

Andrew (Andy) Richardson
September 21, 1986 - November 15, 2021



Andy Richardson, of Bloomington, passed away on Monday, November 15th at Bloomington Hospital after a short illness. Andy was born on September 21st, 1986 to Sue Childress and Jeff Richardson. He grew up in Bloomington and graduated in 2005 from Bloomington High School North.

Andy's great passion in life was hot air ballooning, and he spent nearly all his time as a young child nurturing an obsession with all things airborne. He integrated himself into the local ballooning community, often whether they liked it or not. With the help of his Uncle Bob, Andy bought his first hot air balloon when he was 14 years old, a single passenger experimental aircraft. This hot air balloon was so precious to him that he insisted on keeping the basket in the living room - the family decorated it for the holidays.

In the intervening 21 years, Andy turned his passion into a profession, and his company, Adams Balloons, is one of the largest manufacturers of balloons in the United States and well-known for its special shape creations and thermal airships. His ride company, Bloomington Balloon Rides, fills the skies with balloons most fair-weather nights. His goal was to make hot air ballooning a sport that all could enjoy - from manufacturing affordable and durable hot air balloons for pilots to giving safe yet unforgettable rides to passengers across the country.

Andy was an experienced commercial pilot, test pilot, certified balloon repair man, flight instructor, and mentor to aspiring enthusiasts. He was especially proud of his latest accomplishment, becoming an FAA-certified Designated Pilot Examiner.

Andy participated by invitation in national and international festivals, including as one of two Americans at the Age 30 and Under World Championships in Lithuania in 2012. He provided the balloon for the New Horizons mirrored and lighted balloon art installation, shown across the state of Massachusetts. Andy was also asked by the Smithsonian Institution to manufacture a balloon for their collection, which now resides in the National Air and Space Museum. He also donated his time to Dream Catcher to construct their ADA-accessible balloon which has successfully given thousands of rides

to mobility-challenged individuals. He was the former president of the Montgolfier Society of Indiana Balloon Club, and an active member of two New Mexico Lighter than Air ballooning clubs: the ABQ Aerostat Ascension Association and the Top Gun Club.

Andy was a gifted storyteller, was tremendously generous and funny, and was very beloved by his family and those who knew him. Andy is preceded in death by his maternal and paternal grandparents.

He is survived by his mother Sue Childress; father Jeff Richardson; his sisters and brothers-in-law, Jessica (Thomas) Smith, and Jennifer Richardson and Fred Hubbard; a niece and nephew; Adam Dog, a 170 lb Great Dane and his partner in crime; and a large extended family and friends network who are profoundly saddened by his passing.

Arrangements are Saturday, November 20th at 10:00 am visitation and 11:30 am service at The Funeral Chapel. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the MCCSC Foundation (<https://mccsfoundation.org/>), the Mid-Atlantic Great Dane Rescue (<https://www.magdrl.org/>), or the charity of your choice. The family welcomes you to share pictures, videos, and memories at <http://www.andyslifealoft.com>.