



August 26, 2009

Introducing...

Betty Skelton Erde



"The First Lady of Firsts"

The First Lady of Firsts

- First woman:
 - To execute a first solo flight at age 12
 - Test-driver in the auto industry (1954)
 - To receive an AAA auto race driver's license (1954)
 - To drive an Indianapolis race car (1954)
 - To drive a jet car over 300 mph (1965)
 - To undergo NASA testing for astronauts (1959)
 - To compete in U.S. closed course pylon air racing (1968)

The First Lady of Firsts (continued)

- First woman:
 - To be inducted into the National Corvette Hall of Fame of the Corvette Museum (2001)
 - To break an auto land speed record (three times)
 - To Fly a plane upside-down cutting a ribbon 10' above the ground
 - To drive "Jump Boats" over ramps at Cypress Gardens

The First Lady of Firsts (continued)

- That's right, "Jump Boats"...



Hall of Fame Honors



2008



2003



2005



2001



1997

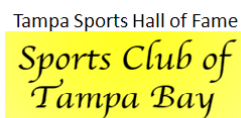
Hall of Fame Honors (continued)



1997



1994



1994

**Tampa Bay Walk of Fame
Tampa Bay Writers**

1991

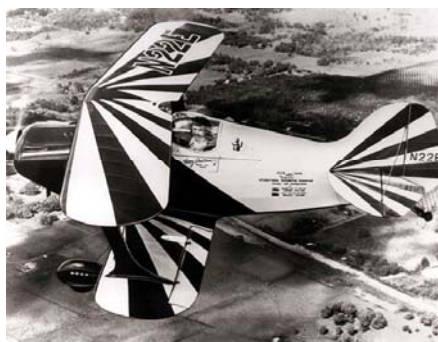


1988



As an Aviation Record-holder

- International Feminine Aerobatic Champion
 - All-American Air Maneuvers - Miami, Florida
 - 1948, 1949, & 1950 in her Pitts S1C "Little Stinker"
 - First woman to win three times



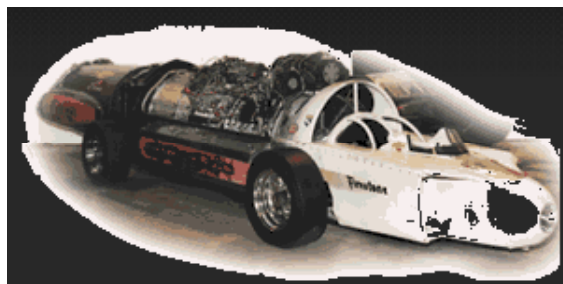
As an Aviation Record-holder (continued)

- World Light Plane Altitude Record
 - 1949: 25,763' at Miami, Florida
 - 1951: 29,050' at Tampa, Florida
- World Speed Record for Engine Aircraft
 - 1949: 421.6 mph at Tampa, Florida
 - P51 Mustang



As an Automotive Record-holder

- World Land Speed Record
 - Top Speed in Art Arfons' "Green Monster Cyclops" of 315.72 mph at Bonneville Salt Flats in 1965
 - 17,500 horsepower jet engine



As an Automotive Record-holder (continued)

- **Baja Endurance Record**
 - Tijuana to Cabo San Lucas
 - June, 1962 in a Chevrolet truck
- **Economy Records**
 - Pure Oil/NASCAR Safety Trials – Daytona, 1960
 - Records set in three different classes
 - World Economy Record, Modified Division – Daytona, 1960
 - Set records for Corvair and Chevrolet Truck
- **Transcontinental South America Automotive Record**
 - Argentina to Chile – 1958
 - Non-Stop round-trip time of 41 hours, 14 minutes in a Chevrolet Wagon
 - Twice across the Andes Mountain Range

As an Automotive Record-holder (continued)

- **Transcontinental United States Automobile Record**
 - “Operational Cannonball” (New York to Los Angeles – 1956)
 - Non-Stop round-trip (2,913 miles) time of 56 hours, 58 minutes in a Chevrolet Sedan
 - First person to break Cannonball Baker’s record



As an Automotive Record-holder (continued)

- 24-hour Stock Car Endurance Record
 - Darlington, 2,438 miles with a team of male drivers – 1956
- World Land Speed Record for Women
 - Daytona Beach in a Corvette, 145.044 mph – 1956



As an Automotive Record-holder (continued)

- World Closed Course Speed Record for Women
 - Chrysler Proving Grounds in Michigan, in a Dodge Firearrow, 144.02 mph – 1954
- Stock Car Flying Mile Record (Stock Car Class Record)
 - Daytona Beach in a Dodge Sedan, 105.88 mph – 1954
- NASCAR Speedweeks - 1956
 - Nine Sports Car Records for Speed and Acceleration
- Stock Car Endurance Run, Bonneville Salt Flats – 1955
 - 395 individual records set over 14 days of trials driving a Dodge with a team of male drivers



Special Recognitions

- National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution
 - Donated her “Little Stinker” aircraft for restoration and display
 - On display at the Museum on the Washington Mall 2001-2003
 - Now on display at Udvar-Hazy Center – National Air and Space Museum at Dulles Airport



Special Recognitions

- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
 - First woman to undergo physical and psychological tests given to astronauts
 - Featured in LOOK Magazine – February, 1960

Special Recognitions

- Navy Blue Angels
 - Named “Sweetheart of the Navy Blue Angels” in 1948 in an event accompanied by Bob Hope, Doris Day, and Les Brown
 - Flew many of air shows with the Blue Angels in the 1940s and 1950s



- International Motor Sports Hall of Fame
 - Honored by Bill France Sr. at the official dedication and opening of the IMSHOF at Talladega in 1983.



Betty Skelton Erde



“It’s Been Quite a Ride!”