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## Educating the Vertical Flight Leaders of Tomorrow

*Since 1977, AHS has awarded more than 450 Vertical Flight Foundation scholarships to promising undergraduate and graduate students planning to pursue careers in vertical flight, thanks to the generosity of members like you. Two of our VFF recipients from the 1980s look back and give their perspectives.*

**W**hen I received the Vertical Flight Foundation scholarship, I was starting the research phase of my doctoral work at UCLA under Prof. Peretz Friedmann. By that time, I had come to realize that vertical lift research, due to the particular complexities of vehicles, had many interesting avenues I could pursue. I was also recently married and had been living in Los Angeles and was still adjusting to the significantly higher cost of living than what I was accustomed to during my undergraduate days in Cincinnati. So, I very much appreciated receiving the award to support me financially, and, just as importantly, to allow me to see that the vertical lift industry knew how important it was to support graduate students in its technical area. The award definitely contributed to my interesting and diverse engineering career, and ultimately landed me in my current position working on rotorcraft autonomous flight research. It's always a pleasure to see the many enthusiastic VFF winners when I attend the AHS Annual Forum, and to know it will help them in their engineering careers. So, congratulations to future winners and to the AHS in supporting this scholarship over the years.



Dr. Marc D. Takahashi  
Senior Engineer, US Army Aviation Development Directorate  
Moffett Field, California, USA  
VFF Scholarship Recipient 1986, 1987



I am excited and exceptionally blessed with the opportunities of a career in rotary-wing flight. I recall my very first opportunity, as an Army coop student from Purdue, was working XV-15 tiltrotor flight test at Ames during the summer of 1984. Watching the XV-15 and its ability to hover and fly like an airplane was amazing and solidified my interest in rotorcraft. The complex multi-disciplinary nature of rotorcraft led me to pursue graduate studies in rotorcraft aeroelasticity and flight mechanics at Georgia Tech. Dan Schrage and Charlie Crawford — my mentors at the time — encouraged joining AHS, our professional society. Active participation in AHS followed naturally with local student chapter support and student design competitions. Robin Gray, our helicopter aerodynamics teacher, mentioned the Vertical Flight Foundation as [how AHS] focused on nurturing students interested in vertical flight. While the financial support was very helpful and appreciated in surviving grad school, the ultimate impact of this prestigious award was priceless — interaction with industry leaders, mentors and friends whom I would grow to consider family. Active AHS involvement has continued professionally ever since while working at GTRI and Bell, for which I am very grateful. Now, over three decades later, watching the V-22 fly stirs the same emotions as the XV-15 did 32 years ago. Today, it is also exciting to watch a growing VFF continue to inspire the next generation of vertical flight engineers.

Dr. Mark Wasikowski  
Principal Engineer, Bell Helicopter Textron  
Fort Worth, Texas, USA  
VFF Scholarship Recipient 1985, 1986, 1987



*Please consider giving generously to the VFF scholarship fund to help draw the highest caliber students to careers in vertical flight technology. Go to [www.vtol.org/vff](http://www.vtol.org/vff) to make a donation, or mail a check to the address at the top of this page.*