

Richard T. Whitcomb

Hampton, Virginia



Inducted in 1980, Richard T. Whitcomb was a distinguished aerodynamicist with the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, later NASA, since 1943. In 1952, he discovered a revolutionary aircraft design concept called the area rule. This method of designing aircraft reduces the drag and increases speed without the addition of power. During the 1960s he invented the supercritical wing, which allows speed, efficiency or maneuverability increases of aircraft at high subsonic speeds. Whitcomb won the 1954 Collier Trophy.