



# *Press Release*

**Contact:**

Julie M. Gibbs

[pr@vtol.org](mailto:pr@vtol.org)

(703) 684-6777

**Vertical Flight Society Announces 2024 Lichten Award Winners**  
*Selected for Technical Excellence from First-Time Technical Paper Presenters*

**Fairfax, Virginia, March 25, 2024** — The Vertical Flight Society today announced the winners of its prestigious Robert L. Lichten technical award. The overall winner will be recognized at the Grand Awards Breakfast on Thursday, May 9, 2024, during the Society’s 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum & Technology Display in Montréal, Québec, Canada.

**Cristiano Maria Capizzi of Leonardo Helicopters** was selected as the overall Lichten Winner. His winning paper, “Correlation of Rotor Loads during Ground Operations in a Turbulent Wind Environment,” will be presented at Forum 80 on Wednesday afternoon, May 8, during the Dynamics II session. Mr. Capizzi was also the winner of the VFS Europe/Africa Region Lichten Competition.

**Nathan O’Brien from University of Maryland** was selected as the Lichten Runner-up for his paper, “Aeroelastic Stability of a Hingeless Hub Tiltrotor at High Speeds.” His paper will also be presented during the Dynamics II technical session on Wednesday afternoon, May 8, and Mr. O’Brien will receive a runner-up certificate. He was the VFS Southeast US Region Lichten Competition winner.

The other regional winners, who were finalists for the competition, were as follows:

- **Zachary Tremblay of McGill University**, was the winner of the VFS Americas Region with his paper, “Design and Testing of Non-Vectored Tailsitter Test Stands: Addressing Unique Challenges and Flight Mode Dynamics.”
- **Caitlin Kay of Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Company**, was the VFS Northeast US Region winner for her paper, “ADAMS-GenHel Co-Simulation Process and Results.”
- **Reuben-Wayne Steward of Texas A&M University**, was the VFS Southwest US Region winner for his paper, “Nonlinear Flight Dynamics Modeling of an Air-Launched Tailsitter UAS.” His paper will be presented at Forum 80 during the Advanced Vertical Flight Session I on Tuesday morning, May 7.
- **Joshua Robbins of The Boeing Company**, was the VFS Western US Region winner for his paper, “Development of a Lightweight, Crash-Tolerant Fuel Bladder.”

The Robert L. Lichten Award was established in 1976 to encourage VFS members who have not previously presented the results of their work at a technical meeting to begin to do so through presentations at local and regional VFS meetings. Each of the ten regions around the world is eligible to select a regional winner to enter the international competition, from which the overall winner and runner-up are selected. The overall Lichten Award Winner is invited to present his/her technical paper at the Forum and receives complimentary travel to and lodging at the Forum, as well as a \$500 honorarium, sponsored by Bell Textron, Inc. The runner-up is also invited to present at the Forum and receives a certificate and complimentary Forum registration.

The Lichten Award honors the memory of Robert L. Lichten, an outstanding rotary-wing engineer and the Vertical Flight Society's 22<sup>nd</sup> President, serving 1965-1966. Lichten was a skilled and dedicated innovator, who spent much of his career championing early tiltwing and tiltrotor concepts. He was considered the "Pioneer of Tiltrotor Technology" for his work at Bell, where he became the director of advanced technology.

Information about VFS's 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum & Technology Display is available at [www.vtol.org/forum](http://www.vtol.org/forum).

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**

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

+1-703-684-6777 | [staff@vtol.org](mailto:staff@vtol.org) | [www.vtol.org](http://www.vtol.org)