

Jacqueline “Jackie” Payne has devoted more than four decades to the advancement of soaring through exceptional service, technical expertise, and leadership at both the national and international levels.

A member of the Soaring Society of America for over 40 years, Jackie has played a central role in shaping the systems and standards that govern badge and record flying in the United States. She began her involvement in 1982 as a crew member and Official Observer, quickly earning a reputation for her deep knowledge of FAI Sporting Code procedures and their practical application. Recognizing the need for clarity and consistency, she authored the *Badge and Record Book* in 1991, with subsequent updates throughout the decade as international standards evolved. Her work became a foundational resource for pilots pursuing badge and record achievements.

Her expertise led to a long tenure on the SSA Badge and Record Committee, where she ultimately served as Chair. In this role, she guided the administration and validation of soaring achievements across the country, influencing generations of pilots. She also contributed at the international level, participating in the evolution of flight verification standards during the transition from barographs to GPS-based flight recorders in the 1990s.

Jackie’s service to competitive soaring extends well beyond administration. She supported multiple United States Teams at World Gliding Championships, assisting with logistics, coordination, and team operations. Her contributions were widely recognized and valued by team members and international officials alike. In 1999, she and her husband, Jim Payne, were jointly awarded the SSA Exceptional Service Award for their sustained contributions to the U.S. Team.

Her organizational leadership was further demonstrated in 2003 as a key figure in the planning and execution of the *Return to Kitty Hawk* coast-to-coast soaring event, commemorating the centennial of powered flight. For this effort, she and her colleagues were awarded the SSA’s Eaton Trophy.

As an Official Observer, Jackie has validated 17 world records and more than 100 U.S. national records, directly supporting the integrity and recognition of soaring achievements. She is also herself a record participant, having served as co-pilot on a U.S. national record flight.

In recent years, Jackie has played a critical role in one of the most ambitious soaring projects ever undertaken. As Chief of Logistics and Operations for the Perlan Project since 2015, she has been responsible for the complex international coordination required to operate the Perlan 2 high-altitude research sailplane in Argentina. Her leadership has been instrumental in enabling multiple world record flights, including operations reaching altitudes above 76,000 feet. In

addition, she has contributed to the project's global outreach through her work on communications and written documentation.

Her involvement in advanced aerospace programs extends beyond Perlan, including support for the development and testing of pioneering aircraft such as the pressurized Perlan 2, the fly-by-wire Nixus sailplane, and the hydrogen-powered Blue Condor.

Through her sustained dedication, technical expertise, and leadership, Jacqueline Payne has had a profound and lasting impact on the sport of soaring. Her work has supported pilots at every level, strengthened the infrastructure of record and badge flying, and contributed to some of the most significant achievements in modern soaring history.