

# ISnAP

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International Society for Aviation Photography



# LIVING LEGENDS OF AVIATION AWARDS SHOW

By Hayman Tam

In Hollywood, January marks the start of the awards season as celebrities flock at various events to be feted in the company of their peers. Sandwiched between the Golden Globes and the Screen Actors Guild awards is a special intimate awards event celebrating the best in the field of aviation. Often referred to as the Academy Awards of Aviation, the Living Legends of Aviation Awards is a black tie gala in which the Legends of Aviation honor significant contributions to aviation. Held this past January 20th at the Beverly Hilton, this is considered the most prestigious and important recognition event of aviation. This year's memorable evening of aviation awards and entertainment featured Morgan Freeman, with a special tribute to Cliff Robertson and a 90th birthday salute to Bob Hoover.

The "Living Legends of Aviation" is a select group of 70 people of extraordinary accomplishment in the aviation field. Among the defining criteria used in identifying "Living Legends" are aviation entrepreneurs, innovators, industry leaders, record breakers, astronauts, pilots that have become celebrities and celebrities who have become pilots. As the initial group of Legends evolved, these extraordinary people of aviation nominated others to join them, and the list has gradually grown to seventy people. As Legends take their flight west, new inductees selected by their fellow Legends replace them.

2012 marked the ninth anniversary of the Awards, held at the Beverly Hilton hotel in Beverly Hills in the very same ballroom as the Golden



Globes. Barron Hilton himself is a pilot, aviation enthusiast and also a "Living Legend". The original event host was Airport Journals, a publication that helped my aviation photojournalism efforts in the beginning. My editor contacted me back in 2008 to see if I was interested in being an event photographer at their next event. It turned out that he thought I was based in L.A. but I assured him that we (my wife is my second shooter) would be honored to be there. It's been three consecutive years now and it is one of my favorite annual photographic efforts.

The event is covered with a photo team typically seven in number. The event starts off with a cocktail reception, which requires red carpet coverage, and guest registration coverage where the Legends receive their medals and autograph the many items put up for auction. Once folks have started dinner, there are some table shots of key VIP tables. The photographer's table is easily spotted as being tucked in a far corner, where we frantically shovel food in our faces prior to the start of the festivities. Once the lights go down, folks are shooting the podium action at different distances, one or two covering stage left and a chosen one takes care of green room shots. Most of the team is then tasked to cover the "after party", providing opportunities to capture the Legends in a more relaxed setting. It should be noted that normal press photography is limited to the red carpet as the guests approach the reception doors. Once inside, other than guests, we are the only event photographers.





Shooting conditions during the reception ranges from bright ballroom to candlelight, and is a normal flash setup since you are fairly close to the subjects. I have used the Gary Fong Lightsphere with good results on my Nikon SB-600 mounted on a D70/D300/D7000 (differing bodies over the years). My normal setup for podium speakers is without flash, using my 80-200 f/2.8 from about 100' back. My analog lens lacks VR so it is a challenge, so having six fps helps. Stage left shots are back to flash, switching to a Sto-Fen diffuser, with a 35-70 f/2.8 lens. I bought my own tuxedo this year and I will confess that I was hesitating and looking before kneeling or sitting down in the course of shooting.



This year I was delighted to learn that my separate worlds of ISAP and Living Legends would be colliding, with none other than ISAP Chairman Larry Grace himself being invited as an event photographer. Larry was a welcome addition and added to the esprit-de-corps among the photo team, along with his tireless promotion of ISAP.

This event is a fantastic opportunity to see and even meet some of these aviation heavyweights. It has also been very educational in learning from the acceptance speeches how these folks built their lives around aviation, often starting as childhood dreams. Elon Musk, founder of SpaceX, mentioned in his speech last year that his financial success with PayPal and Tesla Motors was simply a foundation for his real goal of building manned spacecraft.

Living Legends of Aviation Inductees this year are:

- Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger- The pilot who gained instant fame with his perfect ditching of US Airways Flight 1549 into the Hudson River in 2009
- Barry Schiff- Retired TWA airline Captain, award winning journalist and author who has written for AOPA Pilot magazine for 49 years, and holds every FAA category and class rating (other than airship). Holds five world speed records and has logged over 27,000 hours.
- Steve & Suzanne Oliver- A husband and wife aerobatic and skywriting team (Pepsi Skywriters) that as performed since 1981.
- Jeffrey Puckett- Owner of Jet Linx and USAero. An award winning aerobatic pilot, he founded Prayer One, an organization that introduces inter-city youth and community leaders to the world of aviation. He has flown over 3500 people to date.



- John & Martha King- Owners of King Schools who revolutionized the flight training industry. They both hold every FAA class and category rating, and are backup pilots for the Fujifilm blimp.
- Preston Henne- Senior VP of Gulfstream responsible for product management, engineering and flight operations.
- Elon Musk- CEO of both Tesla Motors and Space Exploration Technologies (SpaceX), co-founder of PayPal before selling it to eBay.

Award Honorees this year are:

- Aviation Industry Leader of the Year
  - Mark Van Tine- President and CEO of Jeppesen since 2003.
- Aviation Entrepreneurs of the Year
  - Fatih and Eren Ozmen- CEO and CFO of Sierra Nevada Corporation
- Harrison Ford Aviation Legacy Award
  - Dr Richard Sugden- Doctor and pilot who has gone to Kenya to train local pilots and provide planes for the Kenya Wildlife Service. Active with Veteran's Airlift Command, and is a warbird airshow pilot.
- Lifetime Aviation Entrepreneur
  - J. Robert Duncan- Chairman Emeritus of Duncan Aviation, one of the world's largest business aviation sales and service organizations.



- Aviation Inspiration and Patriotism Award  
- Morgan Freeman- Oscar winning actor and private pilot since 2002. Loves flying his Swearingen SJ30 and is a Charter founding member of the Living Legends of Aviation.

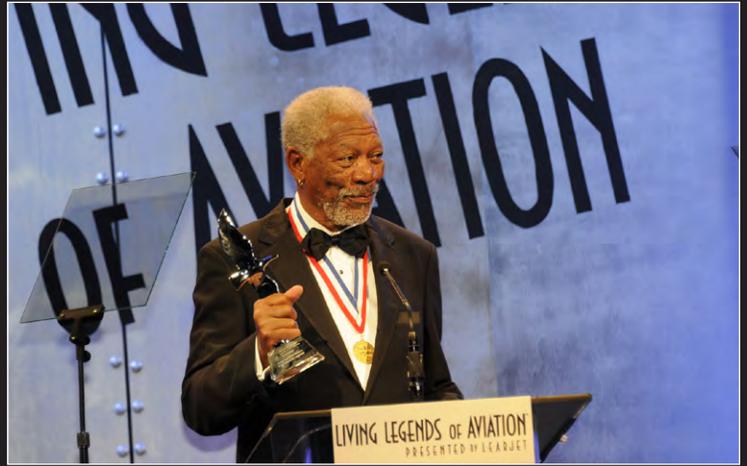
- Aircraft of Legend Award-  
- Mike Sinnett representing the Boeing 787 Dreamliner design team. The first 787 entered service in October of 2011.

- Bob Hoover Freedom of Flight Award  
- Burt Rutan - Legendary aircraft and spaceship designer of over 367 designs, of which 45 have flown.

The Legends event is produced by the Kiddie Hawk Air Academy, a non-profit organization that introduces children to aviation. Kiddie Hawk follows the students as they progress, making scholarships available as Kiddie Hawk pilots enter actual flight training. Learn more about the Living Legends of Aviation Awards at [www.livinglegendsofaviation.org](http://www.livinglegendsofaviation.org).

For Living Legends of Aviation 2010 to 2012 event photos taken by Hayman Tam, go to <http://lloa.shutterfly.com>.





Additional photos taken by Larry Grace