

# "CONGRATULATIONS! YOU GOT A JUDY!"

by Jim Crouch

**T**his accolade will be heard for the first time at drop zones participating in USPA Safety Day activities around the country on March 12. So, what the heck is a "Judy," and who's getting it?

A Judy refers to the new USPA Chesley H. Judy Safety Award. USPA's latest recognition for service to the skydiving community came together as the result of an important act of generosity, along with imagination at the right time.

In 1995, USPA established a fund to promote safety through education and training with a grant from the family of the late Ches Judy. The fund has since grown to a little more than \$2,700. But it took an idea from USPA member David Kiedaisch last year to put the money to good use. Kiedaisch asked USPA to develop an award that would recognize excellent and innovative skydiving instructors.

The fund memorializes Judy, who on September 10, 1995, died aboard a Queen Air that crashed on takeoff for the sunset load near West Point, Virginia.

With Judy went nine other jumpers and the pilot, along with the resident of the house the plane struck after losing control.

Judy, an active skydiver for more than 30 years, made most of his jumps in his last decade. He spent most weekends training skydiving students, first with drop zone owners George and Betty Kabeller in Downsville, Maryland, and then moving with them to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. He continued at Chambersburg when former USPA National Director Al Gramando purchased the drop zone and renamed it AFF East. In his last year, Judy taught at Skydive West Point for school owners Dave Ropp and Ruth Sondheimer, who also perished in the crash. In his last two months, after retiring from a long and successful career with the State Department, Judy served on the USPA staff as director of safety & training.

The lively Judy is warmly remembered for his friendly and light-hearted approach to student training, which eased tensions and

made skydiving fun for everyone lucky enough to jump with him. He also dedicated himself to improving the quality of instructors, working in instructor certification courses as an AFF evaluator and Relative Workshop tandem examiner.

He and his wife, Pat, had four children, all of whom have jumped. His son, John, holds the current national open-class bronze medal in 4-way formation skydiving with Team Fastrax.


The original donation from the Judy family and friends, along with subsequent contributions, will pay the printing and other costs of maintaining the award created for Safety Day in Chesley H. Judy's name. The USPA Board expanded on Kiedaisch's original idea of an award just for instructors. A "Judy" may be presented during Safety Day activities to one jumper from each drop zone who in the past year, through example, deed, training or innovation, has promoted safety in the sport.

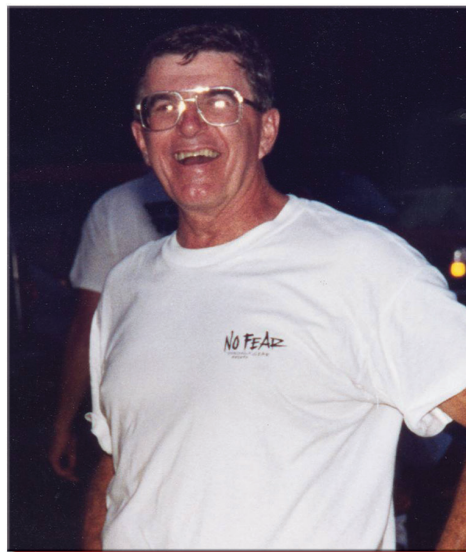
Awardees may include anyone on the drop zone who has made a noteworthy difference to the safety of local jumpers.

The choice, to be coordinated through the USPA Safety & Training Advisor organizing Safety Day and the drop zone owner, could be the alert jumper who noticed someone's misrouted chest strap just before exit, the diligent staff member who worked tirelessly to revamp the school's student training program or the committed individual who implemented the one idea that finally got everyone landing in the same direction. The actions that justify the award can be every bit as varied as the individuals who might receive one.

USPA will print and distribute the Judy Award certificates, suitable for framing, free to participating USPA Group Member drop zones or S&TAs conducting Safety Day. The award program

will continue alongside USPA Safety Day for years to come.

Earning recognition from peers for improvements to safety at home—where it counts the most—anyone who gets a "Judy" would feel justly proud to receive the award for his contributions to his fellow jumpers. 



*The late Ches Judy.*

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