

RICHARD W. BUTLER (2007)

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Growing up in the 1950s when aviation was a highly visible and romantic thing, it was natural that Dick was fascinated with flight. Thus he pursued both a bachelor's and master's degree in aerospace engineering and went to work for Sverdrup Corporation.

In 1967 he discovered soaring at Eagleville, TN and, in 1968, purchased his first sailplane, a K6E. His first competition was at Harris Hill, Elmira -- the first standard class nationals -- where he flew George Moffat's old Standard

Austria to a middle-of-the-pack finish. Next he owned a Libelle which he modified. His first Open Nationals was at Adrian, MI in 1974, flying an ASW-12 and finishing in fourth place. He placed second flying his Glasflugel 604 in 1975 at Hobbs, did not compete in 1976, 1978 and 1981 but placed first in 1977, 1979 and 1980 with the significantly modified 604.



Champion 1977
Caddo Mills, TX



Champion 1979
Minden, NV



With wife Sarah in 1980 at
Hobbs, NM, Glasflugel 604

Dick was selected for the U.S. Team four times between 1976 and 1983 placing 5th in Finland in 1976, twelfth in France in 1978, seventh in West Germany in 1981 and seventh in Hobbs in 1983.

He took a soaring sabbatical between 1984 and 1999 to focus on his career. He had earned an engineering degree at Auburn in 1965 and a masters in aerospace engineering at University of Tennessee Space Institute in 1972. He joined Sverdrup Corporation in 1965, worked his way up the corporate ladder and became president in 1994.

He returned to soaring competition and sailplane modification in 1999 and modified an ASW-22 both structurally and aerodynamically with a new airfoil, 28 meter span, longer fuselage, new empennage and retractable tail wheel. He flew this sailplane to victory in the 2003 Open Nationals. During these years he participated in many competitions (including categories other than Open) winning the Open Nationals again in 2008 at Ephrata, this time flying an ASH 26E. He was on the U.S. Team in 2006 (Sweden, placing 18th flying the ASW 22db) and in 2012 (Uvalde, placing 7th flying the Concordia).

Dick's emphasis in recent years leading up to the World Contest in Uvalde and beyond has been the Concordia. His partners in this endeavor have been the well known aerodynamicists Gerhard Waibel and Loek Bormans. The photo below shows the Concordia on its first landing.



In summary, Dick Butler, also known as DB, has a rare combination of talents: An education and solid knowledge of the engineering and science of low speed aerodynamics, the fabrication skills to implement a very complex and exacting project and a single-minded, no compromises attitude to any endeavor he undertakes.

The above was adapted from an article by Sharron Stemler; the photos from *Soaring* magazine, SoaringCafe.com and the Internet.