Publications

During his medical career Dr. Thomas was the author of numerous writings regarding such topics as Glucose tolerance, Psychosis after childbirth, medical aspects of swimming, sky diving, influence of menstrual protection devices, public health problems on the Olympics, Gastroenteritis of travelers in athletes, Menstruation, Parachuting, "Lift of to Landing", Co-editor for eight editions of Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary, and various writings about the problems of the female athlete competition.

Timeline of Clayton Thomas' Ballooning Activities

Ballooning and Aviation Honors

- 1974 - Certificate of Merit, Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration, Western Region
- 1983 - Winner of the Montgolfier Trophy at Annonay, France at bicentennial event
- 1995 - Certificate of Honor by National Aeronautic Association for significant contribution to the development and enhancement of hot air ballooning and safety and contributions to aviation medicine
- 2003 - Massachusetts State Award , The Aero Club of New England in recognition of his significant contributions to the development and advancement of hot air ballooning and ballooning safety in the New England and the Northeast United States
- 2012 - The Wright Brothers "Master Pilot" Award by Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration
- 2013 - The Ed Yost Master Pilot Award was presented to Dr. Thomas on May 12, 2013 by the Balloon Federation of America



Ballooning Accomplishments

- 1969 - 2011 - Founder and President the Balloon School of Massachusetts and Balloon Port
- 1972 - 2011 - FAA Designated Pilot Examiner
- 1973 - 1975 - Flew at the U. S. National Hot Air Balloon Championships in Indianola, Iowa
- 1980- Balloonmeister and Co-coordinator for the opening ceremonies of the Winter Olympics at Lake Placid. (FAA Designated Examiner certifying more than 40 LTA pilots)
- 1980 - Balloon Repair Station was established
- 1983 - Winner of the Bicentennial of Manned Flight in Annonay, France



Thanks to the following sources for assistance in preparing the above information: the Clayton Thomas family, Jim Winker, Mick Murphy and Balloon Federation of American.