John S. Langford

Entrepreneur • airplane designer • education advocate

Born in 1957, John was educated in the Atlanta Public Schools and at M.I.T.. He and his wife Barbara moved to Virginia in 1985. He organized and led a team that designed and built the Daedalus 88, which shattered records for human-powered flight by flying 72 miles from Crete to Santorini. In 1989 he created Aurora Flight Sciences which pioneered the use of unmanned aircraft for earth and planetary atmospheric research. Under John's leadership Aurora developed over 40 successful robotic aircraft, including high-altitude long-endurance, vertical takeoff and landing, optionally piloted, and fully autonomous designs. He co-founded Athena Technologies which pioneered fault-tolerant flight controls. After Aurora was acquired by Boeing, John launched Electra.aero to lead the decarbonization of aviation, starting with hybrid-electric extreme short takeoff and landing designs. A lifelong aeromodeller and STEM advocate, John works to inspire the next generation of aviation leaders.