



Press Release

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Vertical Flight Society Announces 2024 Scholarship Recipients
\$120,000 in Vertical Flight Foundation Scholarships Awarded to 29 Students

Fairfax, Virginia, April 1, 2024 — The Vertical Flight Society is pleased to announce its 2024 Vertical Flight Foundation (VFF) scholarship recipients. Scholarships totaling \$120,000 are being awarded this year to 29 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 nearly 700 scholarships awarded to date,” said VFS Executive Director Angelo Collins. “This year, VFS is able to award a record number of scholarships, and a record total amount — \$120,000 — a 20% increase over the past five years.”

The following are this year’s awardees, who will be recognized as part of the VFS Grand Awards Program on Thursday, May 9, 2024. The awards breakfast banquet will be one of the highlights of the Vertical Flight Society’s 80th Annual Forum & Technology Display, taking place May 7-9, 2024, in Montréal, Québec, Canada (see www.vtol.org/forum).

Bachelor Degree Recipients

- **Nathaniel Hoover, Pennsylvania State University:** [Prof. Barnes McCormick Scholarship](#), remembering Penn State’s venerable Boeing Professor Emeritus.
- **Grace Johnson, University of Maryland:** [Robert Head Scholarship](#), honoring the engineering pioneer from McDonnell/Hughes/McDonnell Douglas/Boeing.
- **Philemon Koh Jun Kai, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore:** Virasak Family Scholarship, supported by longtime VFS member Jacques Virasak.
- **Lucie Kovarik, University of Michigan:** [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.
- **Lucas Park, University of California, Irvine:** [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.
- **McKenna Taylor, Georgia Institute of Technology:** [Dr. Robin Gray Scholarship](#), honoring the beloved Georgia Tech professor who taught generations of students.
- **Annalaine Whitson, Texas A&M University:** [Franklin D. Harris Scholarship](#), honoring the contributions and memory of 65 years of dedicated service to the rotorcraft industry.

Master Degree Recipients

- **Rajan Bhandari, Auburn 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.

- **Batin Bugday***, University of Maryland: [Dr. Jing Yen VFF Scholarship for Cost Awareness](#), given to the most qualified applicant who shows interest in improving rotorcraft affordability.
- **Walther Chong**, Georgia Institute of Technology: [Dr. Dewey H. Hodges Scholarship](#), awarded to an applicant in Aeromechanics and honoring the beloved professor at Georgia Institute of Technology, decorated engineer, and one of the foremost aerospace researchers of his generation.
- **Micaela Crispin***, Pennsylvania State University: [Bell Textron Scholarship](#), provided by a generous endowment from the company and awarded to the top scoring applicant.
- **Brett D. Dalrymple**, Pennsylvania State University: [M.A. “Tony” McVeigh Scholarship](#), honoring the memory of the Boeing advanced rotorcraft designer and mentor.
- **Margaret Donovan**, University of Maryland: [Dr. Friedrich Straub Scholarship](#), honoring the former senior manager of dynamics technology and technical fellow of The Boeing Company.
- **Maks Groom**, Massachusetts Institute of Technology: [Dr. Norman D. Ham](#), honoring the pioneering rotorcraft/VTOL professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- **Akshaj Kumar**, Texas A&M University: [Dr. Richard L. Bennett Scholarship](#), honoring the longtime Bell researcher, university professor and consultant.
- **Miracle J. Nyancho**, Texas A&M University: [Tom Wood Scholarship](#), which recognizes his 50+ years of technical contributions to Bell Textron.
- **William Magellan Ogle**, University of Maryland: [Hal Andrews Scholarship](#), which remembers a preeminent Navy aviation engineer, advisor and historian.
- **Jiwoo Song**, Pennsylvania State University: [Evan Sampatacos Scholarship](#), remembering the former McDonnell Douglas/Boeing engineer.
- **Logan Tanner Swaisgood**, University of Maryland: [Prof. Alfred Gessow Scholarship](#), honoring a pioneer in the helicopter field at NACA/NASA and founder of the University of Maryland Rotorcraft Center.

Doctorate Degree Recipients

- **Diksha Aggarwal**, Virginia Tech: [Bob Arden Scholarship](#), honoring the US Army Aviation's structures, fatigue and loads leader.
- **Apurva Anand**, University of Maryland: [Bob Lynn Scholarship](#), which honors the memory of the former Bell Textron executive and VFS leader par excellence.
- **Matthew Arace**, University of Maryland: [M.A. “Tony” Paradiso Scholarship](#), honoring the pioneering Sikorsky engineer and founding member of VFS.
- **Rachel M. Axten**, Pennsylvania State University: [Frank N. Piasecki Scholarship](#), honoring the inventor of the tandem rotor helicopter.
- **Jasmine Chang**, University of Michigan: [Glidden S. Doman Scholarship](#), named for one of the six original American helicopter pioneers.
- **Ceren Cansu Esmek**, 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.
- **Alexandre Guibert**, University of California, San Diego: [Frank Robinson Scholarship](#), honoring the founder of Robinson Helicopter Corp.
- **Alexander Heintz**, Leibniz University Hannover: [Henrich Focke Scholarship](#), honoring the creator of the world's first practical helicopter.
- **Arti Kalra**, Technical University of Braunschweig: [Brain Main Scholarship](#), honoring the Westland EH101 chief designer.
- **Jessica Shum**, University of California, Davis: [Alex Stoll Scholarship](#), honoring the memory, passion and creative genius who was one of the pioneers of electric aviation.

All of the scholarships include a cash award of \$4,000. In addition, the top candidates (marked above with an asterisk) have received special recognition. **Micaela Crispin, The Pennsylvania State University, will receive a total of \$6,000 for the Bell Textron Scholarship**, provided by a generous VFF endowment from the company and awarded to the overall top scoring VFF recipient. **Batin Bugday, University of Maryland, also receives \$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 more than 80 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

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