Inducted in 1992, Thomas G. Smoak started flying after he joined the ROTC at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. After graduating from VPI, he joined the United States Air Force and became a co-pilot on B-47, the Strategic Air Command’s six-jet engine bomber. In March 1960, his B-47 exploded over Little Rock, Arkansas. He was the sole survivor from this midair breakup. In 1962, he left the USAF to become a missionary pilot for the Jungle Aviation and Radio Service. For more than 20-years he flew in and out of dozens of jungle airstrips serving the remote areas of Colombia.