

EMBRY-RIDDLE AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY

IMPACT

ANNUAL REPORT ON PHILANTHROPY | FY 21-22

GAME CHANGERS

CICI AND HYATT BROWN'S HISTORIC
\$25 MILLION GIFT WILL ESTABLISH
EMBRY-RIDDLE AS THE NEXT GREAT
CENTER FOR INNOVATION AND
AVIATION JOB CREATION



CONTENTS

ANNUAL REPORT ON PHILANTHROPY | FY 21-22

02 A STELLAR YEAR

Embry-Riddle Has Best Fundraising Year in Its History

04 UBER GENEROUS

Alumnus Invests in Anti-Poaching Research

05 FLIGHT SAFETY GOES DIGITAL

GE Digital Supports Future Safety of Flight

06 GAME CHANGERS

Cici and Hyatt Brown Transform Embry-Riddle with Historic \$25M Gift

08 INNOVATION & JOB GROWTH

Research Park Grows High-Tech Economy

10 PROPELLING DISCOVERY

Duva Fellows Advance Aviation Research

12 EXPANDING THE PIPELINE

Pratt & Whitney Supports Aviation Maintenance

13 GIVING GOES SOLAR

Ford Helps Students Serve Communities

14 WHY I GIVE

Lt. Gen. Stayce Harris Honors Past with History-Inspired Scholarship

16 PROJECT LIFTOFF SOARS

Aviation CEO Propels Scholarship Program

17 PILOT DREAMS DELIVERED

The Tracy Forrest Scholarship



20 LIGHTING THE FIRE

Philanthropy Councils Inspire Donors and Launch Student Innovation

22 WOMEN'S GIVING CIRCLE

Mentors Help Eagles Soar

24 GRATEFUL EAGLES

Coach Steve Ridder and Friends Honor Jay and Leila Adams

26 BEATING THE ODDS

Student Spotlight: Angel Thomas

27 HAPPY TRAILS

Scholarship Puts Pilot Careers in Reach

On the cover:
Cici and Hyatt
Brown Photo by
David Massey

INSPIRED?

We hope you enjoy these stories of how philanthropy can change lives.

If you are inspired to give, please visit givingto.erau.edu and click "Make a Gift" or email giving@erau.edu

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

“The most important thing we can do is inspire young minds and to advance the kind of science, math and technology education that will help youngsters take us to the next phase of space travel.”

JOHN GLENN

American Marine Corps aviator, engineer, astronaut, businessman and politician.

When John Glenn spoke these words, the world could only dream of the technology and advances yet to come. Now, as the next phase of space travel has begun with NASA's Artemis program set to return humankind to the moon, I am reminded of the immeasurable importance of helping young people to be educated, to dream and to dare to reach beyond what can be imagined.

By helping Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University students, you make the work we do possible and the dreams of young minds achievable. Our mission as the global leader in aviation and aerospace education is centered on inspiring our students while helping them shape the values of service, professionalism, integrity and resilience.

Our most important goal is for our students to go on to successful careers and successful lives. We strive for them to serve their communities and the world at large as a diverse offering of entrepreneurs, employees and employers. Your gifts of time and treasure ensure the ongoing success of Embry-Riddle and make it possible for us to reach our goals and fulfill our mission. We both acknowledge your essential contribution and celebrate your generosity.

Your confidence in us this past year is humbling. We received both our largest gift ever, as well as our largest overall giving total of \$35.8 million. This was



achieved foremost by a historic \$25 million gift from civic leaders Cici and Hyatt Brown, whose generosity inspired a matching amount from the State of Florida. The Browns' incredible contribution to the future of Embry-Riddle students will result in innovation and high-paying

jobs through a new Cici and Hyatt Brown Center for Aerospace Technology.

I am proud to say that another nearly \$11 million was given through the growth of Philanthropy Councils and by expanding our overall reach. Every gift counts. Every dollar helps, whether to build a new building, fund a scholarship, or buy needed equipment. By expanding the breadth and depth of our giving base, we hope to strengthen our ties with an ever-growing number of alumni, corporate partners and friends of the university.

Thank you for investing in our students and our graduates. You are playing a role in shaping the future through the next generation of professionals who will discover what is yet to only be imagined. Together we will go back to the Moon ... and onward to Mars.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Barry Butler". The signature is written in a cursive style.

P. Barry Butler, Ph.D.

President

FISCAL YEAR 2022

A STELLAR YEAR FOR ELEVATING STUDENT SUCCESS AND INNOVATION

Fiscal Year 2022 saw the largest total giving to Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in the university's history. Cici and Hyatt Brown's transformational gift of \$25 million helped create a legacy of giving for years to come and establish a foundation for student success and advancement of aviation and aerospace research.

Embry-Riddle made a tremendous leap forward this fiscal year in scholarship funding, with most of the gifts pledged to scholarships and fellowships, ensuring that Eagles continue to become leaders in the industry while realizing their dreams of flight, exploration and innovation.

\$228,836,000

EMBRY-RIDDLE LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS

\$35,809,908

TOTAL PHILANTHROPY

366 ACTIVE SCHOLARSHIPS

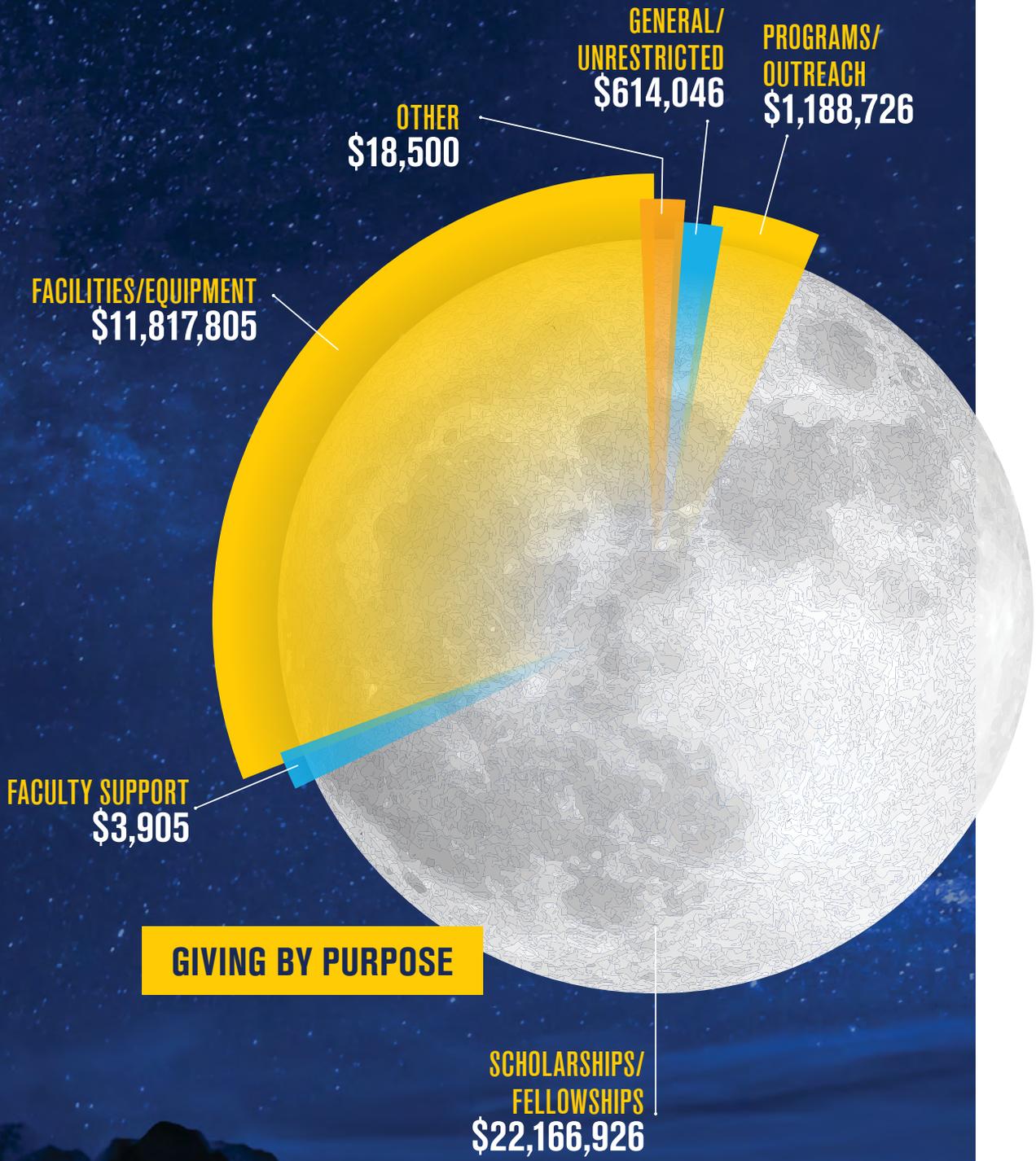
AWARDING OVER \$2.8 MILLION

3,813

INDIVIDUAL DONORS



LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS MARKET VALUE*



GIVING BY PURPOSE

* The total value of the university's long-term investment portfolio includes endowed funds and other long-term investments. Factors such as investment return, contributions and distributions (such as scholarship awards) determine the market value.

UBER GENEROUS

DOM NARDUCCI ('11) AND WIFE LAUREN LOCKLEAR
INVEST IN STUDENT RESEARCH TO IMPROVE
ANTI-POACHING SYSTEMS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
BY EVERLY CHADWICK AND ANTHONY BROWN

Thanks to a generous gift from Eagle alumnus Dom Narducci ('11) and his wife Lauren Locklear, an Embry-Riddle student research team is working to impact the problem of elephant and rhino poaching in Southern African game reserves.

In partnership with Elephants, Rhinos & People, a nonprofit group dedicated to protecting elephants and rhinos by addressing rural poverty, the ICARUS (Instrumentation and Control of Autonomous Robotic and Unmanned Systems) student team is working to develop a network of varied, strategically placed sensors on game reserves that will communicate with satellite tracking systems and autonomous surveillance drones to help monitor animal populations and detect and deter poaching activity.

The project attracted the couple because it combines their passion for animal welfare with a desire to help students develop technological solutions to real-world problems.

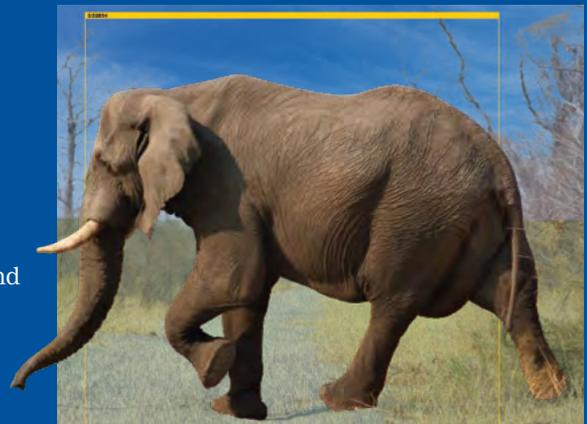
Narducci, an aerospace engineering graduate who enjoys the distinction of being Uber's first intern and longest tenured employee, has learned a lot about solving problems through collaborative research. "I got such an appreciation through those experiences about not just what other areas and

disciplines there are, but how to relate to them, how to work with them, how to engage with people who are operating on very different things," he recalls.

He hopes this gift will help students "get out of the classroom and into the environment" to work with others from different backgrounds and make the world a better place.

"It's giving students an opportunity to work on something meaningful," says Narducci.

"It's a perspective that my wife and I have taken with a lot of our philanthropy. This is not just research for research's sake; it's solving a real problem on the ground."



To this day, [Narducci] credits one of his life lessons to a professor at Embry-Riddle: "Don't sandbag on your deadlines, be respectful and responsible, and always be a little bit ahead on your projects."

A young woman with dark hair and glasses is sitting at a desk, focused on her work on a laptop. She is wearing a grey checkered blazer over a pink top. The background is a blurred blue-toned image of a person in a cockpit. The overall scene is lit with a cool blue light.

FLIGHT SAFETY GOES DIGITAL

PHOTO BY DANIEL LABELLO

GE DIGITAL ESTABLISHES NEW SCHOLARSHIP AT EMBRY-RIDDLE TO SUPPORT THE FUTURE OF FLIGHT SAFETY
BY MELANIE STAWICKI AZAM

GE Digital is supporting the future safety of flight at Embry-Riddle with its creation of the GE Digital Endowed Scholarship Fund.

“At GE, we come to work each day excited about inventing the future of flight,” says Andrew Coleman, general manager of GE Digital’s Aviation Software business. “To make that a reality, we must make our world better for future generations and our aviation industry accessible to everyone from all walks of life. Critical to that is developing students who will lead this industry moving forward. We are proud to launch this initiative with Embry-Riddle to prepare students to solve some of the toughest aviation challenges we’ve ever seen using digital software solutions.”

The new endowed scholarship will help promote career pathways in safety and data analytics by supporting Embry-Riddle students who are pursuing degrees in these areas at the Daytona Beach Campus.

“Our relationship with GE Digital continues to grow as we work together to promote aviation safety through data analytics and sustainability,” says Dr. Alan Stolzer, dean of the Daytona Beach Campus College of Aviation. “We greatly appreciate GE Digital’s support of students who are pursuing careers that will rely on innovative software and analytics aimed at keeping our skies safe.”

GAME CHANGERS

CICI AND HYATT BROWN ARE RESHAPING THE ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE WITH THEIR HISTORIC INVESTMENT IN EMBRY-RIDDLE
BY KIM SHEETER

Hyatt Brown has an impressive history of picking winning investments, honed from long days and short nights in building his insurance business. Since he became CEO of Brown & Brown in 1961 and husband to Cici in 1965, Hyatt Brown has turned the family-owned insurance agency with a single office into one of the world's top brokerages. Brown & Brown currently has 450+ locations, including offices in the United States, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Bermuda, Canada, the Cayman Islands, Ireland and Italy.

Now, after a series of strategic philanthropic investments in Embry-Riddle over the years, culminating in a history-making \$25 million transformational gift, Hyatt and Cici Brown are betting on the university as the next great growth opportunity for Daytona Beach and Florida.

SHAPING THE FUTURE

“Hyatt grew up here. I’m the foreigner,” Cici Brown jokes about her 58 years in the area. The couple shares a long-term perspective — with a view that extends well into the future. “We like things that are built to last that will be around a long time.”

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University is one of those things.

“We’ve watched [the university] since it came here in trucks, and that’s fun to remember,” she says, referring to Operation Bootstrap, Embry-Riddle’s historic 1965 move from Miami to Daytona Beach. Her husband calls the growth of the campus a miracle and believes “there is lots more to come.” He points to the development of all campuses as “expansion done right.”

More than 50 years later, the Browns are equally excited to see the Research Park evolve. “Look what’s happened already. In 10 years, I can’t begin to imagine what it’s going to be like. The potential is just off the charts,” Cici says.



PHOTO BY DAVID MASSEY

The State of Florida concurs. Recently it agreed to match the Browns’ gift with an additional \$25 million. This funding will supercharge Embry-Riddle as an economic growth engine by adding a business marketplace focused on creating high-paying jobs. The Cici and Hyatt Brown Center for Aerospace Technology will soon rise in the university’s five-year-old Research Park with more than 105,000 square feet, including 40,000 square feet of research-quality hangar space. The couple’s gift will also support the development of the people needed to grow this high-tech economy, with a portion of the funds going toward scholarships to attract top talent to Embry-Riddle and its Research Park.

HYATT BROWN SEES THEIR GIFT AND THE MATCH AS A WINNING INVESTMENT IN THE AEROSPACE INDUSTRY AND IN FLORIDA.

“The future of space is boundless. The amount of investment, both private and public, in space exploration, is changing the way that we travel, changing where we travel to, that’s the future, and Embry-Riddle is right at the baseline, so that’s really good for Volusia County.”

He sees Embry-Riddle as a force that enriches the area intellectually, culturally and most measurably, economically. “In the last 10 years, the median family income in the county has risen faster than it ever has... When every boat floats higher, everybody benefits.”

THE EMBRY-RIDDLE DIFFERENCE

Historic gifts like those of the Browns rarely happen overnight; they are often the result of a long and meaningful relationship. For the Browns that relationship began with Coach Steve Ridder, who understands and cultivates integrity, the bedrock value at Brown & Brown. More than a decade ago, Brown & Brown launched a basketball scholarship and internships that turned into a valuable recruiting mechanism for the company.

Hyatt Brown says of his Eagle hires, “They’ve done exceptionally well. They are leaders in terms of sales, heads of offices and departments at our company. Embry-Riddle has been a great supply depot for us.” The ranks of certified flight instructors are also a pipeline, he adds: “Brown & Brown has seven pilots, all of whom are graduates and all of whom were flight instructors.”

Their extensive travel makes the Browns ambassadors for Embry-Riddle, and Hyatt Brown is pleased to see that “people know about Embry-Riddle everywhere you go.” They have even encountered a pilot in Africa who is a graduate. Their conversations with proud alumni are a delight. “They’re so happy to talk about what’s going on. Their enthusiasm is crazy. They light up like Christmas trees,” says Cici Brown.

KEEPING FLORIDA COMPETITIVE

In Hyatt Brown’s view, Embry-Riddle securely positions Florida for economic growth, adding the advantages of well-paid aerospace and engineering jobs to diversify the tax base beyond tourism. Tax advantages compared to the Northeast and Midwest may attract people to Florida, but its universities create opportunities to keep them here.

“Embry-Riddle and other universities in Florida that are quite advanced in engineering and programs important to the growth of aerospace put us in the catbird seat. I am looking forward to substantial continued expansion.”

Brown sees Embry-Riddle’s strength in technology-focused education as a big head start but one sure to face increased competition in the future. Good stewardship of gifts is essential to generate positive cash flow for stability and growth, he notes.

“Embry-Riddle is in the phase of its growth today where we are on the good side of going up the hill,” says Brown, citing the institution’s great product, great location and skill in marketing all of its assets.

BUILT TO LAST

Cici Brown advises, “Anybody who is thinking of making a gift to any institution: Do it. Don’t wait. Help some people who can’t get there on their own. If you’re giving money for scholarships of whatever level to these ‘built to last’ organizations as I call them, it’s a wonderful thing to do.”

“When you invest in an organization, that’s like putting your name on it, meaning: I approve,” her husband adds.

Cici Brown sums up their commitment to philanthropy simply: “It sure makes you feel good.”

Thanks to nearly 60 years of generosity and engagement, the Browns have a lot to feel good about, and there will be more celebrations for them to share in soon.

“Embry-Riddle is in the phase of its growth today where we are on the good side of going up the hill.”
— Hyatt Brown



RESEARCH PARK GROWS HIGH-TECH ECONOMY

The Cici and Hyatt Brown Center for Aerospace Technology will be the latest addition to the Embry-Riddle Research Park – already a proven driver of economic impact and high-paying jobs in aerospace and technology. Founded in 2017, the Research Park on the Daytona Beach Campus has already generated \$137 million in total economic impact in 2021 alone – a 50-percent increase from 2019. Targeting high-growth sectors, the Research Park supports more than 700 jobs overall, a 40-percent increase since 2019.

AT A GLANCE

\$137,000,000

ECONOMIC IMPACT IN 2021

\$75,000

AVERAGE SALARY

163

JOBS CREATED

\$101,000,000

OUTSIDE INVESTMENT IN FIRMS TO DATE

210

STUDENT INTERNS

25

TENANTS

FISCAL YEAR 2022

9

INVENTION
DISCLOSURES

8

PATENT
APPLICATIONS

2

U.S. PATENTS
ISSUED

NICAPLEX

APPLIED AVIATION AND ENGINEERING RESEARCH HANGAR

BUILDING SUCCESS

Embry-Riddle has invested heavily in infrastructure for the high-tech economy, including the following cutting-edge facilities:

- ▶ **The John Mica Engineering and Aerospace Innovation Complex** is the cornerstone of the Research Park, housing workspaces, labs and business support services.



- ▶ **The Wind Tunnel** is one of the largest and most technologically advanced subsonic wind tunnels at any U.S. university.
- ▶ **The Cici and Hyatt Brown Center for Aerospace Technology**, set to break ground within the year, will include makerspace and room for entrepreneurial activity (see page 7).
- ▶ **The Applied Aviation and Engineering Research Hangar**, with access to Daytona Beach International Airport, provides research and corporate lease space.
- ▶ **The Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center** currently under construction will expand the park's operations and provide production space for WeatherFlow-Tempest.

RESEARCH PARK TIMELINE

— March 2017 —

The Embry-Riddle Research Park opens with its cornerstone building, the John Mica Engineering and Aerospace Innovation Complex, hosting four initial startups.

— 2017 —

Alumnus Reamonn Soto ('17) wins the Research Park's inaugural Launch Your Venture entrepreneurship competition. His company **Sensatek Propulsion Technologies** takes root at the Research Park and goes on to win several funding awards for technology that increases the reliability and performance of jet engines.

— 2018 —

Embry-Riddle installs one of the largest and most technologically advanced subsonic wind tunnels, enabling researchers to further innovate in areas that include making landings at sea safer.

— 2020 —

VerdeGo Aero, a hybrid-electric aerospace powertrain firm and **SeaMax**, a light-sport aircraft maker, bring the Applied Aviation and Engineering Research Hangar to capacity.

— 2021 —

The Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center is announced and is expected to house the rapidly expanding Research Park tenant **WeatherFlow-Tempest Inc.**, the creator of a personal weather system accessible via smartphone app.

— 2022 —

Cici and Hyatt Brown give \$25 million to support innovation and high-paying job growth, including a planned Cici and Hyatt Brown Center for Aerospace Technology.

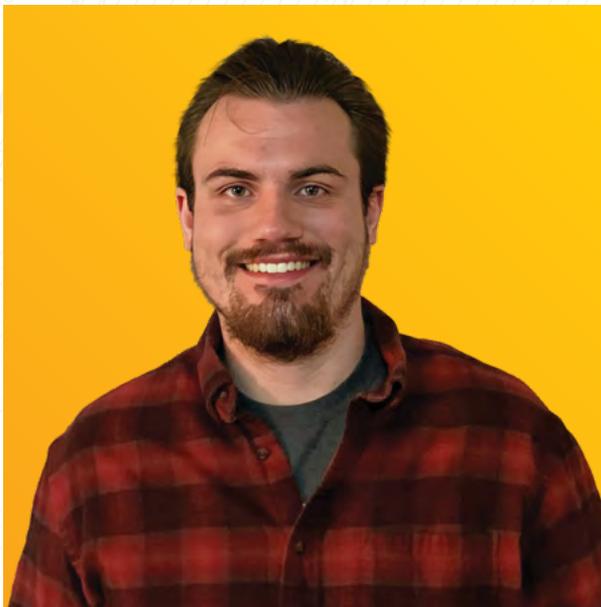
PROPELLING DISCOVERY

DUVA FELLOWSHIP RESEARCH DRIVES EFFICIENCY AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS | BY KIM SHEETER

In 2012, Charles and Elizabeth Duva established Embry-Riddle's first aerospace engineering fellowship to support doctoral students. The award goes to at least one aerospace engineering graduate student each year. The generosity of the Duvas reflects a continuing commitment to education and a belief that talented researchers bring immediate and long-term benefits to the community and the industry. Thanks to the stipend that is part of this award, three Duva fellows can focus on research that promises to bring advances to aerospace design, aviation training, and performance and safety.

"The Duva Fellowship enabled me to focus heavily on novel work, which led me to earn the SMART Scholarship and will continue to shape my career."

—Elias Wilson



ELIAS WILSON MASTERS ALGORITHMS THAT ADD UP TO SAFER SKIES

Elias Wilson ('18, '19, '22) is an Eagle Scout from Oregon with a passion for design and a commitment to volunteerism that encompasses tutoring and fundraising. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in Aerospace Engineering, and thanks in part to the Duva Fellowship, he will soon be Elias Wilson, Ph.D.

His graduate research has focused on model-based predictive control algorithms, which provide intelligent control decisions when compared to typical feedback algorithms. His dissertation examined the challenge for helicopters to maneuver and land during a total power failure. This research informed the development of a model predictive controller to maneuver autonomously and land a tilt rotor, tested with a high-fidelity model of a tilt rotor vehicle.

Wilson credits the Duva Fellowship with setting him on a path toward a string of successes in his research career, including winning a prestigious scholarship from the Department of Defense's Science, Mathematics, and Research for Transformation (SMART) Scholarship-for-Service program. The program's mission is to support the development of innovative scientists, engineers and researchers as part of a competitive workforce that can harness the dynamic trends in technology to protect national security.

"The Duva Fellowship enabled me to focus heavily on novel work, which led me to earn the SMART Scholarship and will continue to shape my career," he says.

KAELA BARRETT HAS A PASSION FOR FAST-ACTING INNOVATION

Growing up in the southern Caribbean nation of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, spotting a jet flying over her tiny island was rare, but Kaela Barrett ('20) was intrigued. "I was a curious kid, always asking, 'Why?' Before too long, I knew I wanted to be an engineer," she says.

Chasing down some of those "whys" brought her to the United States and Embry-Riddle. As an undergraduate pursuing her Bachelor of Science degree in Aerospace Engineering, Barrett worked with the Society of Women Engineers to tutor elementary school students and Girl Scouts in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) exploration.

Barrett plans to complete her doctorate in 2025 with a focus on computational structural mechanics and design optimization. Her current research involves the design and additive manufacturing of new materials that could help aerospace manufacturers create low-cost but highly reliable structures. These unique materials could increase the performance of scanning technologies and stealth fighters.



"I was a curious kid, always asking, 'Why?' Before too long, I knew I wanted to be an engineer."

—Kaela Barrett

The Duva Fellowship was additional fuel for her dreams. It allowed her to move on from a university job as teaching assistant in Aerospace Structures.

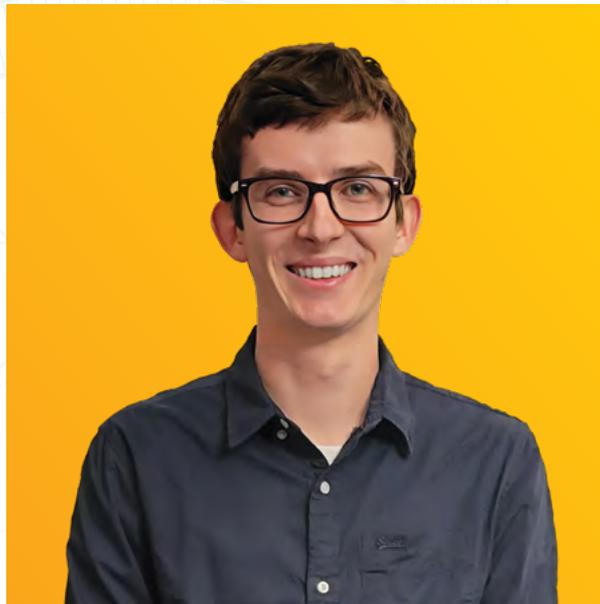
"Without the fellowship, I would not have been able to afford to continue my studies. The freedom to focus on my research is a huge advantage. My passion is in helping make people's lives better as soon as possible."

FREDERICK SCHILL EXPLORES THE HUMAN-MACHINE CONNECTION

Frederick Schill ('20) did not grow up in an aviation family, but when a classmate's father in the Air National Guard landed a Blackhawk helicopter at their school, he was one of the first to climb in. "What set me on an engineering course is a high school teacher who involved me in the Technology Student Association Flight Endurance competition. I learned a lot of basics building small, balsa wood airplanes," he remembers.

In 2020, Schill completed his Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering with a concentration in Computational Mathematics. Thanks to support from the Drs. Charles and Elizabeth Duva Endowed Fellowship, he's completing his master's in Aerospace Engineering where he is investigating machine-learning techniques to advance aviation safety. His work could help pilots and other operators solve complicated tasks with less prior knowledge because they will be able to interpret more abstract data rapidly, aiding in accident prevention.

After he earns his doctorate, he hopes to work at Northrop Grumman's Dynamics Control Group. Longer term, he would like to return to Embry-Riddle



"There is a lot of potential in figuring out [human]-machine interaction to improve pilot performance."

—Frederick Schill

to teach. "I'm fascinated by what I'm learning about optimal control and adaptive control for manned aircraft. There is a lot of potential in figuring out [human]-machine interaction to improve pilot performance metrics and improve simulation tools for student pilots that don't compromise the quality of their training," he says.



EXPANDING THE PIPELINE

PRATT & WHITNEY SUPPORTS THE FUTURE OF AVIATION MAINTENANCE | BY KIM SHEETER

Pratt & Whitney extended a helping hand to aviation maintenance techs wearing oversized work gloves. Their sponsorship allowed five women studying aviation maintenance to overcome an even more fundamental challenge than male-scaled gear and equipment. The company's generosity allowed the only all-female school team to get to the Aerospace Maintenance Competition presented by Snap-On and held annually with Aviation Week Network's MRO Americas.

Think of it as the Olympics of aviation maintenance. In April, teams from commercial airlines, repair and manufacturing companies, schools and general aviation converged on Dallas. These highly skilled teams were vying for the O'Brien Trophy, a 4-foot-tall bust of the father of aviation maintenance Charles E. Taylor. They faced 27 separate tests that required troubleshooting, cable rigging, damage inspection, removal and installation of units and a human factors exam.

For industry, the prize is the expanding talent pipeline. Mary Anne Cannon, vice president of the company's West Palm Beach Site & Development Operations, sees the sponsorship as an investment in critical talent: "We're happy our donation showcased that hard work on such a big stage. The Aerospace Maintenance Competition at MRO Americas is a great opportunity for students — the next generation of aviation maintenance technicians — to connect with the skilled professionals already in the field to continue to inspire and learn from them."

The team formed later than many competitors because of the pandemic. However, they quickly made up for lost practice time. Coach and assistant professor of Aviation Maintenance Science Cristin Klaus witnessed next-level teamwork as the competition progressed. "They are constantly going above and beyond to learn and perform with skill and efficiency, but I was proudest of how well they worked together," Klaus says.

Early recognition from industry leaders such as Pratt & Whitney sets students up to succeed. "Sponsorships allow students to embark on unique experiences, such as factory tours and access to advanced training equipment — these opportunities solidify learning and encourage confidence. I am excited to see students grow into accomplished maintenance technicians and future leaders in aviation maintenance technology," Klaus says.

Vanessa Vowotor ('22) has already launched toward leadership. Vowotor earned her Bachelor of Science in Aviation Maintenance Science focusing on safety and accident investigation the month after competing. A week after graduation, she moved to Virginia, where she is now an aircraft mechanic with United Airlines.

Klaus says the rest of the team still at Embry-Riddle are eager to go to the competition in Atlanta in 2023.

PHOTO BY JOEY HARRISON



PHOTO BY BERNARD MILCHUSKY

FORD HELPS STUDENTS SERVE COMMUNITIES

BY GINGER PINHOLSTER AND CAROLINE MAHALA

A project with roots in the island of Haiti is improving life in a food desert in Daytona Beach, Florida, thanks to a five-year, productive partnership with Ford.

This spring, Embry-Riddle students installed 18 solar panels in the community garden at Derbyshire Place in north Daytona Beach. This faith-based community center offers enrichment programs, recreational activities, support groups, free meals and job training.

The 16.9 kilowatts generated by the new solar array will allow the garden to spend \$1,000 less a year on electricity, which translates to 60

more meals a month for residents in need. That is the mathematics of compassion, according to Embry-Riddle student Marcella Smith, whose technical savvy and heart to help were first committed to an earlier university initiative, Project Haiti.

The new solar panel installation is something of a hybrid – an outgrowth of a five-year joint effort of student engineers, an Honors Program initiative and a Ford College Community Challenge grant. The initial funding from Ford supported water filtration projects in Haiti that incorporated solar purification technology.

When the pandemic made continued work in Haiti impossible, the Ford C3 Foundation allowed students to split the grant between international and local initiatives. They used half to design, construct and ship a solar-powered water purifier to a malnutrition center in Haiti and half for the solar array at Derbyshire Place.

The shift from water filtration in Haiti to sustainable agriculture locally was encouraged by Dr. Marc Compere, associate professor of Mechanical Engineering, working with Dr. Geoffrey Kain, Honors Program director and professor of Humanities and Communication.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Embry-Riddle students installed a solar panel at Derbyshire Place in Daytona Beach, Florida, this summer, saving the community center \$1,000 a year in electricity costs.



PHOTO BY BERNARD MILCHUSKY



PHOTO BY BERNARD MILCHINSKY

Ford Motor Company established the Ford College Community Challenge to encourage students to work with nonprofit partners to design and implement solutions to critical needs. The grant defines its challenge as creating “community projects that address critical local needs in new ways, with a focus on helping the community become a more sustainable place to work and live.”

Compere appreciates Ford’s flexibility in supporting the solar panel installation in Daytona Beach, which he sees as consistent with the goals of community service and hands-on experience for students. “The focus on improving community health and stimulating the local economy is identical to Project Haiti’s mission.” Students also gained direct experience with site planning, permitting, installation and working alongside other community volunteers, including local philanthropy and service organizations.

Students from the Honors Program work in the garden and operate a farmer’s market every Saturday. Proceeds from the sale of fresh produce benefit Hope Place, which helps displaced families and young adults who have aged out of foster care. Halifax Urban Ministries operates this nonprofit.

For two years, Honors student Grace Robertson (’22) coordinated student participation at the garden. Committing her engineering skills to community service was a factor that led to Robertson’s selection as one of Aviation Week Network’s 20 Twenties class, which recognizes emerging leaders in aerospace. Now a systems engineer on the Dream Chaser spaceplane for Sierra Space, Robertson credits the overall culture of Embry-Riddle with her success. She points to the Derbyshire Garden as a powerful influence.

“The culture at Embry-Riddle, of students and faculty doing whatever it takes, together, to make their dreams a reality, is what’s special. The goal was to break down equity disparities in race, gender, nationality and wealth. This experience will live with me always, as I learned I am nothing if not a servant to my community.”

In addition to the Ford grant, the solar panel installation earned additional support from The United Way Social Innovation Fund, local philanthropists Andrea and Larry Frank, and Halifax Urban Ministries.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY U.S. AIR FORCE

WHY I GIVE

HONORING THE PAST INSPIRES LT. GEN. STAYCE HARRIS TO PAY IT FORWARD | BY KIM SHEETER

Retired Lt. Gen. Stayce Harris ('87) earned her place in history as the first African American woman to hold the three-star rank in the U.S. Air Force.

She earned her undergraduate degree in engineering from the University of Southern California, followed by a master's in Aviation Management at the Embry-Riddle Worldwide Campus at Norton Air Force Base in California, later serving as adjunct professor.

In establishing a scholarship for Embry-Riddle students, she honors the past that inspired her and casts a decisive vote of confidence in the contributions of emerging aviators. The Lieutenant General Stayce Harris/Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship will become an endowed scholarship fund to support African American, full-time juniors or seniors who maintain a GPA of 2.5 or higher.

A SCHOLARSHIP HELPED SHAPE YOUR CAREER PATH. IS THAT WHY YOU CHOSE THIS FORM OF A GIFT TO EMBRY-RIDDLE?

Yes, absolutely! An Air Force ROTC scholarship allowed me to complete my undergraduate degree, and Air Force tuition assistance enabled me to complete my master's degree at Embry-Riddle. I remain very grateful for both. Now being able to give back and pay my blessings forward to the next generation of STEM and aviation professionals brings me joy and hopefully relieves, even in a small way, the worry of college debt when pursuing an education and, eventually, professional dreams.

YOU HAVE SPOKEN ABOUT THE LEGACY OF THE WOMEN'S AIRFORCE SERVICE PILOTS (WASP) AND THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN. WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO NAME YOUR SCHOLARSHIP AS YOU DID?

I named the scholarship to honor and continue the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen. I met the Tuskegee Airmen and their families three months before I went to Air Force Undergraduate Pilot Training (nearly 40 years ago). They've been my heroes/heroines, inspiration and extended family ever since. I dedicated my Air Force career to making them proud because I was so grateful they paved the way for someone that looked like me, as a black female, to follow in their footsteps.

IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU THAT STUDENTS APPRECIATE THE HISTORY OF THESE TRAILBLAZERS?

It is very important to understand the journey of our trailblazers and, if you're fortunate enough, get to meet them and learn firsthand from their wisdom and experiences. I feel fortunate that during my Air Force career, I met several WASPs and learned from their experiences as our first women Air Force pilots serving in World War II. Their passion for serving our nation, fortitude and most importantly their spunkiness warms my heart. They are true heroes! It was my greatest honor to have both a WASP and a Tuskegee Airman pin on my third star during the ceremony promoting me to lieutenant general.

IF A STUDENT BENEFITTING FROM YOUR SCHOLARSHIP COULD "BLAZE A TRAIL" OR BREAK A BARRIER AS YOU HAVE, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE THAT ACHIEVEMENT TO BE?

I would love for them to blaze their trail and own it. As I often share, I want people to "fly their own airplane" and blaze a trail that is uniquely theirs and then pay it forward by leading, mentoring and being a force multiplier by giving back to others.

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN EARLIER IN YOUR CAREER?

Academics are important. So give every class your best effort because your college grades may not completely reflect you or your potential, but they offer a first impression of your perceived abilities. You want that first impression to be positive.

IS THERE ANY ADVICE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE TO SUPPLEMENT THE SKILLS AND MASTERY STUDENTS WILL GAIN THROUGH YOUR SCHOLARSHIP?

I'll offer Tuskegee Airmen Brig. Gen. Charles McGee's Four P's formula for success: Perceive, Prepare, Perform, Persevere. And I offer a fifth P: Pay your blessings forward.



PHOTO BY TAMARA MERGAUD

PROJECT LIFTOFF SOARS

AVIATION CEO PROPELS INNOVATIVE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM | BY KIM SHEETER

Project Liftoff aims high with a mission to build a more inclusive and diverse aviation talent pool. A group of industry influencers initiated the program in 2021 to fund a student’s four-year tuition, and room and board. But they also wanted it to go beyond traditional scholarships. As part of the program, students would participate in learning communities and benefit from the mentorship of peers and industry experts, career advising and leadership development training — all with the goal of giving them life and career skills to succeed.

Chairman and CEO of Priester Aviation, Andy Priester, explains: “There are incredibly smart people in underrepresented groups, and we want to create a pathway for them to gain education and opportunity. When I heard about Project Liftoff, I saw it as a way I could contribute. We need to improve how we recruit talented people into corporate aviation and the aviation industry overall.”

The 70-year-old global aircraft management and charter company initially pledged \$50,000 toward a student scholarship. The curriculum and caliber of Embry-Riddle students inspired Priester to commit an additional \$25,000 to support another future Eagle. The second scholarship will be awarded when full funding is secured.

Fellow inaugural donors are Solairus Aviation, John King, Alaris Aerospace, Leslie Singer and Larry Noe, Sheltair Aviation, VanAllen, Candace Covington and Nat Iyengar, and Pete and Vera Agur.

The scholarship launch has been highly collaborative between donors and the David B.

O’Maley College of Business. Priester, who began his career in education, always enjoyed engaging with students, and he finds that he still does. He visited the Business Eagles and saw valuable potential. “They were everything an employer could hope for: eager, willing, interested, friendly and engaged. There was no one in that room I wouldn’t hire.”

Not only did the students win his confidence, he liked the university’s approach to aviation business education. “There are great schools out there doing what they did 20 or 30 years ago. However, I want to align with institutions that are thinking about where aviation is going.”

Although he is happy to “fly a desk” these days, Priester grew up in aviation and is a licensed pilot. Consequently, he recognizes the pervasive safety culture at Embry-Riddle. “Flying is more than manipulating the controls of an airplane. It incorporates preparation before you get into the cockpit. We need to hire trip coordinators and pilots and maintenance managers with that well-rounded awareness, whether it is their responsibility to file a flight plan or start an engine or turn a wrench.”

“They were everything an employer could hope for: eager, willing, interested, friendly and engaged. There was no one in that room I wouldn’t hire.”
—Andy Priester



PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT: ANDY PRIESTER, JERRY BRACEY, TODD ANDERSON (SHELTAIR AVIATION), AND PETE AGUR (VANALLEN GROUP)

A FULL-COURT PRESS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Jerry Bracey II (at left), the first recipient of the Project Liftoff Student Success and Scholarship program, is pursuing a degree in Aviation Business Administration with a focus on supply chain management. The Indiana native also joined the men's basketball program.

Bracey appreciates the comprehensive support he enjoys thanks to his scholarship. "I have the opportunity at Embry-Riddle to greatly better myself, not just in the game of basketball, but as a person and as a student. I have so much appreciation and excitement about Project Liftoff. The same drive, dedication and competitiveness I have on the court will translate to the classroom."

Priester has been in the stands to see Bracey's focus and discipline on full display on the court. Thanks to the vision of donors like him, there are wins ahead for other talented students — and aviation — as a diverse group of leaders emerge in aviation.

In shaping the industry, Project Liftoff donors are definitely not on the sidelines. As Priester sees it, "We can hope other people solve the challenges of promoting corporate aviation or we can take a leadership role by offering what's in our wallet and our own skills, experiences and the opportunities our companies can create. I want to get out front to attract the best talent. I choose an active approach because it's the smart thing to do morally, professionally and financially."

For more information about Project Liftoff, contact

Mary Lynn Ulch

386.226.7176 | ulchm@erau.edu

TRACY FORREST SCHOLARSHIP DELIVERS ON PILOT DREAMS

Tracy Forrest, who passed away in 2020, will always be remembered as a philanthropist, an accomplished pilot and a mentor to the next generation of aviators. His passion for aviation lives on through the Tracy Forrest Scholarship, established to help students launch careers in aviation and space.

Friends and colleagues established the endowment in 2020, prioritizing candidates seeking education to advance a lifelong interest and commitment to contribute to the aerospace industry. Ed Turley, Cyrus Sigari, Jon Callaghan, Jeff Forrest and Rae Lovenbury with the New Horizons Foundation contributed \$120,000 to create the scholarship to honor Forrest's commitment to mentoring young aviators and talented students planning careers in space. The donors have decided to commit their term scholarship for a total of \$400,000 over the next five years, in addition to establishing a \$50,000 endowment so that the scholarship exists in perpetuity.

Scholarships relieve financial pressures, but the first students to receive the Tracy Forrest scholarships in 2022 explain what a powerful and positive influence this generosity is on their families and futures.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

TRACY FORREST SCHOLARSHIP

CONTINUED FROM PG 17

“I was almost in tears when I got the call. It made me feel someone had my back.”

—Nick Meconi



NICK MECONI

Nick Meconi chose Embry-Riddle in Prescott for the strength of the flight program, small campus and the fact that it is just a four-hour drive from home.

He is working on his commercial rating and credits the fact that he passed his check ride for instrumentation rating to the support of his scholarship. He hopes to graduate in 2024.

A demanding degree program, a part-time job and the transition to responsible “adulting” keep him busy. However, he has begun to network by visiting EAA AirVenture Oshkosh this year and volunteering at a career fair. He hopes to become a peer counselor through the College of Aviation, extending his outreach as a member of the Flightline Advisory Board.

Volunteerism appeals to him. “During recent hurricanes, I saw pilots from all over the country delivering supplies and aid,” Meconi said.

“I want to spend a few years flying search and rescue and fire operations before I join a commercial airline.”

He sees the Forrest Scholarship as a vote of confidence. “I was almost in tears when I got the call. It made me feel someone had my back. There are times you question whether it is worth it — it is — but it helps to know people believe in you. When a reward like this comes along, you’re reminded: ‘You can do this.’”

“It really helped me get to the finish line.”

—McKenzey Piper Kimes



MCKENZEY PIPER KIMES

McKenzey Piper Kimes has been mesmerized by flying since her mother took her to EAA AirVenture Oshkosh as a child. She decided she wanted to be a hurricane hunter and is now majoring in Aeronautical Science with a minor in Meteorology.

While she is still considering an employer such as the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration after she earns her commercial license and graduates in 2024, she thinks she might like to fly for a cargo fleet like FedEx or UPS.

She is grateful that her scholarship makes those career goals closer to a plan than a dream. “My parents work hard to provide for us, but the scholarship was so helpful. Commercial training took me all year, and when I heard about the scholarship last spring, I could finish without any disruptions or restrictions. It really helped me get to the finish line. It took away so much worry so I could focus.”

ALEXANDRA MCGONAGILL

Raised in Palm Harbor, Florida, Alexandra McGonagill heard about Embry-Riddle from a neighbor, former F/A-18 pilot John Shea, who told her, “Everybody knows Embry-Riddle.”

Extensive travel throughout her childhood made an impression on her. “I got used to being in the air, and the sky became part of my life. I knew I didn’t want to be on the ground, sitting at a desk. I’d rather sit in the cockpit of an aircraft.”

She is now in the flight program and plans to finish check rides for her commercial rating this fall and graduate in 2023. Balancing academic and flight hours is demanding, but she finds time to support charities.

Through her sorority, Alpha Xi Delta, she has volunteered with the Kindly Hearts Initiative, which delivered Covid-19 relief to those in need and has since started helping foster children.

McGonagill appreciates the experience she has already gained in the aviation industry, including dispatcher training. “I’m leaning more toward military operations as well as the airlines and then maybe working with rockets,” she says. Her sister, Ashley, is still in high school, working on her associate degree through a dual-enrollment program. She is exploring possibilities in medicine.

“My scholarship lessens financial pressure on my family so my sister will have the same educational opportunities I do. I’m very family oriented, and all my hard work is for my family. I hope donors know that every dollar they give helps more than one person.”



“I hope donors know that every dollar they give helps more than one person.”

—Alexandra McGonagill

LUCA ANTHONY VIZZARRI

Luca Anthony Vizzarri is well on his way to following his father’s footsteps to become a commercial pilot. He has completed his private pilot’s license and instrument rating, and he is working on his commercial license.

On a campus tour, Vizzarri was prompted to apply with a plan to major in aeronautical science after hearing a comment from then Acting Dean of Aviation Dr. Michael Wiggins: “You can go to a school that has aviation, or you can go to a school that IS aviation.”

Vizzarri was born in Kansas to an Army aviator and Polish mother. As an Army brat, he moved nine times, living in Texas, Georgia, Italy and Germany. By high school, he was living in Florida, where he earned a reputation as a talented athlete, playing football and varsity wrestling at Oviedo High School. As a part-time lifeguard, he made six rescues. He is now a member of Sigma Chi and serves as president of recruiting for the fraternity.

His scholarship will help him realize his dream of flying for the airlines someday. “I do not know how to say ‘Thank you’ enough. I remember getting the phone call, and it was such a crazy feeling. I was beyond ecstatic. I can’t believe I was this lucky. The other goal I have in life is to pay back my amazing parents someday. They sacrificed so much for me and were great role models.”



“You can go to a school that has aviation. Or you can go to a school that IS aviation.”

—Luca Anthony Vizzarri

LIGHTING THE FIRE

FINDING MEANING IN SUPPORTING STUDENTS THROUGH PHILANTHROPY COUNCILS | BY DIANA MAZZELLA

In 2020, Rod Moore ('89), a retired naval officer, got an unexpected call. Would he be interested in joining a Philanthropy Council at Embry-Riddle's College of Engineering in Prescott?

The alumnus with a bachelor's in Aeronautical Engineering and master's in Civil Engineering agreed.

He was recovering from a traumatic brain injury. "I didn't know it at the time, but I was looking for purpose again," he said.

He says the experience lit a fire under him. In addition to giving \$2,000 a year for three years — split between scholarships and student projects in the college — council members choose student projects to fund while engaging and mentoring the students.

"When I got a chance to start reviewing all these projects, I got really excited again — and then to actually ask questions and have a chance to interact with the students is probably the most rewarding part of it. And to share our experiences as council members with them, and to have them give their perspectives and ask questions — that kind of engagement was really the most important part of the council, whether or not the projects got funded."

THE FUNDED PROJECT THAT LIT THE FIRE

One of the projects that did get funded that Moore remembers most strongly is a team of students working on a suborbital reusable vehicle. Since 2018, a group of students has been aiming to create a fully reusable rocket that would reach an altitude of 100 km at hypersonic speed. This is a relatively new area in college programs, and this group of students is aiming to establish a lower cost to make this kind of project more accessible to other students.

In fall 2020, they had a week to prepare to pitch their project to a new Philanthropy Council panel.

They were awarded funding and then again in 2021, receiving approximately \$8,000 in support from the council.

At a recent test flight in the Mojave Desert, the rocket cleared the launchpad reaching Mach 2. But a problem with the structure ended the flight prematurely. The team is investigating and aiming for their official maiden launch.

"It's about doing the hard things and pushing the boundaries — that is why we are trying to get to space," said Guarav Nene, the project's principal investigator and a senior in Aerospace Engineering from Seattle. "And as far as we know, only one other university has successfully done this with a student-built rocket."

Nene said the support from alumni on the Philanthropy Council since its inception has helped their nascent project, which includes three other members: David Hadley, a junior in Mechanical Engineering on the Robotics track from Seattle; William Knoblauch, a junior in Mechanical Engineering on the Propulsion track from San Antonio, Texas; and Cooper Eastwood, a senior in Aerospace Engineering from Los Angeles.

The financial support from the council is bringing their project to the finish line, Eastwood says.

"That large chunk of funding really put us in place to get this project all the way through so all four of us can see this through the end — so we can actually accomplish our goal of getting into space. Those alumni, they've been with us throughout two years now. And they'll be able to see our progress."

It's the encouragement that has proved invaluable, according to Nene.

"I know for our team it feels like we are taking a community of alumni along the ride with us."

—Guarav Nene

PHILANTHROPY
COUNCILS AT
A GLANCE

8 COUNCILS
4 IN PRESCOTT, 4 IN DAYTONA

106
MEMBERS

\$1,000,000
RAISED IN ADDITIONAL GIFTS FROM MEMBERS

“I know for our team it feels like we are taking a community of alumni along the ride with us,” Nene says. “I feel like there is a unique sense of community when we talk about our progress every year with them. We know them by name, we know their stories and they know ours.”

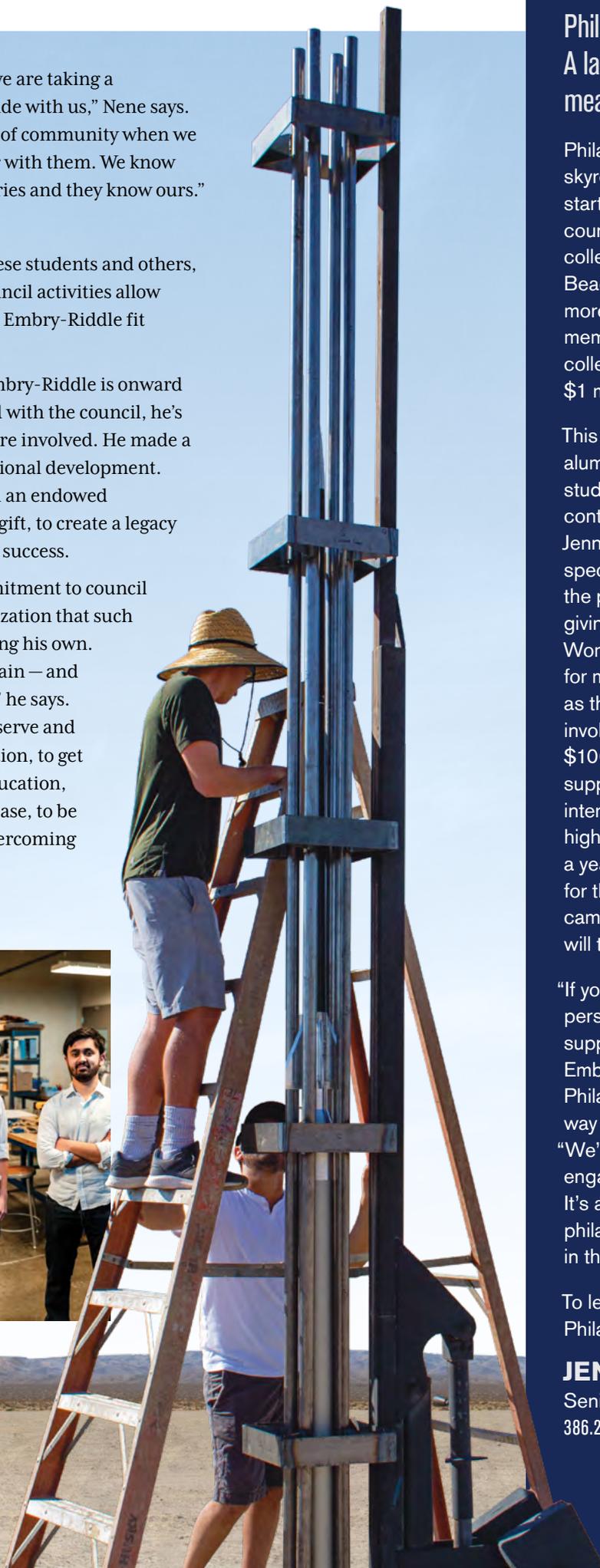
A RISING TRAJECTORY

Excited by his interaction with these students and others, Moore says that Philanthropy Council activities allow alumni to reflect on, “Where does Embry-Riddle fit in my trajectory?”

For Moore, that trajectory with Embry-Riddle is onward and upward. Since being involved with the council, he’s been inspired to become even more involved. He made a gift to the dean to support professional development. And he and his wife, Amy, created an endowed scholarship, including a planned gift, to create a legacy that contributes to future student success.

What started for Moore as a commitment to council service has now grown into a realization that such service can change lives — including his own.

“I have an opportunity to serve again — and that’s what I’ve missed is serving,” he says. “This was a way on the council to serve and to further Embry-Riddle’s reputation, to get a chance to be an amplifier for education, for service — and in my personal case, to be an amplifier for perseverance, overcoming obstacles and paying it forward.”



Philanthropy Councils: A launchpad for meaningful engagement

Philanthropy Councils have skyrocketed since they were started two years ago with four councils each at Embry-Riddle colleges in Prescott and Daytona Beach. Members have given more than \$600,000 through membership giving and have collectively pledged nearly \$1 million in additional gifts.

This model of engaging alumni and supporters with students and campuses is only continuing to grow. This year, Jenni Craig, senior director of special initiatives, who leads the programs, is launching new giving circles — in addition to the Women’s Giving Circle — one for military and veterans, as well as the Flight Society, which involve members contributing \$100 a month for three years and supporting their related campus interest groups. There are also high-impact councils at \$5,000 a year for three years, such as for the Research Park and for campus leadership initiatives that will target large-scale growth.

“If you are looking for a more personal, meaningful way to support student success at Embry-Riddle, then joining a Philanthropy Council is a great way to go,” says Craig. “We’re asking everyone to be engaged and get involved. It’s a chance to watch your philanthropy at work firsthand in the lives of our students.”

To learn more about the Philanthropy Councils, contact

JENNI CRAIG

Senior Director, Special Initiatives
386.226.7342 | craigj10@erau.edu

\$600,000
RAISED IN MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT

THE EMBRY-RIDDLE WOMEN'S GIVING CIRCLE

MENTORS TURN FLEDGLINGS INTO EAGLES WHO SOAR | BY KIM SHEETER

Some organizations with the most far-reaching impact start with a small but focused group. That was the case with the Ninety-Nines, founded by women pilots in 1929. What began with 99 charter members is today an international organization that still inspires and advances the education of women entering aviation.

The Embry-Riddle Women's Giving Circle, launched this summer, shares the Ninety-Nines' commitment to welcoming talent into a field where women can meet a need for critical skills. Their mission: Create a legacy to address the financial needs of female students and provide young women with role models and mentors who can pave the way to success in the fields of aerospace, aviation and beyond.

This growing group of accomplished women is reaching out to help those who will follow and — given the support they deserve — surpass their achievements. They will award the first scholarships in 2023 to students on the Daytona Beach and Prescott campuses.

Despite gains in other professions, women remain underrepresented on the flight deck, at the launch pad and in the C-suite of aviation and aerospace companies. A 2018 report estimates that only about 4.4 percent of airline pilots are female, with 7 percent certified by the Federal Aviation Administration.

The aviation industry benefits when women gain opportunities to push innovation and boost economic vitality. The Women's Giving Circle includes alumni, friends and industry experts who want to encourage the success of young women through mentorship, scholarships and industry insight and encouragement. Each member's contribution of \$100 a month over three years (a total

of \$3,600) endows a term scholarship for female students with financial need.

Founding members of the Women's Giving Circle include a brigadier general, CEOs, an airline captain and employees of NASA, Northrop Grumman, Aerojet Rocketdyne and Embry-Riddle. Their skills range from engineering and commercial aviation to spaceflight and information technology. Embry-Riddle's First Lady, Dr. Audrey Butler, chairs the group.

Senior Director of Special Initiatives Jenni Craig says the widening circle invites new members. "It's the perfect time to get involved! The founders are drawing on their backgrounds and experience to create momentum and build engagement between members, students, mentors and industry experts. Now we can focus on encouraging and elevating young women when they are making big decisions about their careers."

PROOF OF POTENTIAL

Embry-Riddle women are leaders in aviation. Notable graduates include Patrice Washington ('82), the first African American pilot of a major airline and astronaut Nicole Stott ('87), who combined scientific duties and artistic creation aboard the International Space Station. Members of the Women's Giving Circle continue that legacy. "Nikki" Schwanback ('97) is Deputy Manager for Flight at NASA. Dr. Tracy Lamb ('22) is CEO of Quantum AI. And Ana Vegega ('80) is a captain at United Airlines.

"It's been 42 years since I graduated from ERAU, and I have enjoyed a rich career in general aviation, aerospace, and the airline industry," Vegega says. "It's not only my passion, but I believe it's my responsibility to mentor and assist those who follow.

It was an honor to be asked to become a founding member of the ERAU Women's Giving Circle with the opportunity to advocate for a new generation of women as they chart their own course and work to achieve their goals."

THE NEXT GENERATION

One member of the new generation is Angelina Samaroo. On a whim Samaroo took a discovery flight as a teenager that shifted her career aspiration from civil engineer to pilot. She never looked back – but she does look around. As a member of the Flight Line Assimilation Program, she mentors flight students and helps bring diverse crews from regional and larger airlines to the Daytona Beach Campus for hangar talks. This outreach continues her science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) advocacy as a high school student in Niskayuna, New York.

She understands the power of examples and connections. "We gain a lot of honest insight by talking directly to people in the field. As a minority student, I know psychologically that when you are younger, seeing someone in the role you aspire to helps pave your way."

Vegega was particularly influential for Samaroo: "She is an amazing mentor. She has experience in corporate aviation and the airlines, and I'm still juggling which direction I want to go."

For Samaroo, mentorship takes the form of support as well as advice. "No matter who you are, pilots have a high drop-out rate. Earning your ratings is hard work with lots of highs and lows. Encouragement gets you through those lows."

Samaroo hopes to inspire and educate other pilots as a certified flight instructor at Embry-Riddle as early as next year.

Existing scholarships, like the forthcoming Women's Giving Circle scholarship, have also helped Samaroo on the path to her bachelor's degree in Aeronautical Science and her commercial rating. She plans to remain at Embry-Riddle after her December graduation and earn a master's degree. "I am leaning toward human factors with a focus on safety."

The Women's Giving Circle also includes peer mentorship. Through a women's ambassador mentoring program in the College of Aviation, female students and their families gain a friendly point of contact for questions and concerns. When they arrive on campus, peer mentors help them



"When you are younger, seeing someone in the role you aspire to helps pave your way."

— Angelina Samaroo

adjust academically and socially. Monthly mentoring meetings and phone calls with women in aviation keep them in touch with the industry and future employers.

Providing personal support to today's college students allows successful women to acknowledge those who helped them in their careers. Co-founder of the Ninety-Nines Amelia Earhart advised, "Never interrupt someone doing something you said couldn't be done." Almost a hundred years later, the Women's Giving Circle takes that idea to the next level by ensuring a lack of support does not interrupt success.

For membership information,
please contact

JENNI CRAIG

Senior Director, Special Initiatives
386.226.7342 | craigj10@erau.edu

A photograph of a man, Steve Ridder, wearing a dark jacket and a cap, reaching up to cut a basketball net with scissors. The background is a solid blue color.

GRATEFUL EAGLES

ATHLETICS SUPPORTERS HONOR LEGACY OF JAY AND LEILA ADAMS | BY DIANA MAZZELLA

Steve Ridder was 29 years old when he brought his wife and two children from Kentucky to coach the first season of Embry-Riddle basketball in 1989-90.

The team went 4-22, with two of those wins being forfeits. Home games were held in a middle school gym. There were no athletic scholarships.

But in 1991, his second full season coaching, the team improved to 22-8. Embry-Riddle hosted a series at the Ocean Center in Daytona Beach, and at a game against Flagler College, Embry-Riddle President Kenneth Tallman and Trustee Jay Adams (HonDoc '08) visited the locker room and spoke to the players about how the university was going to grow athletics.

“It was that day that felt like Jay Adams and I had connected,” Ridder said.

Ridder, who’s had a 34-year career at Embry-Riddle — including 20 years from 1993-2013 as athletic director — was eager to build the program, and Jay Adams became a father figure to the still young coach and administrator, offering advice and encouragement and never failing to support him and Embry-Riddle athletics.

Adams, who was instrumental in moving the campus from Miami to Daytona Beach, attended most games both home and away with his wife, Leila. A member of the Board of Trustees for 41 years, he’d call Ridder and give his feedback about how the most recent game was played. He fundraised for scholarships and capital campaigns to create the ICI Center, the Crotty Tennis Complex and the University Sports Complex. He established an internship program for students at his employer, Brown & Brown Insurance. And the couple brought in future board members and supporters to help the university grow.

Now the Daytona Beach Campus has close to 500 student-athletes on 20 teams with an average GPA higher than the general student body. Ridder says Jay and Leila Adams were a big part of that. Adams loved athletics and he loved winning, being especially proud to cut down the basketball net after a championship game.

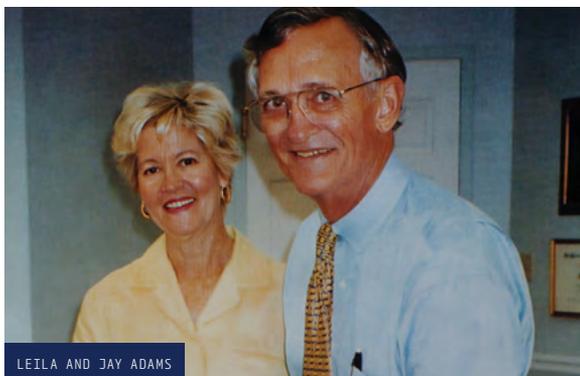
Jay passed away in 2019, followed by Leila in January 2022.

Ridder and friends of Embry-Riddle wanted to honor the couple’s decades of work building a network of support that is still paying dividends to this day. Civic leaders Cici and Hyatt Brown, Mori and Forough Hosseini, and Glenn and Connie Ritchey made leading gifts, and 100 percent of Embry-Riddle’s Board of Trustees, as well as other staunch supporters, have raised \$1.2 million to date for the Jay and Leila Adams Family Athletic Endowed Scholarship, facilities improvements and support for the men’s and women’s basketball programs. Upcoming improvements include a locker room and fan-seating zone in the ICI Center to be named for the couple.

Julie Adams Rand, the couple’s daughter, attests to their firm devotion to the university. “I think they would be honored and completely humbled by the outpouring of support,” Rand said of the fundraising initiative. “Athletics had such a special place in both my mom and dad’s hearts.”



PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT: THOMAS B. SOUTHARD, SISTER M.DOROTHY BROWNE, FORMER PRESIDENT JACK R. HUNT, JAY ADAMS



LEILA AND JAY ADAMS



PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT: COACH STEVE RIDDER, FORMER PRESIDENT STEVE SLIWA, LEILA AND JAY ADAMS



LEILA, JULIE ADAMS RAND AND JAY POSE WITH AIR FORCE THUNDERBIRD PILOT MAJ. JASON CURTIS ('11)

To make your contribution
to celebrate the legacy of

JAY & LEILA ADAMS,

go to givingto.erau.edu/adams

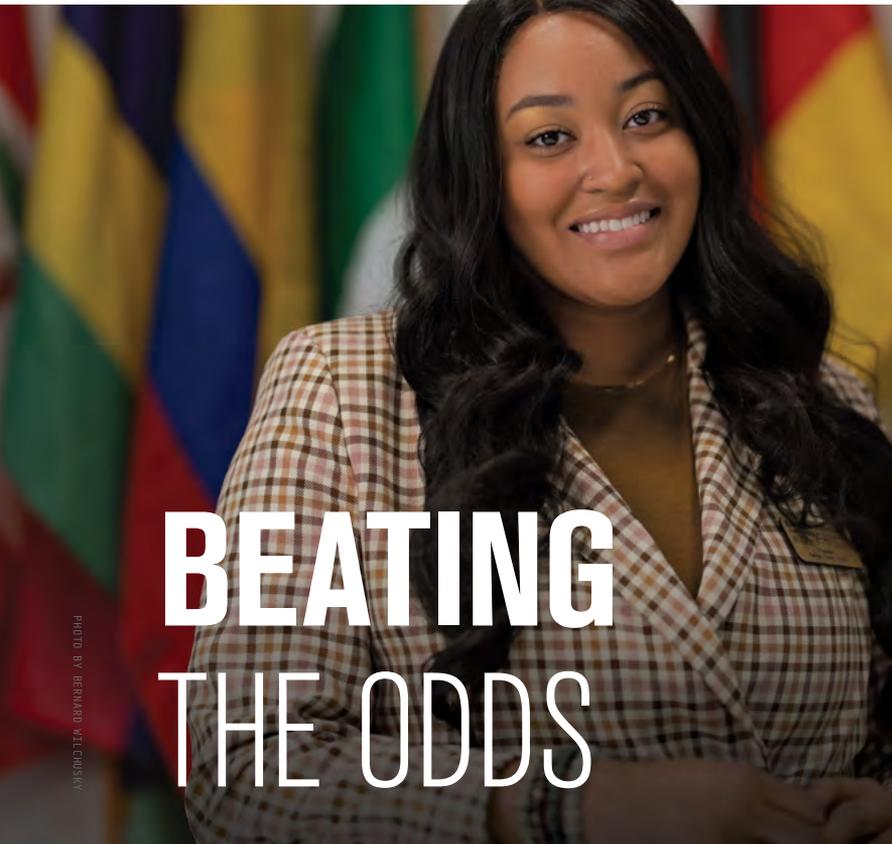


PHOTO BY BERNARD WILSON

BEATING THE ODDS

CLASS PRESIDENT THRIVES AT EMBRY-RIDDLE
BY MICHAELA JARVIS AND DIANA MAZZELLA

“When you invest in student scholarships, it goes beyond the classroom.”

—Angel Thomas

Twenty-two years ago, a newborn baby was abandoned in winter. First she was known as Baby Doe. Then she became Angel. Today, with love and support, she’s thriving and giving back to others what she’s been given.

Angel spent her first hours of life alone after being abandoned under an outdoor stairway at an apartment complex in Greensboro, North Carolina. Her biological mother, a child herself, hoped someone would find her and bring her in from the mid-November cold.

Luckily, a woman heard the baby whimpering as she was leaving for work at 5:45 a.m.

After being treated for hypothermia, Angel Thomas was fostered by a woman who later adopted her. It wasn’t until she was about 4 or 5 years old that Thomas learned she was adopted, and it wasn’t until she was in middle school, and the bullying started, that she began agonizing over the circumstances surrounding her adoption.

“I heard it all back then — like, ‘Your parents didn’t want you,’ or ‘You were a mistake,’” Thomas says. “All throughout that time, I just wondered: Why didn’t my biological mother want me?”

Her adoptive mother, Carrie Thomas, arranged for her to see a therapist, which Thomas says was crucial to her getting through that phase of her life.

“If I didn’t go through that therapy, I’m not sure I’d be here,” she says.

As a teenager, she leapt into leadership and service, from participating in youth mentorship and leadership organizations to joining a young pilots club, the Civil Air Patrol and two robotics teams. In 2018, she won Miss Teen Greensboro and was first runner-up in Miss Teen North Carolina. At Embry-Riddle, she volunteered with the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals, making food baskets around the holidays, and participated in professional development through the Student Leadership Summit and Women in Aviation panels.

This spring, Thomas (’22) was president of her graduating class at Embry-Riddle, earning a bachelor’s degree in Aeronautics, with minors in business and occupational safety.

In Thomas’ freshman year at Embry-Riddle, she received the Praise! Scholarship, an endowed scholarship established by Embry-Riddle Controller Jaré Allocco Allen. The scholarship has been awarded six times to women and underrepresented students at Prescott and Daytona Beach campuses. Thomas says the scholarship helped pay for books, allowing her to spend fewer hours working and more time studying.

Scholarship assistance helped her, and she knows it helps other students. “When you invest in student scholarships, it goes beyond the classroom,” she says. “Scholarships honestly help alleviate many financial burdens students may face. No matter what the monetary value of the donation may be, donating helps the students accomplish their goals and focus on classes.”

She’s now working as a warehouse environmental health and safety specialist at Amazon in Indianapolis and continues to share her story to inspire others. She says she embraces her personal history, which contributes to where she is today and where she’s headed.

“I don’t think I would change a thing that’s happened in my life,” Thomas says, “because everything has just taught me that, no matter what, you have to keep moving forward. You have to stay positive and learn to love yourself no matter what your situation. Because it’s not where you’re coming from, it’s where you’re going to. At the end of the day, you have to keep moving forward.”



AVIATOR'S SCHOLARSHIP BLAZES A HAPPY TRAIL FOR NEW PILOTS

A PLAN TO DELIVER ON DREAMS | BY KIM SHEETER

Playwright Lorraine Hansberry asked, “What happens to a dream deferred?” For Ken Jillson, the dream returned so much bigger that he had to share it. Applying both imagination and discipline, he spent a career chasing dreams and catching them. Now that he has rediscovered his passion for flying, he will help others do the same.

“I marvel at how fortunate I’ve been to have magical visions and make them come to life. It’s amazing,” says the recreational pilot who will put aviation careers in reach for Embry-Riddle students in need through the Ken Jillson & Al Roberts Happy Trails Aviation Scholarship Endowment.

The “full ride” for a student attending the Prescott Campus is available for up to five years and covers tuition and fees, books, on-campus housing, meal plan (or equivalent off-campus) and flight training fees.

In a career that spans public relations, marketing, fundraising, Broadway productions and a love of aviation that reignited after a long gap, Jillson doesn’t just believe in magic. He makes you believe, too.

FIRST LOVE

Trips to the Los Angeles International Airport with his father sparked his fascination with airplanes, but Jillson never wanted to be a pilot. He was attending Cal State, Long Beach, when his father’s death forced him to work as a bank teller to help his family and

get through school. He grew curious about a woman who appeared every Friday to deposit a fistful of checks. She told him the money was coming in to a flight school and invited him to try a discovery flight.

They put him in a Cessna, and he was hooked. He had to learn to fly. “To this day, I haven’t a clue how I got the money together for lessons. I was scraping through, putting myself through college.”

He soloed after 12 hours — not quite unshakably confident. “The airport at Hawthorne is parallel to LAX. I’d look out my window and see Douglas DC-8s and Boeing 707s landing, and I’d think: ‘Whoa, I’m in this dinky little Cessna 150.’ But I kept at it.”

After about 30 hours, a mistake followed by a dressing down from the tower rattled him. “I turned crosswind too quickly. When you take off, you have to make a left turn and I turned too soon. I had to report to the tower for a lecture. The whole thing freaked me out.”

He made the last entry in his logbook that day in 1967, too shaken to take to the air again.

Or so he thought.

(RE)UNITED AND IT FEELS SO GOOD

Aviation would return to Jillson in a big way in 2017. When Harrison Ford was involved in a mishap at John Wayne Airport, Jillson was dazzled by the star power — not of Ford — but of his Aviat Husky. “It’s a hot rod.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

It has big, fat tires, a tailwheel and a stick. It looks very old school — very Indiana Jones, but it has all the latest glass cockpit avionics.”

He fell back in love with the idea of flight.

“I was around 70 when I started thinking about picking up flying again. I had the resources and the time to study hard. I thought, come hell or high water, I’m going to finish my training and I’m going to have an Aviat Husky.”

Jillson studied two hours a day and flew twice a week at the Chino Airport, earning his private pilot license in 2018. He soon moved from rentals to his own Bonanza G36. Favorite trips include Catalina and Sedona, Arizona, which put Prescott — and Embry-Riddle — more prominently on his radar.

This year, the airplane market allowed him to sell his Bonanza at a profit. It was time to trade up to his dream plane. He recently took delivery of his hand-built beauty in October and trained for a week at the Aviat Husky facility.

Both of his planes have an Embry-Riddle connection. He sold his Bonanza to Cort Haynes (’00), and his test pilot at Aviat is Bobby Drouin (’20).

One of his delights is his Aviat’s tail number — 828HT. The first digits stand for his August 28 birthday. The HT stands for Happy Trails. The reference is a private salute to his life partner, Al Roberts, who would play the Roy Rogers song to signal an end to their dinner parties. Jillson and Roberts enjoyed a personal and professional partnership — including running a business and co-founding a nonprofit foundation — that lasted 50 years, ending with Roberts’ death in 2021.

Another red-letter day for him is a planned visit to Embry-Riddle in Prescott. “I have lived in a small town, Laguna Beach, California, for 50 years. I love the idea of making a difference in a small community.”

A HEART TO HELP, A HEAD FOR BUSINESS

Jillson is exuberant but not impulsive. His executor, who also functions as a business adviser, helped him examine how Embry-Riddle manages endowments. He liked the stewardship he saw, with the use of 5 percent of the donation so the bulk of the gift continues to grow through investment. He called the school and began planning his estate gift with Travis Grantham, Executive Director of Gift Planning and Special Gifts.

His friends in the arts heightened his awareness of the value of endowments. “Gifts that reach into the future help sustain good work. When people from the U.S. are planning their trusts, they should realize how a trust makes a big difference, whether a million dollars or multimillions. You have to plan ahead so you have some control before you take your final flight.”

“This all makes me very happy. I saw a press release about a big gift from Boeing in 2019, and I thought, mine’s going to be better!”

True to his natural enthusiasm, he is already an ambassador. “I’ve told people what I’m doing with the Harvard of Aviation and I tell them, ‘Look it up and you’ll see why.’ I’ve been blessed with resources, and I like the idea of helping a student with good grades and financial need on the career path to becoming a pilot. It would be very near and dear to my heart if the student could be from Laguna Beach.”

Another aspect of his affinity for aviation students is that he remains one himself. “I’m working on my instrument rating. It is hard to memorize all this stuff. But my pilot friends tell me it is the one rating you will cherish because it really means you are a better pilot. My goal is to earn that rating before the end of the year. Working on it!”

The artistic focus of his career may seem a departure from aviation, but to Jillson, the connection is imagination (with the hard work to back it up). “Things I’ve done don’t seem to have anything to do with aviation, but it all weaves a background of magic. If you dream it, you can make it happen. That is the gift that I’m really sharing. If you think you can fly, if you want to become an airline pilot or corporate pilot, you can do it. That Happy Trails Scholarship is the magic that will open doors that may appear shut.”

For more information on estate planning, please contact

TRAVIS GRANTHAM

Executive Director of Gift Planning and Special Gifts

386.226.7568 | travis.grantham@erau.edu

"Gifts that reach into the future help sustain good work."

—Ken Jillson

IMPACT

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION

Senior Vice President and
Chief Operating Officer

Rodney Cruise

Executive Director of Gift Planning
and Special Gifts

Travis Grantham

Executive Director of Philanthropy

Steven Bobinsky

Executive Director
of Alumni Engagement

Edmund Odartey ('04, '10)

EDITORIAL

Vice President, Communications

Ginger Pinholster

Assistant Vice President, Communications

Everly Chadwick

Executive Philanthropy Writer

Anthony Brown

Publications Editor

Diana Mazzella

Senior Writer

Kim Sheeter

Director of Stewardship

Stacy Martorella

Graphic Designer

Jesse McIver

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University is a tax exempt,
independent, nonprofit, nonsectarian, coeducational university.
Nonprofit ID: 59-0936101.

© 2022 Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. All rights reserved. All contributions in cash, stock and other gifts-in-kind received between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022, are reflected in this report. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this report. Contact the Office of Impact Reporting at 800.362.9285; or email uadonor@erau.edu with any corrections, questions or address changes.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Michael Amalfitano

President & Chief Executive Officer
Embraer Executive Jets

Mr. John Amore ('72)

Chief Executive Officer
Global General Insurance
Zurich Financial Services (Retired)

Mr. Kenneth Dufour ('85, '89)

President
Aviation Management Consulting

Dr. Charles "Chuck" Duva

President & Chief Executive Officer
Duva Enterprises Inc.

Dr. Jim Henderson (HonDoc '13)

Chairman & Chief Executive Officer
AssuredPartners Inc.

Dr. Mori Hosseini (HonDoc '13, '79, '82)

Chairman & Chief Executive Officer
ICI Homes Inc.

Dr. Janet Kavandi

President
Sierra Space

Mr. Neal Keating

Kaman Corporation (Retired)

Gen. Ronald Keys (HonDoc '19)

U.S. Air Force (Retired)
Principal
RK Solution Enterprises
Senior Advisor
Bipartisan Policy Center

Dr. Joseph Martin (HonDoc '18; '74)

*Office of the Chairman
& Vice Chairman of the Board*
Fairchild Semiconductor
International (Retired)

Dr. Sally Mason

President Emerita
University of Iowa
*Senior Fellow & Executive Search
Consultant* AGB

Mr. Steve Nordlund ('90)

Vice President & General Manager
Phantom Works
Boeing Corporation

Mr. David O'Maley

Chairman Emeritus
Ohio National Financial
Services Inc.

Mr. Glenn Ritchey

President & Chief Executive Officer
Ritchey Automotive Group

Mr. Jean Rosanvallon

*Special Senior Advisor to the Chairman
& Chief Executive Officer*
Dassault Falcon Jet

Mr. Zane Rowe ('91)

*Executive Vice President &
Chief Financial Officer*
VMware Corporation

Mr. Jon Slingerup ('81)

Chief Executive Officer
Lind Marine

TRUSTEES EMERITI

Mr. Harry Lamon

Principal
Lamon & Sherman Consulting (Retired)

CONTACT THE OFFICE OF PHILANTHROPY

Stacy Martorella

Director of Stewardship
martores@erau.edu | 386.226.6328



A PROFOUND IMPACT LEAVES
AN EVERLASTING LEGACY

GIVINGTO.ERAU.EDU
800.362.9285