



Contact:

Valerie Sheehan
1-703-684-6777 x107
pr@vtol.org

**Vertical Flight Society Announces
2020 Individual Recipients of Its Prestigious Awards**

Nine vertical flight leaders are recognized for their invaluable contributions

Fairfax, VA, April 1, 2020 — The Vertical Flight Society today announced the 2020 individual recipients of its prestigious awards program. Since its establishment in 1944, VFS Awards have paid tribute to the outstanding leaders of vertical flight and served as a catalyst for stimulating technological advances. This year’s winners will be recognized at the Grand Awards Banquet on Oct. 7 during the VFS **76th Annual Forum and Technology Display** in Virginia Beach, Virginia (www.vtol.org/forum).

“Since Igor Sikorsky and Gen. H. Franklin Gregory were first honored in 1944, the Vertical Flight Society has been recognizing the leading contributors to advancing vertical flight,” said VFS Executive Director Mike Hirschberg. “Those being recognized this year have made invaluable contributions to all manners of vertical flight aircraft — past, present and future.”

Lt. Col (Dr.) Arvind K. Sinha, of the Defence Aviation Safety Authority for the Australian Department of Defence, is this year’s honored recipient of the **Dr. Alexander Klemm Award**, the highest honor the Vertical Flight Society bestows on an individual for notable achievement in advancing the field of vertical flight aeronautics. Sinha was recognized for more than 45 years of contributions, while in various roles in the military (including the elite 17 Parachute Field Regiment as its Para Eagle), academia and government (as Director of Engineering) for vertical flight operations, training, engineering, safety and service, providing enthusiastic leadership and promoting exemplary international collaboration.

The title of **Honorary Fellow** is granted to highly distinguished Society members who have made exceptional leadership, innovative or other meritorious contributions that have significantly advanced VFS and the vertical flight community during their career. This year’s Honorary Fellow is **Andy Keith**, Chief, Propulsion Engineering for Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Company. In more than 30 years at Sikorsky, Keith has provided outstanding leadership and technical expertise. Over the same time period, he has similarly made substantial contributions to the Society, notably on the VFS Propulsion Technical Committee, followed by assuming the role of the VFS Deputy Technical Director for Vehicle Design from 2012-2018, and has been since serving as the VFS Technical Director.

The title of **Technical Fellow** is granted to Society members whose career-based accomplishments towards the goals and objectives of the vertical flight technical community constitute an outstanding technical achievement. The 2020 Technical Fellows are:

- **Dr. Mahendra Bhagwat**, Aeromechanics and Basic Research Focus Lead, US Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (CCDC), Aviation & Missile Center (AvMC), Technology Development Directorate – Aviation (TDD-A), for his pioneering contributions to the fundamental understanding of transient wake dynamics.

- **Prof. Carlos Cesnik**, Clarence “Kelly” Johnson Professor of Aerospace Engineering, University of Michigan, has pioneered the development of the active twist rotor, advanced the state of the art in structural health monitoring, and has made landmark contributions to the coupled aeroelasticity-flight mechanics of very flexible long endurance aircraft.
- **Dr. Chengjian He**, Vice President of Research and Development, Advanced Rotorcraft Technology, Inc., is an internationally recognized authority on rotorcraft aerodynamics and modeling and simulation. Dr. He is the technical leader of the comprehensive rotorcraft modeling and simulation program, FLIGHTLAB.
- **John Schillings**, Technical Fellow for Handling Qualities, Bell Textron, Inc., for 40 years of contributions to rotorcraft aerodynamics, handling qualities and comprehensive flight simulation.

The **John J. Schneider Historical Achievement Award** is given in recognition of distinguished achievement by an individual in encouraging appreciation of, and enhancing access to, the history and legacy of vertical flight aircraft. This year’s recipient is **Kenneth M. Bartie**, The Boeing Company. A Society member since 1981, Bartie has made significant contributions to documenting and preserving the history of The Boeing Company’s vertical flight heritage, support to the American Helicopter Museum & Education Center during its creation and founding, leadership in the VFS History Committee and creation of the annual VFS History Calendar since 2009.

The annual **François-Xavier Bagnoud Award** is given to an individual Society member under the age of 35 for career-to-date outstanding contributions to vertical flight technology. This year’s winner is **Patrick O. Bowles** of Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Company, for his numerous contributions to vertical flight while at the University of Notre Dame, United Technologies Research Center (UTRC), and Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Company. Most recently, Bowles was one of the leads in the extensive computational fluid dynamics (CFD) effort that solving the exhaust gas reingestion (EGR) issue for the Sikorsky CH-53K King Stallion.

The Society’s **Paul E. Haueter Award** is given for an outstanding technical contribution to the field of vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) aircraft development other than a helicopter or an operational vertical flight aircraft. The 2020 Haueter Award is being awarded to **Gwen Lighter**, the CEO of GoFly. Over the past five years, Lighter has been a “force of nature” — formulating and inspiring others with her vision of personal flying devices, securing over \$2M in sponsorships, and launching an international competition that drew 3,800 innovators participating on 854 teams (100+ university teams) from 103 countries on six continents. The GoFly Final Fly Off on Feb. 29, 2020 drew dozens of the world’s most inventive vertical flight innovators; the Grand Prize was not claimed, so the competition continues.

The Vertical Flight Society previously announced in October 2019 that **Dr. Mark B. Tischler**, US Army Senior Scientist, had been selected for the 2020 Alexander A. Nikolsky Honorary Lectureship; this award will also be presented at the VFS 76th Annual Grand Awards Banquet on Oct. 9, 2020.

The Vertical Flight Society was founded as the American Helicopter Society in 1943 by the pioneers of the helicopter industry, who believed that technological cooperation and collaboration was essential to advance vertical flight. VFS is the global non-profit society for engineers, scientists and others working on vertical flight technology. For more than 75 years, the Society has led technology, safety, advocacy, and other important initiatives, and has been the primary forum for interchange of information on vertical flight technology. Descriptions of the awards and past recipients are available at www.vtol.org/awards.

The Vertical Flight Society

2700 Prosperity Ave, Suite 275, Fairfax, VA 22031 USA
 +1-703-684-6777 | staff@vtol.org | www.vtol.org