



Contact:

Julie M. Gibbs
703-684-6777 x103
staff@vtol.org

**Vertical Flight Society Announces 2021 Vertical Flight Foundation Scholarship Recipients
*\$100,000 in Scholarships Awarded to 27 Students***

Fairfax, Virginia, April 1, 2021 — The Vertical Flight Society is pleased to announce its 2021 Vertical Flight Foundation (VFF) scholarship recipients. Scholarships totaling \$100,000 are being awarded this year to 27 of the world’s most talented engineering students interested in vertical flight.

“Since 1977, our Vertical Flight Foundation Scholarships have helped inspire generations of students to pursue careers in vertical flight, with many now holding leadership positions in industry, academia and government, with more 600 scholarships awarded to date,” said VFS Executive Director Mike Hirschberg. “Through the incredible generosity of our members, we have been able to greatly expand the program in recent years. Over the past decade, we have now awarded 238 scholarships worth more than \$750,000.”

The following are this year’s awardees, who will be recognized at the VFS Grand Awards Ceremony which will debut on Wednesday, May 5, 2021. The award ceremony video will be one of the highlights of the Vertical Flight Society’s 77th Annual Forum & Technology Display, taking place virtually from May 10-14, 2021 (see www.vtol.org/forum).

Bachelor Degree Recipients

- **Leilani Friday, Pennsylvania State University:** Frank N. Piasecki Scholarship, honoring the inventor of the tandem rotor helicopter
- **Shubhank Gyawali, Ohio State University:** Friedrich Straub Scholarship, honoring the former senior manager of dynamics technology and technical fellow of The Boeing Company
- **Joseph Kiley Heimerl, Texas A&M University:** Michael J. Rutkowski Scholarship, honoring the NASA/US Army aeromechanics engineer and leader
- **Christopher Johnson, Ohio State University:** Joseph P. Cribbins Scholarship, honoring the individual who had perhaps the most influence and long-term impact on US Army Aviation logistics in the 20th century
- **Melanie A. Peavy, Texas A&M University:** Tom Wood Honorary Scholarship, which recognizes more than 50 years of technical contributions to Bell by Mr. Wood

Master Degree Recipients

- **Matthew Shane Asper, University of Texas at Austin:** Bob Lynn Scholarship, which honors the memory of the former Bell executive and VFS leader par excellence

- **Matthew Bahr, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute:** Robert Head Scholarship, honoring the engineering pioneer from McDonnell/Hughes/McDonnell Douglas/Boeing
- **Hunter Denton, Texas A&M University:** Barry J. Baskett Scholarship, honoring the memory of a career US Army engineer who led Aviation Engineering, and later managed the Aviation Technology Base Program
- **Nicholas Rehm (2-time recipient), University of Maryland:** John J. “Jack” Fetsko Scholarship, honoring the helicopter operations pioneer and leader
- **Peter Ryseck (2-time recipient), University of Maryland:** Alfred and Elaine Gessow Scholarship, honoring a pioneer in the helicopter field at NACA/NASA and founder of the University of Maryland rotorcraft center
- **Brendan Smith, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute:** James Howlett Scholarship, named for the Sikorsky handling qualities and flight dynamics simulation leader and visionary
- **James Sutherland, University of Maryland:** Hal Andrews Scholarship, which remembers a preeminent Navy aviation engineer, advisor and historian
- **Lennart Werner, Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg (JMUW):** Santino "Tino" Pancotti Scholarship, honoring the former technical lead for Agusta and AgustaWestland (now Leonardo Helicopters)
- **Damaris Rene Zachos, Pennsylvania State University*:** Bell Scholarship, provided by a generous VFF endowment from the company and awarded to the top overall scoring VFF recipient.

Doctorate Degree Recipients

- **Jared Carnes, University of Tennessee, Knoxville:** John J. Schneider Scholarship, honoring the memory of a preeminent VTOL aircraft designer and historian
- **Ruthvik Chandrasekaran, Georgia Institute of Technology:** Charles C. Crawford Scholarship, named in memory of the former Army Aviation development leader, GTRI researcher and past VFS Board Chair
- **Cheng Chi, University of Maryland:** Raymond W. Prouty Scholarship, which honors the memory of a pioneering helicopter engineer with a lifelong commitment to educating the rotorcraft community
- **Airin Dutta, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute:** Anita Abrego Scholarship, which honors the memory of the NASA rotorcraft aeromechanics engineer
- **Sicheng (Kevin) Li, University of California, Davis:** Evan Sampatacos Scholarship, remembering the former McDonnell Douglas/Boeing engineer
- **Felix Loessle, Leibniz University Hannover:** Howard C. "Pat" Curtiss, Jr. Scholarship, honoring the pioneering Princeton University rotorcraft aeromechanics researcher and educator
- **Ravi Lumba (2-time recipient), University of Maryland:** M.A. “Tony” McVeigh Scholarship, honoring the memory of the Boeing advanced rotorcraft designer and mentor
- **Joseph Robinson, Georgia Institute of Technology:** Dr. Wel Chong (Ben) Sim Scholarship, honoring the US Army acoustics research scientist
- **Farid Saemi (2-time recipient), Texas A&M University:** Dr. John Zuk Scholarship, honoring the NASA engineer who was a champion of civil tiltrotor technology and applications
- **Jared Sagaga, University of California, Davis:** Dr. Richard M. Carlson Scholarship, former Hiller and Lockheed engineer who became the chief of the Army's Advanced Systems Research and Analysis Office at Ames Research Center

- **Frederick Tsai (2-time recipient), University of Maryland:** John W. Sobczak Scholarship, honoring the memory of the US Army applied aviation technology engineer
- **Raja Akif Raja Zahirudin, Pennsylvania State University:** Prof. Barnes McCormick Scholarship, honoring Penn State's venerable Boeing Professor Emeritus
- **Paola Zanella, Georgia Institute of Technology*:** Dr. Jing Yen VFF Scholarship for Cost Awareness, given to the most qualified applicant who shows interest in improving the affordability of rotorcraft.

Each of the Bachelor scholarships includes a cash award of \$3500; the Masters students receive \$3500 each and Doctorate scholarship winners each receive \$3,625. In addition, the top candidates (marked above with an asterisk) have received special recognition. **Damaris Rene Zachos, Pennsylvania State University, will receive a total of \$5,000 for the Bell Scholarship**, provided by a generous VFF endowment from the company and awarded to the top overall scoring VFF recipient. **Paola Zanella, Georgia Institute of Technology, is receiving \$6,000 as the winner of the Dr. Jing Yen VFF Scholarship for Cost Awareness**, given to the most qualified applicant who shows interest in improving the affordability of rotorcraft.

The Vertical Flight Foundation was established in 1967 as the philanthropic arm of the Vertical Flight Society. Since 1977, the merit-based scholarship program has been a great success story. For more information on the Vertical Flight Foundation or to donate to this important cause, please visit our VFF microsite at www.vtol.org/vff. A list of all past VFF scholarship winners and success stories are also available.

VFF and VFS are both recognized by the US Internal Revenue Service as 501(c)(3) charities. VFS covers all overhead costs of administration and accounting, so 100% of every tax-deductible contribution to VFF goes directly to student scholarships.

Founded as the American Helicopter Society in 1943, the Vertical Flight Society is the global non-profit society for engineers, scientists and others working on vertical flight technology. For over 75 years, the Society has led technical, safety, advocacy and other important initiatives, and has been the primary forum for interchange of information on vertical flight technology.

The Vertical Flight Society

2700 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 275, Fairfax, VA 22031 USA

phone: +1-703-684-6777

email: staff@vtol.org; website: www.vtol.org