



Press Release

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Vertical Flight Society Announces 2023 Scholarship Recipients *\$100,000 in Vertical Flight Foundation Scholarships Awarded to 22 Students*

Fairfax, Virginia, April 6, 2023 — The Vertical Flight Society is pleased to announce its 2023 Vertical Flight Foundation (VFF) scholarship recipients. Scholarships totaling \$100,000 are being awarded this year to 22 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 667 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 just the past five years, we have now awarded more than 100 scholarships worth a half-million dollars.”

The following are this year’s awardees, who will be recognized as part of the VFS Grand Awards Program on Thursday, May 18, 2023. The awards breakfast banquet will be one of the highlights of the Vertical Flight Society’s 79th Annual Forum & Technology Display, taking place from May 16-18, 2023, in West Palm Beach, Florida (see www.vtol.org/forum).

Bachelor Degree Recipients

- **Connor Elliott, Texas A&M University:** [Troy M. Gaffey Scholarship](#), honoring his major role in the development of the tiltrotor at Bell and the coaxial compound helicopter as CEO of AVX Aircraft.
- **Peter Capozzoli, University of Maryland:** [Walter J. Hodgson Scholarship](#), named for the late US Air Force and Hughes Helicopter test pilot.
- **Alison Linares Mendoza, University of Pittsburgh:** [Franklin D. Harris Scholarship](#), honoring the contributions and memory of 65 years dedicated service and numerous contributions to the rotorcraft industry.
- **Gabrielle Schumacher, University of Maryland:** [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.
- **Audrey Putri Waliliong, Georgia Institute of Technology:** [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.

Master Degree Recipients

- **Catherine Catrambone, University of Maryland:** [Hal Andrews Scholarship](#), which remembers a preeminent Navy aviation engineer, advisor and historian.

- **Joseph Kiley Heimerl, Texas A&M University** (2-time recipient): [Tom Wood Honorary Scholarship](#), which recognizes more than 50 years of technical contributions to Bell Helicopter by Mr. Wood.
- **Isabella Mawry, The Pennsylvania State University**: [Dr. Richard L. Bennett Scholarship](#), honoring the longtime Bell researcher, university professor and consultant.
- **Brenden Oates, 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.
- **Nathan O'Brien, University of Maryland**: [Dr. Alfred Gessow Scholarship](#), honoring a pioneer in the helicopter field at NACA/NASA and founder of the University of Maryland rotorcraft center.
- **Vivek Upoor, University of Maryland**: [Jimmie S. Honaker Scholarship](#), remembering the early US Air Force helicopter test pilot.
- **Zoelle Wong, Georgia Institute of Technology**: [Frank Robinson Scholarship](#), honoring the founder of Robinson Helicopter Corp.

Doctorate Degree Recipients

- **Shreyas Ashok, Georgia Institute of Technology**: [Dr. Frank Caradonna Scholarship](#), honoring the US Army Emeritus Scientist who worked for 43 years at the Ames Research Center in flight dynamics as a researcher and mentor.
- **Christopher Axten, The Pennsylvania State University**: [Evan Sampatacos Scholarship](#), remembering the former McDonnell Douglas/Boeing engineer.
- **Victoria Britcher, University of Maryland**: [Dr. Friedrich Straub Scholarship](#), honoring the former senior manager of dynamics technology and technical fellow of The Boeing Company.
- **Lidia Caros-Roca, Imperial College London**: [Robert Head Scholarship](#), honoring the engineering pioneer at McDonnell/Hughes/McDonnell Douglas/Boeing.
- **Hunter Denton***, **Texas A&M University** (2-time recipient): [Bell Textron Scholarship](#), provided by a generous VFF endowment from the company and awarded to the top scoring applicant.
- **Aishwerya Singh Gahlot***, **Georgia Institute of Technology**: [Dr. Jing Yen VFF Scholarship for Cost Awareness](#), given to the most qualified applicant who shows interest in improving rotorcraft affordability.
- **Colleen M. Murray, University of Maryland**: Virasak Family Scholarship, supported by longtime VFS member Jacques Virasak.
- **Shivani Patel, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University**: [Alex Stoll Scholarship](#) honoring the memory, passion and creative genius and considered as one of pioneers of electric flight.
- **Katarzyna Pobikowska, Warsaw University of Technology**: [Frank N. Piasecki Scholarship](#), honoring the inventor of the tandem rotor helicopter.
- **Eleni Sotiropoulos-Georgiopoulos, Georgia Institute of Technology**: [Dr. Robin Gray Scholarship](#), honoring the beloved Georgia Tech professor who taught generations of students.

Each of the Bachelor scholarships includes a cash award of \$4,000; the Masters students receive \$4,000 each and Doctorate scholarship winners each receive \$5,000. In addition, the top candidates (marked above with an asterisk) have received special recognition. **Hunter Denton, Texas A&M 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. **Aishwerya Singh Gahlot, Georgia Institute of Technology, 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 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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