BREAKING BARRIERS

Alumni, like Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. ('95), bring diverse backgrounds and a shared Embry-Riddle heritage to national leadership roles
When will you see us?

That was the theme of a silent protest near the Daytona Beach Campus after the killing of George Floyd. It is a fair question, and it deserves an answer — from institutions and communities, and from each of us as individuals.

To see the value of every person requires a willingness to take a hard look at yourself. You then have to be willing to learn and change, which should be the core values of any university.

To honor George Floyd, our campuses joined in a virtual memorial. We followed this up with two “Your Voice Matters” Zoom meetings. Students, staff and faculty shared their thoughts, feelings and experiences. These were candid conversations, not speeches, and the emphasis was on listening to each other. Some personal stories were painful to hear. However, I felt encouraged by the trust and mutual respect that was consistent across almost four hours, which means we have a solid foundation to build on.

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University has launched a search for a new senior adviser, a chief diversity and inclusion officer (CDIO). This new position extends our commitment to make aviation and aerospace more diverse and inclusive. We have taken steps in the right direction, including recruiting campaigns, scholarships, mentoring programs and awareness-raising channels and events. Our new CDIO will help us find new ways to recognize, attract, support and celebrate talent.

You then have to be willing to learn and change, which should be the core values of any university.

Senior Vice President of Philanthropy & Alumni Engagement Bill Transparent (’91)

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A Mathematical Solution

NSF grants fund pedestrian movement, disease-spread modeling to fight COVID-19

ow people move through a given space may offer clues to how infectious diseases, like COVID-19, spread. Sinrich Namilae, an associate professor of aerospace engineering at Embry-Riddle, is refining research he conducted on pedestrian movement — amplifying it with new data and disease-spread modeling — to help develop social distancing strategies as the world confronts the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We want to get an aggregate idea of how people are moving,” Namilae says. “For this COVID problem, the research is even more relevant.”

Namilae started researching pedestrian movement during the 2014 Ebola epidemic in Africa. Last year he was awarded a $600,000 National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to develop a cyberinfrastructure for this problem. He was recently awarded another $200,000 NSF RAPID grant, to incorporate new streams of data — from video footage from worldwide public-domain webcams, as well as from cellphone location systems — into pedestrian dynamics modeling. The mathematical models of pedestrian movement are based on the movement of particles, such as molecules, and were originally developed in materials science.

“All of this comes together so we can look at pedestrian data more comprehensively,” Namilae says, adding that he will be working with colleagues from the University of West Florida, Purdue University and Arizona State University, as well as with students from Embry-Riddle. The result of their research will be a cyberinfrastructure, or software system, useful to such decision-makers as civil engineers, aviation workers and public health professionals as they work to design the most efficient social distancing guidelines. The modeling could then be used to inform policies designed to mitigate local outbreaks of infectious diseases. “[The software] will help determine the best tactics, for example, in an airport,” Namilae says. “How should the security queue be designed? How should a building be designed?”

Theme parks are another example of a venue where crowds mix intensely. Additions to traditional serpentine lines that reduce mixing, such as temporary walls between the lanes of customers, can reduce infection rates to 25% of what they would otherwise be, Namilae says. Single-file lines represent an even more drastic reduction. By simulating many variations of different kinds of situations with pedestrian modeling and combining them with infection modeling, Namilae says it is possible to identify and quantify vulnerabilities, and determine crowd management strategies that may lead to lower infection rates.

— Michaela Jarvis

Tapped to Serve

Four alumni named to FAA task force

Four Embry-Riddle alumni are part of a new 20-member task force charged with developing strategies and processes that will encourage high school students to explore and pursue aviation-related careers.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao announced on July 17 the formation of the Youth Access to American Jobs in Aviation Task Force (YATAF). The following Embry-Riddle Eagles are among those who were selected to serve: Joanne “Jo” Damato ’94, vice president of educational strategy and workforce development for the National Business Aviation Association; Kasey Herzberg ’06, director of engineering for Aircraft Data Fusion; Nancy Shane Hocking ’07, manager of Pilot Gateway programs for JetBlue Airways, and John Hornibrook ’19, vice president of flight operations for Horizon Air.

Herzberg, who earned a Master of Aeronautical Science (MAS) from Embry-Riddle, says she is honored to be a part of the task force that’s creating a vision to help build the next generation of aviation leaders. In addition to her role as director of engineering at Aircraft Data Fusion, she is executive director of the Challenge Learning Center of Minnesota, a nonprofit that inspires and engages youth in STEM education. “This is an exciting industry with so many incredible opportunities. We need to just keep the cockpit open. It is imperative that we build a strategy to ensure youth have access to opportunities that expose and inspire them early on,” Herzberg says. Shane Hocking, who also earned a MAS from Embry-Riddle and holds a Ph.D. in Aerospace Sciences from the University of North Dakota, agrees. She’s been involved in research on pilot sourcing, hiring and performance, and in her role at JetBlue, she oversees programs that help prospective pilots make their way to a JetBlue flight deck.

“I am looking forward to working with this amazing group to expand aviation career pathways for every young person who has ever dreamed about taking to the skies,” Shane Hocking says. The YATAF will work to develop and provide recommendations to the Federal Aviation Administration to increase the number of high school students taking STEM courses leading to a career in aviation, encourage and support students to pursue aviation programs of study, and identify strategies and opportunities for apprenticeships and workforce development programs that lead to employment.

Damato, a certified aviation manager with an MAS from Embry-Riddle, says she was that “15-year-old highschooler” who was inspired to pursue a career in aviation, but her family, teachers and guidance counselors lacked the resources and information to help her start the journey. “I want to pay it forward,” she says, “to make the path into the industry clearer, especially for underrepresented groups and individuals.”

— Sara Wittrow

Embry-Riddle’s Economic Impact in Florida, Arizona Surpasses $2.3 Billion

The overall economic impact of Embry-Riddle in Florida and Arizona now surpasses $2.3 billion — up 44% since 2016, the independent Washington Economics Group (WEG) reported in August.

Embry-Riddle further supports nearly 18,000 jobs in Florida and Arizona — up from just under 14,000 in 2016, making the university “a leading creator of high-wage employment in both state economies,” according to the WEG report.

Additionally it found that the earning and spending power ofEmbry-Riddle’s alumni in Florida and Arizona generated $900 million and $86 million, respectively, in total economic activity this year.

Embry-Riddle’s Research Park is also an economic driver. The Research Park, which opened on the Daytona Beach Campus in 2017, has generated more than $30 million in economic impact in Florida and directly or indirectly created 500 jobs, many of which are high-wage.

— Ginger Pinnolater
I’m excited to announce that the inaugural cohort of the all-volunteer Eagle Writers Corps (EWC) is already hard at work. Two of our newest Eagle writers make their debuts in this issue: Tristyn Bemis (’20) and Kim Sheeter. For more information about the EWC, visit alumni.erau.edu/ewc.

A big thanks to those who completed the 2020 Alumni Attitude Survey, distributed via email from December to February. Nearly 3,000 of you took the time to share your opinions with us. Among the takeaways: 65% said they made a “Great decision” to attend Embry-Riddle; 58% said their experience as a student was “Excellent”; and 24% said their experience as an alumnus was “Excellent!” I’m happy to report that 24% also said they would welcome more printed materials from their alma mater (like Lift). See more survey results: alumni.erau.edu/2020survey.

There’s no need to wait for the next survey. Let us know what you think: liftmag@erau.edu.

— SARA WITHROW, EDITOR

In Memoriam
I was sorry to read in the spring 2020 edition about the passing of my classmate Joe Hajcak. Godspeed, Joe. Joe was the pilot who gave my wife, Marilyn, and me our first, and only, private flight aboard the Goodyear Blimp N1A from Watson Island in Miami on November 20, 1975. What a treat it was to leisurely cruise up and down Miami Beach at 37 mph (not knots) for an hour! He even let me have some “stick” time.

Stephen E. Goldhammer (’73)
B.S. Aeronautical Science

Chicken Coop Memories
Seeing the picture of the chicken coop in Lift (spring 2020: Wings of Legacy) brought back an old memory. I went to Embry-Riddle in 1955, and our dorm room was in the chicken coop, as was all of our ground school classes. We rode a van every morning to TAMARI Airport for flight training.

I attended Embry-Riddle for about six months and received my commercial. I got a job in Richmond, Virginia, immediately upon graduation, flying charters and power line patrol before I was hired to fly copilot on a twin Beech for a frozen food corporation in New Jersey. In July of 1956, I was hired by Capital Airlines, which merged with United five years later. I retired with just under 38 years of service.

Tom Bailey (’56)
Commercial Flight Certificate

Correction
The caption on this photo (spring 2020: Global, p. 29) should have read: Codou Mbow, co-founder of the Senegalese Alternative Learning Association, stands with members of the Saly Airshow leadership.

AHP Response
In response to W. Emory Chronister, spring 2020: Feedback AHP was a professional aviation fraternity, Alpha Eta Rho. I was a member in 1978-79. It allowed membership of both men and women. As a woman, it was one of the few clubs I could join at the time. We pledged and had an initiation ceremony, just like other fraternities, but we didn’t have any “crushes” going on.

Gail Tworek Martin (’79)
B.S. Aeronautical Studies

Epsilon Rho Chapter of Alpha Eta Rho
While the student chapter is inactive at this time, we have a strong alumni organization with over 700 brothers and sisters. I was chapter president starting in Miami in 1964. I am anxious to meet any members from the founding of the chapter in 1960.

Richard L. Thompson (10, ’82)
B.S. Aeronautics and Engineering Master of Aeronautical Science

IN OTHER WORDS

You’ve Got to Be Twice as Good
BY KEITH BASKET (’82)

I grew up in the Washington, D.C., area, and for as long as I can remember I wanted to fly.

My story could start with the 5-year-old version of me who, as a passenger on one day on a Piedmont Airlines 727, thought to himself, “I want to do this when I grow up.” Fast forward to 2020, and that little kid is now a 707 captain for a major airline. Dreams actualized — not that it was the least bit easy or guaranteed.

Growing up, and later as I was learning to fly, I heard the same loving admonition from my mother countless times: “You’ve got to be twice as good.” Although her advice may not have been as applicable to me as it was to the generation of African Americans that preceded me, I took it to heart and set off on my educational and career trajectory.

Once at Embry-Riddle, I was fortunate to have met John Paul Riddle himself. I learned to fly; took advantage of the career center’s industry contacts to help land my first job; made lifelong friendships and presided over the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity.

Had I chosen a career path that, quite frankly, would not have been available to my father, who even as a World War II veteran would have faced obstacles and opposition in a system where policies of exclusion were taken for granted, and Black airline pilots were all but nonexistent. By the time I entered college in the 1980s, the commercial pilot population was still only 1% African American.

Today that number approaches 3%, while African Americans make up 13% of the U.S. population. We’ve come a long way, but we still have a ways to go.

You’ve Got to Be Twice as Good”

BY KEITH BASKET (’82)

An airplane itself certainly doesn’t care about the race, color or creed of its pilots. And as skilled, highly trained professionals, our ability to perform at the highest levels is never a function of race, gender or ethnicity. However, while piloting skills may be the great equalizer, the opportunity to become a pilot has been historically limited.

The greatest strides in diversifying the cockpit have occurred only in the last few years. Regrettably, some of those gains may be reversed as the industry responds to current, worsening economic realities. Nevertheless, the cyclical nature of the industry has proven that “now” is the best time to prepare for the future. I was encouraged by the host of young African American students, as well as recent graduates, whom I met in my panel discussions at the Embry-Riddle campus earlier this year. It is incumbent on you to get in the game and help make a difference.

Meanwhile, I’m proud of the ways in which a once insular industry has evolved and continues to do so. This is an industry that must embrace positive change and realize that as both a profession and a nation, we benefit by tapping into the talents and experience of everyone, not just some. The demographic data will let you know if your inclusion efforts are truly successful. As alumni, we are both part of, and leaders of, this effort.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Basket earned a B.S. in Aeronautical Science in 1982. He was a guest panelist at Embry-Riddle’s 2020 Black Alumni Reunion in February. A captain for United Airlines, he resides in New York.

SEND US YOUR STORY In Other Words gives you the opportunity to share your industry-related or personal perspective with Lift readers. Email submissions/proposals to liftmag@erau.edu.

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Capt. Brian Florence (’90) has flown with United Airlines for nearly 30 years, but one of his most memorable flights was the last ride of John Paul Riddle. Florence was an Embry-Riddle student just shy of his 21st birthday when he flew to South Florida to scatter the ashes of Embry-Riddle’s co-founder.

“I met [Riddle] on campus several times. I first spotted him grabbing a bite at the grill in University Center,” Florence remembers. “He was an older gentleman in a ball cap and blazer. He laughed a lot and seemed very kind. When someone told me who he was, I walked over to shake his hand. He was very interested in talking with students.”

When Riddle died in April 1989, the Daytona Beach Campus hosted a memorial. On display was his portrait, draped in school colors and a floral arrangement in the shape of an airplane.

Florence had the skills but not the wardrobe. “I had to find a blazer, shirt and tie,” he says. He flew one of the school’s Cessna 172s from Daytona Beach to Miami International to meet Tandy Miles Riddle, who entrusted him with her father’s ashes.

It was a nerve-wracking flight for a new pilot. Although Eastern Airlines was on strike at the time, Miami was an exceptionally busy airport. “We were on approach between two DC-10s with their higher approach speeds. For me to come in at 120 knots as the last plane on a busy airport...”

John Paul Riddle also had a resting place on land — with the Royal Air Force (RAF) crest. In two neat rows in the southwest corner of Oak Ridge Cemetery in Arcadia, Florida, standing sentry over 23 tombstones that carry the British Royal Air Force (RAF) crest, is a gravesite marker commemorating his life rests at the British Plot of Oak Ridge Cemetery in Arcadia, Florida.

It wasn’t a lot of ceremony, but it was aviation in its purest form: A young pilot, in one of our planes from a pioneer’s namesake university, set him free.” — CAPT. BRIAN FLORENCE (’90)

In the plane were Wiggins, now professor and chair of the department of aeronautical science, and George Thune, university public relations director. The trio flew over Coral Gables out to sea, and at about 800 feet, they scattered the ashes. “I was nervous about the dispersal, but I held the plane steady while Dr. Wiggins dispersed Mr. Riddle’s ashes,” Florence remembers.

Florence says giving Riddle his final ride home is one of his most cherished memories. “It wasn’t a lot of ceremony, but it was aviation in its purest form: A young pilot, in one of our planes from a pioneer’s namesake university, set him free.”

Like Riddle, Florence also committed to a life in aviation. Today, he flies Airbus A320 and 319 aircraft for United Airlines throughout North America and the Caribbean.

AMIDST BRITISH TRAINEES

These deaths spanned five years, 1941 to 1945, and not all were the result of flying accidents. Two airmen died of spinal meningitis shortly after they reported for training, and one died in a car crash. Arman Alfred Thomas Lloyd accidentally drowned in a hazing incident only hours after his first solo in 1942. Later that year, the first flying casualty buried at Oak Ridge was Roger Bensley Crosskey. The final deaths occurred just four days before V-E Day and the surrender of Germany; two airmen died when their A-6 training aircraft crashed in Belle Glade, Florida.

On April 19, 1989, Capt. Brian Florence (’90) recorded his flight from Daytona Beach to Miami International to spread John Paul Riddle’s ashes out at sea.
INDUSTRY ROUNDTABLE

C. Jeffrey Knittel ‘80, CEO, Airbus Americas
Rebecca Possili-Cilli ‘90, President and COO, Freescale Aircraft Ltd.
Ray Janisco ‘91, Manager, FedEx Express Crew Travel Services
John Hackworth ‘09, Founder, Professional Pilots of Tomorrow and pilot for JetBlue

“we’ve all been holding our breath since early March, and our faces are turning blue.”
— John Hackworth ‘09

The global economy is still reeling from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, which hit the United States in March 2020. The aviation industry has arguably experienced the greatest financial toll of any sector. The International Air Transport Association projected in June that worldwide, airlines will lose more than $84 billion this year, and passenger traffic may not achieve pre-COVID-19 levels until 2024. We reached out to executives in a variety of aviation business sectors—from global aircraft manufacturers and charter services, to airline pilots and cargo operators—to get their take on this crisis. Here’s what they had to say:

Q: how has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your business sector to date?

C. Jeffrey Knittel ‘80: This is the worst downturn that this industry has faced. The pullback here has been much more dramatic than 9/11, and it’s been global. No one has seen anything like it. Revenue passenger miles at one point were down 90%.

This is a high-fixed-cost business. If you have an 80% to 90% drop in passenger kilometers, you need for airplanes today drops. That is putting a lot of pressure on this industry. The industry as a whole is pulling back—slowing things to maintain our balance sheets.

As a member of ALPA’s Pilot Peer Support (PPS), I personally have seen an uptick in the number of calls from pilots across the network.

Our responsibilities as trained PPS volunteers are to act as an ear for those struggling with their circumstances and provide them the tools and resources to help themselves. It’s important to acknowledge the growing mental and emotional struggle from facing an uncertain future. We’ve all been holding our breath since early March, and our faces are turning blue.

Ray Janisco ‘91: Early in the pandemic there was a drop in demand in several markets. There has since been a significant increase in demand for continued and expanded operations to support movement of business-to-business and business-to-consumer goods, and with that, an above normal increase in the fiscal expense for materials and manpower to conduct those operations.

In addition to the expenses every business is encountering, such as personal protective equipment and sanitizing of facilities, we also have to meet the stringent, and sometimes frequently changing, COVID-19 entry requirements of many foreign governments. Those restrictions have required changes to routing, augmenting crew, conducting in-country COVID-19 testing and utilizing more costly government-designated hotel vendors.

So while FedEx Express is experiencing volumes usually not seen until the holiday peak season, it’s taking a tremendous amount of additional effort and an unusual amount of expense to meet demand and maintain our high level of service.

Q: how do you see the coronavirus crisis disrupting aviation in the future?

Knittel: In terms of international flying, I think you’ll see airlines operating a more fragmented system instead of operating hub to hub. As most airlines have learned over time, the yields are better when you’re operating spoke to spoke, and passengers will pay for not having to connect into a hub.

Smaller passenger airplanes will also be in greater demand, such as the A220 and the A321. And as routes open up— or even as people want to fly transcontinental and transatlantic—the 321LR and XLR, which can accommodate passenger loads of 190 to 170, will be a great fit.

The A321XLR has only been out less than a year in summer 2020. The market is there, and I think COVID will turn around and maintain our high level of service.

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What’s in a Label?

Three alumni look ‘inside the box’ to develop the latest machine learning innovations

BY LAUREN JOHNSTON

A Tool for Tomorrow

The tool, and the company they’ve formed, is called Labelbox. A web-based platform, Labelbox allows users to identify and label items portrayed in an image, so that these items can be parsed, via a proprietary machine learning algorithm, to extract meaningful insights. The platform also allows users to coordinate the activities of individual labelers, whether it’s a handful or thousands. The platform will allow users to coordinate the activities of individual labelers, whether it’s a handful or thousands.

The three aerospace engineer entrepreneurs acknowledge that their shared college experience created a lasting bond and a burning desire to innovate. “It has been the most transformational experience of all our lives, meeting there [at Embry-Riddle] together,” Sharma says.

And even as they change the landscape of machine learning and AI, Sharma says the three continue to be interested in aviation. “Our world is very much like Embry-Riddle, even today.”

Fighting COVID-19 With Data

Multiple organizations that are working on vaccines, treatments and cures for the COVID-19 disease caused by the new coronavirus are using Labelbox as a tool in their arsenal.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Sharma, Rieger and Jou expressed their gratitude to professor Snorri Gudmundsson, Glenn Greiner, Yongho Lee, Brian Butka, William Barott and Jianting Liu for their mentorship and support.
Alumni bring diverse backgrounds and a shared Embry-Riddle heritage to national leadership roles

BY ALAN MARCOS PINTO CESAR AND MELANIE STAWICKI AZAM

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force JoAnne S. Bass ('05) is the first woman and the first Asian American to serve as the Air Force’s highest-ranking enlisted leader.
Leading the U.S. Air and Space Forces

Perhaps no one soared higher than Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. (’95), who made history on June 9, 2020, when the Senate unanimously confirmed his nomination as the 22nd chief of staff for the U.S. Air Force. Brown is the first African American to serve in this role — and the first to lead any U.S. Armed Force as its highest-ranking officer.

A command pilot who holds a Master of Aeronautical Science from Embry-Riddle, he credits his achievement in part to his ability to see challenges as opportunities, and to African American leaders across the Air Force and military who inspired him, “like the Tuskegee Airmen, Benjamin O. Davis Jr. and Chappie James.”

Honorary Embry-Riddle alumna and Secretary of the Air Force Barbara Barrett (HonDoc ’06) had the privilege of swearing Brown into his new post on Aug. 6.

In taking his oath of office, Brown attained something that would likely have been unimaginable for his grandfather, Robert E. Brown Jr., who served in an all-Black unit during World War II, and his father, Charles Brown, who grew up in segregated San Antonio, Texas. Today, only 8.8% of all military officers are Black, according to Pentagon statistics.

Prior to his recent appointment, Brown commanded the Pacific Air Forces and the air component of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. He admits he faced challenges in his career ascent.

“I felt pressure to perform error-free, especially for supervisors I perceived had expected less from me as an African American. I felt that as I rose through the ranks, I often had to work twice as hard to prove their expectations and perceptions of African Americans were invalid, in order to pave the way for those behind me,” he says. He learned to walk an invisible tightrope between two worlds: “You learn to adapt to the majority while still providing your perspective as an African American, and not the perspective of all African Americans,” Brown says.

Following the public outcry against the May 25, 2020, police killing of George Floyd, a Black resident of Minneapolis, the four-star general was prompted by his son to make a public statement.

Brown recalls, “He asked me, ‘Dad, what’s PACAF (Pacific Air Forces) saying?’ which is code for, ‘Dad, what are you saying?’” Brown responded by posting a video (produced by PACAF) on social media. In it he stated: “I can’t fix centuries of racism in our country … [But] I’m thinking about how I can make improvements personally, professionally and institutionally, so that all airmen, both today and tomorrow, appreciate the value of diversity and can serve in an environment where they can reach their full potential.”

Honoring this intention, one of Brown’s first official duties as chief of staff was to appoint JoAnne S. Bass (’95) as the 19th chief master sergeant for the Air Force. CMSAF Bass now holds the distinction of being the first woman and the first Asian American to serve as the Air Force’s highest-ranking enlisted leader. “It is a moment that could not have taken place without the efforts of many women who have gone before me,” said Bass, at her Aug. 14 transition ceremony. “Our Air Force today is on the right side of history … we are focused on setting a foundation for all Americans to see themselves in this great institution.”

Chosen from more than a dozen finalists, Bass, who holds a B.S. in Professional Aeronautics from Embry-Riddle, was promoted from command chief, Second Air Force, at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi. Her new role includes continuing work on diversity and racial equality in the Air Force.

“As we reflect on the past, we must also look forward to cultivating an environment filled with innovation, with collaboration, moving toward our future … a future where we embrace true diversity and forge an inclusive culture where our airmen’s talents, what they bring to the fight, are embedded deep in our roots,” she said.
Secretary Barrett, who leads the U.S. Air and Space Forces, says she feels fortunate to have Brown and Bass on her executive team. “The department benefits from their leadership,” she says.

As a female leader in a male-dominated profession, Barrett is also known for breaking socio-cultural boundaries. Her achievements were hard fought. After her dad died when she was 13, she went to work to support her five siblings, herself and her mother. “Whatever measure of success I achieved, it was born of necessity,” she says.

An Arizona native, Barrett has also been a cattle and bison rancher for close to three decades; plus, she’s an instrument-rated pilot, and trained and certified for space flight.

“I am fortunate to be from Arizona, where women have been in leadership roles for a very long time — where what you produce is what matters, as opposed to gender or race,” she says.

Former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, whom Barrett worked for when Day O’Connor was an Arizona state senator, was one of her mentors and role models.

Barrett, who taught leadership as a Harvard Fellow at the Kennedy School of Government, says she has seen a lot of change over the decades, and there is much less resistance today to women in leadership positions.

“Leadership takes energy, a vision and determination to get things done,” she says.

“Leadership is in ample supply among women today around the world.”

Leveling the Field
Maj. Gen. Deanna Burt (’91), who served as director of operations and communications for the U.S. Space Force and is now commanding officer for the Combined Force Space Component Command (CFSCC) at Vandenberg Air Force Base, would agree.

When Burt commissioned into the Air Force out of Embry-Riddle’s ROTC Detachment 157, women weren’t allowed to be fighter pilots.

Burt, who earned a B.S. in Aeronautical Engineering from Embry-Riddle, chose the Air Force because of a scholarship. She expected to exit to the private sector after fulfilling her four-year obligation. But during those four years, her friend Jeannie Lavatt (née Flynn) became the first female fighter pilot.

“The passion and desire for flying that I saw in my female counterparts at Embry-Riddle ... now they had a chance and the door was open. I saw many go from T-38 or heavy pilots and cross over to fighter pilots after that,” Burt says.

But what made Burt fall in love with the Air Force and make her career there, was its system of meritocracy — basing promotions on a person’s performance, first and foremost. Later, when she became chair of the developmental team, she put the system into practice herself. When low-performing captains were identified, a team member would provide them with additional mentorship, she says.

This effort helps level the playing field, regardless of a person’s background, Burt says, which brings diversity into leadership — an important goal. “If all you see is a bunch of old white guys, you don’t see a future at the company. You’ve got to be willing to grow people to bring them all the way to the top. I have absolutely been a product of that.

“But it has to be a meritocracy. You can’t artificially put them in by quota, or your organization will struggle as well. Diversity takes time. It has to be persistent.”

Now, decades into what started as a four-and-done commitment, Burt is leading the CFSCC for the nation’s newest military branch — the Space Force — and she wants to make diversity a big part of its success.

“Without diversity, you struggle with new ideas. If you don’t have diversity in age, gender, ethnicities and experiences, you won’t get to a full picture of how best to change and make the Space Force as cutting-edge as it needs to be,” Burt says.

Paving the Way for Immigrants
U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Valdiva Mehana (’13, ’17) is helping to transform military policy and practices. In July, she received the prestigious American Immigration Council’s American Heritage Award for her efforts on behalf of immigrants.

“My accomplishments and contributions to America wouldn’t have been possible if I didn’t have people who helped me along the way,” says Mehana of the award. “It was not easy to get here; it was a very long journey.”

At age 17, Mehana and her family fled the war in Kosovo and lived as refugees in Germany until she was 16. When the war was over, they returned home to a destroyed house and a country in ruins. After working as a U.S. military contractor in Iraq and Afghanistan, Mehana came to Daytona Beach, Florida, in 2010 to attend Embry-Riddle and pursue her dream of becoming a pilot.

Secretary of the Air Force Barbara M. Barrett (Hon.Dept. ’97) admires the work of Office to Inventing Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. (’95), her husband. Shareen, holds the Bible. Brown is the 22nd chief of staff of the Air Force and the first African American to serve in this role.

At Embry-Riddle, Mehanja earned a B.S. and an M.S. in Aeronautical Science, worked as a certified flight instructor and competed (and finished first) in the 2013 and 2014 Air Race Classic (collegiate division). She also placed third (2013) and second (2014) overall in the all-women’s cross-country flight competition.

In 2015, she enlisted in the U.S. Army under the Military Accessions Vital to National Interest (MAVNI) program with the goal of becoming a Black Hawk helicopter pilot. Despite becoming a naturalized citizen in 2016, Mehanja encountered career-limiting obstacles based on her foreign born status. She fought back and was ultimately allowed to join Officer Candidate School and become an Army aviation officer.

In September 2020, she completed her Black Hawk pilot training. She has since transitioned from active-duty service to the Alabama National Guard and aspires to work fulltime as an airline transport pilot.

“Leadership takes energy, a vision and determination to get things done. Leadership is in ample supply among women today around the world.”

— SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE BARBARA BARRETT (HONDOC ’06)
Legal Eagle
Constantine Marantidis (’84)

brings an engineer’s perspective
to intellectual property law

BY COLLEEN RINGER

U pon graduating from Aviation High School in New York City, Constantine Marantidis (’84) thought he’d become a commercial pilot. He moved to Daytona Beach, Florida, to begin his Embry-Riddle education and soon switched from the aeronautical science program to engineering. “I wanted to have a science degree in case the flying thing didn’t work out,” he says. “Back then, you couldn’t do both at Embry-Riddle, so I got a phenomenal, hands-on engineering education from Embry-Riddle, graduating with two Bachelor of Science degrees — one in aeronautical engineering and one in aircraft engineering technology. I also obtained my commercial pilot’s certificate with multi-engine and instrument ratings from outside of Embry-Riddle.”

After attending Embry-Riddle, Marantidis attended Columbia University, where he received a Master of Science in Engineering Mechanics and then attended Loyola Law School, Los Angeles. “To be honest, coming from a smaller school, I was surprised I was accepted at Columbia,” he says, “but I figured I had the grades, so I could handle it — which speaks to the wonderful education I received at Embry-Riddle. The professors really helped you understand why things work the way they do. They get us to think differently, and it paid dividends. “The innovations Marantidis has protected aren’t limited to air and space — they’re also in commonplace public settings. “We have protected and defended the Koala Kare® baby changing station you see in bathrooms,” he says. “[And], we’re defending a company that makes bollards,” which are the posts that jut out of the ground around the perimeters of buildings to deter vehicular attacks, in a patent infringement suit.

Currently, Marantidis manages the creation, enforcement and licensing of patent and trademark portfolios, and he develops strategy and creates the framework for enforcing and defending patent cases on behalf of his clients. But each case still comes down to the individual technology, and he can’t wait to see what’s coming in the years ahead, especially as it relates to the future application of new technologies, especially in drones and artificial intelligence.

“IP law is something we need in order to innovate and move forward,” he says. “It’s the catalyst for innovation, and it’s always evolving.”

Protecging Groundbreaking Inventions

“IP law plays a crucial role in promoting innovation by protecting innovators and their inventions,” Marantidis says. “I work with people who are very intelligent. They come up with cutting-edge ideas, and you need to be able to understand what they’re doing.” That’s where his pilot, engineering and mechanics education comes into play, giving him the ability to look at designs from multiple perspectives. It is also what allows him to craft successful arguments — the deep level of understanding his background affords helps him translate the technology for a broader audience.

“The facts in all of my cases are technology-based,” he explains. “Whether you’re enforcing a patent or defending one, you’re trying to explain the technology in a way that people understand. The arguments often have to make sense to someone who may not be well-versed in technology.”

Throughout his career, Marantidis has represented clients across a wide range of industries, including aerospace, materials science, earth boring technologies, medical devices, pharmaceuticals, propulsion, nanotechnology and more. There have been a lot of successful cases along the way, but one especially big moment was when he helped obtain patents for SpaceShipOne. Designed for suborbital flight, the spacecraft made news on June 21, 2004, when it became the first private-crewed, commercial craft to leave Earth’s atmosphere and reach the edge of space. “It gave exclusivity to Mojave Aerospace Ventures, a company founded by Paul Allen and Burt Rutan, for this type of space vehicle,” he says. “As a result, no one else can use that same type of vehicle in the race to space. Its technology is now used by Virgin Galactic.”

Marantidis also secured patents for the Martin Jetpack for the Martin Aircraft Company of New Zealand by distinguishing it from existing inventions, and he worked with Abraham Karem, known as the father of drones, on securing patents for the optimum speed tilt rotor (OSTR). “I am able to articulate the differences in technologies that make them inventive, and you need to understand the technology to be able to do that,” he says.

Did You Know?

- Embry-Riddle’s Technology Transfer Office, a part of the legal department, secures intellectual property protection for the inventions produced by students, faculty and staff as part of the university’s research enterprise. Technology transfer helps move those scientific findings to companies so that real-world products can be produced. The public benefits from the products that reach the market and the jobs that result from the development and sale of those products. During fiscal year 2020, the technology transfer office received 11 invention disclosures from university faculty and filed five patent applications.
In 2011, John J. Amore ('73) created the Amore Family Endowed Scholarship. Now, thanks to a new investment from Amore and the Scholarship Endowment Matching Challenge, even more students will receive needed financial aid.

U.S. Army helicopter pilot who served in Vietnam, John J. Amore ('73) came to Embry-Riddle in the 1970s to heal from his war experience and to get an education. The camaraderie and sense of belonging he found at the Daytona Beach Campus helped him transition from military to civilian life — and left an indelible impression on him. So much so that Amore has dedicated the last decade-plus to serving the university as a trustee and made it one of his top philanthropic priorities. In 2011, as a new trustee, he made what has become his greatest contribution to student success: the Amore Family Endowed Scholarship. To date, eight students with financial need have received scholarships from the fund.

“I hope my scholarship will help relieve some of the financial burden for students and in some cases, allow students to continue their education at Embry-Riddle,” he says.

Thanks to a new investment from Amore and the board’s Scholarship Endowment Matching Challenge, even more students will benefit from the Amore Family Endowed Scholarship in the future. The challenge provides a dollar-for-dollar match for endowed scholarship gifts (or pledges paid over a five-year period) that total $100,000 or more.

With his recent gift, Amore joins fellow trustees Jim Henderson (HonDoc ’13), Joe Martin (HonDoc ’18; ’74), Neal Kasting and Glenn Ritchey, along with the Gonnion Family (see story on page 22) and Embry-Riddle President P. Barry Butler and his wife, Audrey, in accepting the scholarship challenge.

In addition to his family scholarship, Amore has made significant contributions to student programs and clubs, and just last year he spearheaded and established a matching fund of his own to create a campus memorial for fallen military heroes who are graduates.

A retired CEO for Global General Insurance for Zurich Financial Services, Amore says it is only natural that he support the university that gave so much to him at a critical point in his life. “It was a difficult time, coming back from having served in a very unpopular war. Helping me transition from that to a career in the world of business was a unique service Embry-Riddle did for me.”

The Ties that Bind
While his son’s time at Embry-Riddle was short, it was significant and established ties between the university and the family that remain today. One such tie is a longtime friendship between Dave Gonnion and his son’s former flight instructor Joseph A. Divincenzo (’95).

“Every year on the anniversary of David’s accident, Joe calls me,” Gonnion says. "Joe exemplifies the kind of compassion and personal character that we have come to learn dominates the ERAU culture.”

His daughters, Melissa Kroll and Sara Emmons, are also supportive of the scholarship. Melissa says she remembers her brother’s room being always full of model airplanes and posters of fighter jets. He studied finance at Iowa State University for a year, then told his dad he was determined to transfer to Embry-Riddle so he could follow his true passion — flight. “I could tell when he came home after that first semester, he was truly where he was meant to be,” Kroll says. “He was at peace while soaring amongst the clouds. We know he would be proud to continue to help others who share his same love for flight.”

We hope that we’re able … to assist others who share his passion for aviation in the pursuit of their own aviation career.”
— DAVE GONNION

REFERENCES

For more information on the Scholarship Endowment Matching Challenge, visit giving. erau.edu/100kchallenge or contact Senior Vice President of Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement Marc Archambault: archambault@erau.edu; 386-226-7770.
COVID-19 crisis reveals Eagle character

On the Front Lines

The ‘crisis reveals character’ saying has definitely borne itself out during this.” — Dr. Dan Handel (’10)

A practicing physician at four emergency departments in the IU Health system, Handel says the coronavirus prompted a level of operational nimbleness that didn’t exist before. When COVID-19 cases amplified in March, hospitals stopped offering elective surgeries to ensure patient safety and profits tumbled, he says.

The IU Health system rallied after the first peak of COVID-19, implementing measures that allowed critical care of coronavirus-infected patients and elective surgical procedures to take place in tandem. When a second, even greater spike of coronavirus-infected patients flooded the hospital system in July, Handel says, they were ready. “We’re now operating in an environment where we can serve both needs.”

Teledmedicine Advancements

Another positive development at IU Health is the growth of teledmedicine — where doctors meet with patients over the phone or via an online face-to-face platform.

“The ‘crisis reveals character’ saying has definitely borne itself out during this.” — Dr. Dan Handel (’10)

As vice president and chief medical officer at Indiana University Health—South Central Region, Dr. Dan Handel (’10) helped implement procedures that allowed doctors to care for coronavirus patients and conduct elective surgical procedures at the same time.

Another positive development at IU Health is the growth of teledmedicine — where doctors meet with patients over the phone or via an online face-to-face platform.

“The ‘crisis reveals character’ saying has definitely borne itself out during this.” — Dr. Dan Handel (’10)

As vice president and chief medical officer at Indiana University Health—South Central Region, Dr. Dan Handel (’10) helped implement procedures that allowed doctors to care for coronavirus patients and conduct elective surgical procedures at the same time.
O n March 18, in light of the growing number of COVID-19 infections across the country, the university announced all classes would be taught online, and faculty and staff would work remotely. The ripple effect of this decision could have been detrimental to students — especially those expecting to graduate in May. But Embry-Riddle had a built-in advantage: the Worldwide Campus.

As a pioneer in online learning, the Worldwide Campus was well-prepared to help pivot coursework, faculty and students at Embry-Riddle’s residential campuses in Daytona Beach, Florida, and Prescott, Arizona, to a virtual platform.

“When the shutdown started, we were ready,” says Worldwide Campus Chancellor John W. Watret, Ph.D. “There are a lot of teams working together to create this very active learning environment in an asynchronous world. Our business model is running in real time, using videoconference, chat and virtual face-to-face technologies.”

“At Worldwide, online learning is what we do every day. We already have infrastructure in place to support online learning, and we are able to help faculty with just about anything they need,” Hansard says.

**Intercampus Cooperation**

As the COVID-19 crisis continued, preventing residential students from returning to in-person classrooms for summer session A, the Worldwide Campus opened its virtual doors to allow Daytona Beach and Prescott campus students to continue their education with no delay.

Frederic Ndiaye (CO ’12), executive director of student support services at the Worldwide Campus, worked with registrars and deans to identify equivalent courses among the three campuses, so that residential students could be enrolled in Worldwide courses. He also worked with the provost’s office to identify 54 residential faculty members to teach online classes through Worldwide.

Students already enrolled in residential Summer A were automatically shifted to equivalent Worldwide courses and key deadlines were synchronized.

“In our May term, we registered 10,593 Worldwide and residential students into Worldwide courses seamlessly,” Watten says. “At the close of Fiscal Year 2020 in June, 91% of our approximately 23,000 students were taking online courses.”

For the entire fiscal year, ending June 30, course registrations exceeded 92,000, he adds.

**Online Popularity**

The popularity of online learning at Embry-Riddle sparked an uptick in enrollment. “The increase in COVID-19 cases all around the world has placed limitations on social activities, which has prompted some students to pursue their education,” he says.

A University United

Watret says the COVID-19 crisis, while disruptive, has brought out the best in Eagles from all campuses and made the university stronger.

“The collaboration, the camaraderie and all the support to meet the demand of getting students in class and keeping them going in their education have really brought the three campuses together,” he says.
Embry-Riddle professors are researching a revolutionary risk management solution that could help the airlines weather economic storms

BY CYNTHIA PUCKETT

The airline industry is suffering unprecedented losses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The International Civil Aviation Organization estimated in August that the world’s airlines collectively could lose more than $355 billion by the end of 2020, compared to pre-COVID revenue projections. Additionally, more than 80,000 airline workers are facing (or have now been) furloughed. It’s a devastating situation, but it’s not the end of the story. Working with Embry-Riddle, the industry is responding with energy and innovation.

Enter Skytra, a wholly owned subsidiary of Airbus. In partnership with Embry-Riddle’s Worldwide College of Business, the company is exploring groundbreaking risk management and market-based solutions that could transform the airline industry and help protect it from future economic downturns. Skytra has created a new set of regulated benchmarks, the Skytra Price Indexes, which will permit the aviation industry to hedge volatile ticket prices using financial derivatives. These indices measure the USD/RPK (U.S. Dollar per Revenue Passenger Kilometer) in a given geography and are produced on a daily basis.

Maneesh Sharma, professor and dean of the Embry-Riddle Worldwide Campus’ College of Business, says he and Embry-Riddle professors Sundar Raghavan, Arfonso Canella and Ron Mau recently demonstrated that Skytra’s proposed Europe-North America (EU-NA) Skytra Price Index could offer future revenue protection of close to 90% — even in the face of a COVID-19-type collapse in yields. “We see tremendous potential,” Sharma says. “We think Skytra’s products will enable and lead to revenue protection which will transform the industry.”

A ‘Learning’ Proposition

The research partnership with Embry-Riddle is all about “learning,” says Matthew Tringham, Skytra’s co-founder and chief strategy and product officer. The agreement allows Skytra to tap into the financial expertise at Embry-Riddle and apply that expertise to a real-world problem. It was Embry-Riddle’s Airline Financial Risk Management course — offered in partnership with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) — that first attracted Skytra to working with the university. Sharma recalls the initial contact from Skytra representatives: “They said, ‘We saw your course. We have a proposition; would you put this in your course?’ I said, ‘I will need to research it.’ And the partnership began.

“We think Skytra’s products will enable and lead to revenue protection which will transform the industry.” — MANEESH SHARMA

Sharma says Skytra’s index revolves around hedging or buying insurance against “uncontrollable” revenue losses. Until now, the airlines did not have the tools or the market infrastructure to hedge revenue. But that’s all about to change, he adds.

Airlines have traditionally managed risk by hedging costs, such as fuel prices, interest rates and currency values. However, it is the inability to exercise significant control over revenues that makes the aviation business riskier and more volatile than other service-centric businesses, such as retail and consulting, Sharma explains. “Effective risk management should consider both the revenue and cost of an airline.”

Post-R Note Vision

According to Tringham and Elise Weber, Skytra co-founder and chief sales and marketing officer, Skytra began as an idea on a single Post-it note, which grew to become a wall of notes. Three years later, in 2019, Skytra was born. The company was established specifically to create the financial infrastructure necessary for the air travel industry to help risk-manage its revenue volatility. Based in London, the company is awaiting approval from the Financial Conduct Authority in the U.K. to operate as a benchmark administrator. “We want to give the industry, our customers, tools to better manage their risks — not only hedging costs, but complementing that with the possibility of hedging their yields measured in USD/RPK,” Weber says.

Tringham adds, “We’re doing this because we believe it could contribute to the financial health and stability of the overall industry.”

Weber says educating people about the new market infrastructure (Skytra Price Indices) for a more comprehensive risk management will be key to their success. “It’s extremely important for the industry to understand how to use these new tools to help them achieve their strategic objectives,” she says.

As part of the education equation, Sharma plans to eventually integrate the Skytra Price Indices and the various ways of using financial derivatives for risk management purposes into his coursework for future Embry-Riddle and IATA students.

Tool for the Future

Sharma says Skytra’s revenue hedging concepts could also be leveraged to benefit the greater travel, lodging and tourism industries. Weber agrees. “We started off with risk management because this is where the whole idea was born, but there will be many new value propositions, far beyond risk management. There will be new products coming out such as hedging corporate travel budgets and around flexible ticketing for individual travelers,” she says.

In terms of research topics moving forward, we have an endless list that we could dig into with a partner like Embry-Riddle.”

From left, Maneesh Sharma at Embry-Riddle and Matthew Tringham and Elise Weber at Skytra are researching risk management and market-based solutions for the airline industry.
As I write this letter, we are in the final months of 2020. This was a year of adjustment, challenge, loss and, in some cases, heartbreak. It started out with some of the best opportunities for employment, innovation and the fulfillment of dreams for new graduates and alumni that I have witnessed in my 26 years at Embry-Riddle. As we know, these exciting times were quickly disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic.

At Embry-Riddle, we adjusted on the fly, transitioning classes to online and moving faculty and staff to remote work situations (see related story, Page 26). We turned commencement into a virtual activity and set a goal of checking in on 60,000 of our contactable alumni via phone and email. We also hosted over 190 online regional and affinity-based Talon Talks and get-togethers. Close to 1,000 Eagles attended these e-gatherings from March to September. And, as the effects of COVID-19 endured, we created and held a weeklong virtual, all-campus Homecoming celebration in October.

While some of us suffered greater losses, we were universally impacted by this crisis. Despite the challenges related to social distancing, we Eagles came together to support one another. As Eagles, we’re known for embracing the tenets of a “universal” world. One that encourages and supports academic curiosity, equity, inclusiveness, teamwork and respect for all individuals. Our alumni, students, faculty and staff represent a global community. And it’s a community that looks out for its own.

Case in point: When the university launched its Eagles Care fundraising initiative to help students suffering financially from the pandemic, alumni and friends contributed nearly $180,000 (see related story, Page 32).

This universal spirit of mutual support was particularly evident during the online Eagle gatherings we hosted. Alumni shared their résumés, talked about their jobs and job opportunities, offered mentorship and insight, told “corny” jokes and shared joy. One current student even brought his newborn girl to a gathering and spoke of his pride in becoming a parent and being an Eagle.

I encourage you to visit our events webpage (alumni.erau.edu/events) and join us for future gatherings. In addition, there are podcasts and online Talon Talks, where Eagles share their knowledge and expertise with one another.

Stay safe, look up and be ready, as we have a lot of work to do to recover from the current COVID-related crisis. But as you work, remember we are one, interconnected Eagle universe. There are more than 140,000 Embry-Riddle graduates who have been there and done that, and who are standing by to extend a wing, connect and support one another.

Forever an Eagle,
Bill Thompson (’87)
Executive Director

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The sculpture of Wilbur Wright at the Daytona Beach Campus was dressed for the unusual occasion: Commencement during a pandemic.

Graduates received a special mailing with their diploma, alumni pin and other commemorative goodies.

“[The 2020 graduates of Embry-Riddle have made history] in a way none of us could have expected. Their focus and resilience convinces me that they will succeed in the face of any professional and personal challenges they face in the future.”

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT P. BARRY BUTLER, PH.D.
Michael Henriquez had four classes left to complete his aviation maintenance science degree when the coronavirus pandemic threatened to undo his plans. "I had planned on attending summer classes, while working full time to pay for tuition," he says. "My family was also going to assist me with whatever I couldn’t cover in tuition payments.”

In mid-March, everything fell apart. When the majority of local retail and dining establishments closed their doors, in observance of state and national COVID-19 recommendations, the senior found himself struggling to find a job. At the same time, his family took a financial hit when their restaurant was also forced to close.

But thanks to the university’s Eagles Care Student Emergency Assistance Funds, some of Henriquez’s financial stress was alleviated, and he was able to continue his studies. Eagles Care Funds were established at each Embry-Riddle campus to help students offset unexpected expenses or help pay for tuition or other educational costs during times of crisis.

In light of the pandemic and the critical need it represented, the office of alumni engagement partnered with Daytona Beach Campus Chaplain Rev. David Keck to host a virtual remembrance, or Eagles E-Gathering, this year, to allow alumni to connect, discuss the industry impact and share their memories of 9/11. Using the Zoom platform, alumni met face-to-face online, despite being in different locations across the globe.

At the event, Andy Nureddin ('85, '93) recalled scrambling to get the student pilots at his Montreal-based training center sheltered or transported home, after hearing of the attack on the Twin Towers in New York City. He later learned that his close friend and fellow alumnus, David Charlebois ('83), was a pilot onboard one of the hijacked aircraft. “I remember saying to myself, '9/11 left an indelible mark on me, on my career and on my perspective on aviation in general,'” Nureddin says.

Other alumni attending the event also shared their experiences and how 9/11 impacted their careers. The Eagles E-Gathering was more than just a chance to grieve and heal, it was the first step in a research project meant to culminate in a weeklong symposium in 2021 — marking the 20th anniversary of 9/11.

"[9/11] left an indelible mark on me, on my career and on my perspective on aviation in general," Nureddin says.
Aaron Shemper, Capt. Karl Minter and Carl Sorg of the Robertson Safety Institute at Aviation Awards. The namesake Entrepreneur Award on Jan. 16, 2020, was honored for his (HonDoc ’72) S. Harry Robertson. His son, Chad, presented the award to him at The Villages Aviation Club in The Villages, Florida. His son, Chad, presented the award to him at The Villages Aviation Club in The Villages, Florida.

Patrick Leary recently retired. He writes: “The time has come to let someone else run the business. I have decided to make a major transition of my business model to one that is more focused on the process of selling everything that we have decided to make a major change at the company.”

Robertson is a longtime supporter and lifesaving invention, Robbie Tanks. He writes: “The time has come to let someone else run the business. I have decided to make a major transition of my business model to one that is more focused on the process of selling everything that we have decided to make a major change at the company.”

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Mike W. O’Neal (’06) authored The World I Woke Up To, published in 2020 by Amber Cove Publishing. The novel’s plot involves an illness that turns people into monsters. “It’s been very interesting publishing a book about a pandemic during a pandemic,” O’Neal says.

Shelby King (’18) is a pilot for Planet 9 Private Air. She writes: “Working our way to an ‘unseen’ crew! I recently upgraded to cruise captain, which means I get to fly with fellow alumni Abby Gripping (’10).”

Alexandra Kelleman (’10) is a structural engineer working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Kyle Sigler (’16) is a geotechnical chief in the U.S. Marine Corps. He was recently promoted to garrison sergeant and is moving to a new fighter aircraft squadron to serve as an imagery intelligence chief.

Matthew Clark (’17) is currently an electronics quality supervisor at Delta Group.

Joa Vitor Copo (’17) is a propulsion technician serving in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Ashlyn Lackett (’17) is a quality control manager, safety compliance at HMC Logistics. She writes: “Earning an M.S. in Logistics in Supply Chain Management from Embry-Riddle was the best decision I ever made. Since graduation, I have been promoted from desk level, account owner to a double management role (quality and facility manager). I strongly believe I would not be where I am today without the tools I obtained in the MSLSCM program. Thank you, Embry-Riddle!”

Sergio Sovero (’17) is a database pilot at Delta Air Lines. He writes: “I graduated back in 2017 with a Bachelor of Science in Astronautical Science. I started my career flying the Embraer 175 for Republic Airways for two years. I currently fly the Airbus A320 for a major U.S. carrier. My advice to all students is to pursue their dreams and get involved as much as they can while at ERAU in leadership positions.”

Bruno Maio Torres Trueba (’18) is one of the three founders of Volantis Airlines’ talent development program, which focuses on integrating young, high-potential professionals into the company and guiding them on becoming ‘Volantis’ future leaders.

Jeremiah Avery (’18) is an administrative manufacturing officer at The Innovation Center at Boeing’s Renton, Washington, plant. And his colleagues produced 3D-printed face shield frames for FEMA to distribute to hospital workers.

Kim Kish (’18) is a corporate line pilot and flight administrator for Tailwind Air Service in White Plains, New York.

Danielle Rosales (’18) is celebrating her three-year anniversary at Space Tango in Westminster, Kentucky. She writes: “As an advocate for student success and networking, I look forward to using this exciting experience to help any students who are seeking guidance and are interested in the commercial aerospace industry.”

Naia Butler-Craig (’19), a first-year graduate student at the Daniel Guggenheim School of Aerospace Engineering at Georgia Tech, was honored with the 2020 Modern-Day Technology Leader Award.

Second Lt. Hailee Clark (’19) was awarded the Commandant of the Marine Corps Trophy on Dec. 5, 2019, for Freshest First in her class of NROTC Midshipmen at Officer Candidate School. She was one of seven candidates from from Embry-Riddle. She has been named this honor. The Commandant’s Trophy was also presented to Embry-Riddle in recognition of the dedication of the school and its many instructors to help mold future officers.

Mikayla Queenenberry (’20) is an office practitioner at Embry-Riddle, a wholly owned subsidiary of American Airlines Group.

Marriages/Engagements

2000s

Oswaldo “Oz” Maitas (’05) married Didem Bardem on Jan. 15, 2020, in Hong Kong. Maitas writes: “We met at work in November 2018 on a flight to Munich, which we both operating. I was born in Venezuela, while working in Dubai, on a flight to Germany and getting married in Hong Kong. It’s never too late, chicos!”

2010s

Jill Farkas (’10) and Chekote Nadon (’15) were married on June 20, 2020. They reside in Dallas, Texas, where Farkas is a 787 first officer and Nadon is pursuing a master’s degree in engineering management from Southern Methodist University while on shore duty with the U.S. Navy.

Other

Andrew Fama (’10), the U.S. Air Force’s (“AF”) lead test engineer assigned to the HH-60W “Jolly Green II,” is among several Embry-Riddle alumni working on the USAF’s Combat Rescue Helicopter (CRH) program. He is pictured above with fellow alumni Jordan Pfile (’04), CRH lead flight test engineer at Sikorsky Aircraft Company, and Jordan Pfile (’04), a USAF staff officer and flight test engineer civilian, in front of Whiskey 8 at the 2020 Air War Awards Symposium. Other alumni on the CRH team include Danielle Bardem (’18), Sikorsky avionics test team; Dustin Freeman (’16), Sikorsky avionics flight test engineer; David Garcia (’01), Sikorsky aircraft technician; Rachel Garcia (’04), Sikorsky lead propulsion flight test engineer; Shawn Hammond (’17), USAF HH-60W project manager; Jeff Shayden (’14), Sikorsky manager of mission systems integration team; and Scott Wilkinson (’09), Sikorsky special projects flight test engineer. Fama writes: “What’s been fun about testing on this team is the instant connection that came with the common ERAU background many of us share as alumni. Many of the days feel like going to work with friends. Reminiscing about the old college days before a flight brief, flying together, having an old classmate clearing us from one test point to the next from the tarmac near you. What will be rewarding is, in the end we will all have worked together to make something meant to save lives. I think that’s pretty cool.”

Timothy Marge (’10), who leads the F-35 HMX Queen Elizabeth test team, was recognized with his team for their outstanding accomplishments at the 2019 Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division’s Volunteer Awards Ceremony. Other Embry-Riddle alumni on the test team include Seth Dixon (’09, ’10), ‘10 and Seth Shaw (’09).

Lt. Col. John Caldwell (’13), Capt. Michael Brewer (’09) and Lt. Col. Kenie DiFalco (’08) are all members of the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds Demonstration Squadron that visited campus in February, while Kernen was the communications officer for the Daytonas 500. Caldwell is the commander and leader of the squadron, Bower is the right wing pilot and DiFalco is director of operations.
Electric Car Club

This picture is of the first ERAU Electric Race Car taken in the main Prescott ERAU parking lot in 1993. I remember security unlocking this electric car at 110 mph during our test runs. Of course, this was on the Prescott Airport runway, not around the campus parking lot. I remember the airport tower contacting us, amazed at the high speeds that we were doing. I was the first ERAU Electric Car Club President from 1992-1994, where we built this electric car from ground-up to race at the Arizona Public Service (APS) Solar & Electric at Phoenix International Raceway. We took third place.

This project started from our first Saturday club event to dismantle a donated Volkswagen Bug for the use of its front and rear suspension. Then, the team held a yard sale, to sell the remaining parts that were used to initially fund this project.

...My goal was to involve many of the majors: electrical engineering/computer science to focus on the electric motor/controller and batteries, aerospace engineering to focus on wind tunnel testing and construction of the frame and composite body, aeronautical science to assist in safely and piloting the car, and aviation business administration to manage the finances and sponsorships. Also, this project involved a large number of sponsorships: Prescott Steel & Supply donated the chrome moly tubing; Goodyear donated the tires and did the alignment; HEXCEL donated the honeycomb composite that was used to encapsulate and protect the driver; and GE donated the electric motor/ controller.

I believe that this project provided valuable hands-on experience for all of the team members. Along with the technical skills that we learned, I remember suiting up for business presentations with GE and APS, learning how to seek funding and support from our sponsors, learning leadership skills and how to work together as a team. This project taught me valuable lessons that I have been able to use in my career as a lead, staff systems engineer at L3Harris/ACSS located in Phoenix, where we develop surveillance products, enabling safety and flight simulation.

I will never forget trying to fly it. The car was going to be in a competition at the Arizona Public Service Solar & Electric. Of course, this was on the Prescott ERAU parking lot in 1993. This picture is of the first ERAU Electric Car Club. Photo courtesy of the Embry-Riddle Archive.

It’s Electric

Readers identify the people and circumstances surrounding this image, which was published in the spring 2020 edition of Lift.

Lawrence Clarkson - Oct. 31, 2020

Trustee Emeritus Lawrence Clarkson, BG, retired as president of Boeing Enterprises in 1999. His tenure within Boeing prompted The New York Times to call him “the closest thing Boeing has to a corporate secretary of state.” Prior to Boeing, he worked for Pratt & Whitney, rising to the position of president of commercial products. He also served as a captain in the U.S. Air Force.

An Embry-Riddle Board member from 2002 until 2013, Clarkson supported an ambitious program of facility expansion and improvements, and offered guidance after a tornafo hit the Daytona Beach Campus in 2006.

“As we navigate through our oncoming times, it is inspirational to realize that Lawrence Clarkson and his fellow board members remained focused on serving students. The spring semester for 2007 was delayed by only six days. That’s a level of resilience we are living up to today,” says Embry-Riddle President P. Barry Butler.

Costas J. Sivyllis (‘12) - Oct. 9, 2020

Costas J. Sivyllis (‘12), 30, and his wife of four days, Lindsey Vogliazzo, 33, died when the Beechcraft Baronia Sivyllis was piloting crashed in Colorado — four days after their wedding in Telluride. Sivyllis was a first officer for United Airlines, chairman of the National Education Committee for the Air Line Pilots Association International and an Embry-Riddle graduate with close ties to his alma mater. A member of the College of Aviation Industry Advisory Board, Sivyllis delivered the convocation address to incoming students at the Daytona Beach Campus just two months before his death.

“Costas was an incredible student, flight instructor, mentor and alumnus for the Embry-Riddle community,” says Ken Bynes, flight department chair and assistant dean of the Daytona Beach Campus College of Aviation. “His level of passion for the aviation industry and for Embry-Riddle was unmatched.”

An endowed memorial scholarship has been established in his name: giving.era.edu/costas.

Rudy Frasca - May 11, 2020

Rudy Frasca, 81, was the founder of Frasca International and a leader in the flight simulation industry. His legacy as a flight simulation engineer lives on at Embry-Riddle, where students continue to learn by using Frasca simulators. I had the pleasure of knowing Rudy for nearly 30 years. He was a charismatic and innovative giant in aviation, and his contributions to pilot training have been profound. The Frasca name is synonymous with general aviation simulation,” says Daytona Beach Campus College of Aviation Dean Alan Stoiber.

In Memoriam

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<td>Lawrence Clarkson</td>
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<td>Rudy Frasca</td>
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<td>Mark A. Radcliffe</td>
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<td>Ame Swanson</td>
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<td>Robert Michael Hamaty</td>
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<td>CWO Gregory A. Woodward</td>
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<td>Richard C. Farley</td>
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<td>Richard Samuel Savas</td>
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<td>Maj. Virce “Woody” Woodward</td>
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<td>Barry Panuski</td>
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<td>James E. Afflerbach</td>
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<td>Col. Hunter E. Letchman</td>
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<td>Brittani N. Berg</td>
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<td>Kathleen Denise Shana Parker</td>
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<td>First Lt. David Schmitz</td>
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<td>Matthew, Joseph (Kirsche) Birkfiedl</td>
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<td>Nick Constable</td>
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<td>Lt. Col. Christopher Sheldon</td>
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TAILWINDS

Temporary Quarters

Was this your Embry-Riddle home? When Embry-Riddle moved from Miami to Daytona Beach in 1965, it turned a local hotel into a temporary residence hall. This photo (circa 1967-68) shows the hotel courtyard and swimming pool. Help us fill the gaps in Embry-Riddle’s institutional knowledge. Tell us about this “temporary” dorm and your experience there. We’ll share the details in the next edition of Lift.

Email: lifmag@erau.edu

Photo courtesy of the Embry-Riddle Archive