The Mori Hosseini Student Union is sleek, functional and officially open for business.
You may imagine John Paul Riddle as a dashing barnstormer in his Jenny biplane. You would be right. He was one of many who supported his passion for flying by performing stunts over fields and fairgrounds across America. Some of these early flyers, such as Charles Lindbergh, Wiley Post and Ruth Law, went on to become aviation legends.

He would want to hear from students who are acting as consultants to airlines and airports and striking out as entrepreneurs. At the dedication of the Mori Hosseini Student Union at the Daytona Beach Campus in October, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao acknowledged the contribution Embry-Riddle makes to the country: “American genius for innovation continues to refresh the industry and create exciting new possibilities for the future.” [See related story on Page 10.]

That was true in 1926. It is true now. We will continue to be a part of that American genius for years to come. The aviation business is in our DNA, thanks to T. Higbee Embry and John Paul Riddle. As alumni, you can take pride in our role in defining the industry — past, present and future.

Sincerely,

P Barry Butler, Ph.D.
President
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
New Passenger Jet Service Touches Down in Prescott

Students to Prescott, Arizona, have access to a new jet service operating from Prescott Regional Airport (PRC), thanks in part to a team of Embry-Riddle students. In August 2018, SkyWest Airlines, flying under the United Express banner, began offering flights from PRC to Los Angeles and Denver, with connections available to dozens of United Airlines destinations nationally and internationally.

Prescott Campus School of Business students collaborated with City of Prescott officials to explore the viability of soliciting the new air service. They evaluated local leisure and business travel patterns, the airport facility, passenger needs and concerns, and the needs of prospective air carriers as part of the students’ “signature” capstone business-class consulting experience.

“Along the pathway to our improved air service, the city has greatly benefited from the impressive airport and airline-focused research and foundational relationship-building efforts undertaken by the Embry-Riddle business students,” says Robin Sobotta, City of Prescott airport director.

Eagle Consulting

The Eagle Consulting program, led by Associate Professor Rick Gibson, provides business students a unique opportunity to serve as consultants to private and public sector partners. “This was one of my favorite projects as a student at Embry-Riddle,” says Amelia Cassidy (’17), who graduated with bachelor’s degrees in aeronautics and aviation business administration from the Prescott Campus.

“Our job was to develop a market analysis to see how many people were driving or taking a shuttle to Phoenix, as opposed to flying directly out of PRC. We also wanted to determine the amount of community interest.” Cassidy’s work on the project ultimately helped her land a full-time job. She now works as a network planning and scheduling analyst for SkyWest airlines on the inaugural SkyWest flight to PRC. “I think this is really unique to my situation because I had the opportunity to work on this project as a student, and as a professional. I had the opportunity to see that project go through and become reality,” Cassidy says.

Win-Win Program

Sobotta particularly credits one fall 2017 student team for bringing the airline service to fruition through its outreach with corporate representatives. “It was through these efforts that the students helped airport staff establish a stronger foundation with SkyWest Airlines — the carrier ultimately selected by the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide air service at Prescott Airport,” she says. “Clearly, the opportunity for students to engage in actual industry consulting is a win-win.” — Jason Kados

Preparing the Unmanned Pilots of Tomorrow

Emby-Riddle earns TOP AUVSI certification for unmanned flight instruction

Embry-Riddle is the first academic institution in the world to receive this Trusted Operator Program (TOP) certification from the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI).

Students who complete the required TOP courses will be certified to handle many unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) flying scenarios, from wedding photography to more dangerous situations, says Christopher Cerreta, Embry-Riddle Worldwide Campus assistant professor.

Because Embry-Riddle will be certified at the highest level, TOP Level 3, these students can be certified as TOP Remote Pilots or TOP Remote Pilot Instructors: “We believe it will have such a positive influence on the UAS industry and flight safety,” Cerreta says. “Embry-Riddle students with TOP certification will stand out compared to graduates from other academic institutions and have an increased opportunity for getting jobs.”

TOP certification courses will initially be taught through Embry-Riddle’s Worldwide Campus. It will then be implemented at the Daytona Beach and Prescott campuses. — Ginger Pinholster
**FROM THE EDITOR**

We heard from a handful of readers who expressed concern with the cover text (fall 2018): “Eyes on the Sky: How Dennis Jones became the NTSB’s first African-American managing director.” Specifically, they took issue with the reference to race. While we acknowledge their concern—that is, in this seemingly more enlightened, color/gender blind era, race should not be a part of the conversation when it comes to great achievement—the reality of our industry tells a different story.

It’s a well-known fact that African-Americans are underrepresented in the aviation and aerospace industries. According to Data USA, in 2016, 92.3 percent of aircraft pilots and flight engineers were Caucasian. It’s fair to speculate that the number of whites in aviation administration and safety mirrors this statistical imbalance. It’s people like Dennis who put aviation safety on the career map for African-Americans.

In the words of student Sekou Baraka, who commented on the Alumni Facebook page, Dennis’ story gives African-Americans a “dose of more enlightened, color/gender blind race. While we acknowledge their concern with managing director. “Specifically, they refused to go to the doctor. A few of us offered to take him, but he wouldn’t go. When he finally did go, it was too late, and his appendix ruptured. He passed a few days later. I just want to say that he was one of the nicest friends that I had while attending ERAU. Thank you for the memories.

**Anthony Slukszki ($1)**

Aviation Maintenance Technology Certificate

**The City’s University**

Great issue fall 2018, What’s missing in the Prescott Campus story! 40 years of Ascent, Page 7 are comments from local citizens. It used to be that ERAU- Prescott was thought of as “that little school where they trained pilots.” Now, it is considered the “city’s university,” and it generates a lot of pride and support from among the locals.

**Ray and Patty Newton**

Prescott Campus Board of Visitors

**TALK TO US**

We invite your feedback on Lift content or topics related to the university. Letters may be edited for style, length and clarity. Submission does not guarantee publication.

EMAIL: liftmag@erau.edu

**LIFT IN OTHER WORDS**

BY FACULTY EMERITUS ALEXANDER T. WELLS

I never planned on being a teacher. I worked for 12 years—the first six as an aviation underwriter for the Royal Globe Insurance Companies in their New York City and Chicago offices. This was followed by three years as an economic planner for United Airlines and finally a large insurance brokerage firm in Chicago handling the United Airlines account.

I earned a master’s degree in economics from DePaul University and began teaching part-time at local colleges in Chicago. Around this time, I met Dan Sam, academic dean at Embry Riddle, at a University Aviation Association meeting. In March of 1972, I ventured south from wintry Chicago to my interview with Lowell Christman (and the aviation management staff) at the small school in Daytona Beach that many still considered a fixed-base operator. I remember staying at the old dormitory and walking along the dirt shoulder adjacent to Clyde Morris Boulevard to my interview. I was hired and started that fall.

My wife, Mary, and two children followed me to our new Florida home, which had an added benefit. It was closer to our retired parents. I had left a job in Chicago paying $19,500 a year to teach at Embry Riddle as an assistant professor. I was offered $1,000.

My primary job was to develop aviation management courses in airline management, airport planning and management, general aviation marketing, and aviation insurance. I looked upon my move to Daytona Beach as a tremendous challenge. Until then, a typical college management program was all that was available for those interested in aviation business. My first charge was to create course outlines, handouts and reference materials. There were no textbooks in these areas.

I moved my four years on the Daytona Beach Campus, working with Jack Hunt and the few faculty members who were there at that time. We were all like one family. In 1973, I helped start Embry-Riddle’s first graduate program—the M.S. in Aviation Management—through a partnership with Biscayne College in Miami. Relocating to South Florida in 1976, I became the graduate program director.

In 1979, I accepted a position with Braward Community College (BCC) heading up its aviation program. During my 20 years at BCC, I turned over my books to Clarence Rodrigues and Bruce Chadbourne. Bruce and I authored the third editions of the general aviation and insurance books. We also collaborated with the Aviation Insurance Association (AIA) to develop a certification course for AIA members. We presented seminars around the country to prepare practitioners for the certification test.

Retiring in 1998, Mary and I moved to Deland, Florida, where I continued teaching at the Daytona Beach and Worldwide campuses until 2012. For 40 years I had been associated with Embry Riddle. What started out as an aviation career turned into a fulfilling life of teaching and touching the lives of hundreds of students across the country and internationally who used the books I wrote and co-wrote as a foundation for their aviation management programs. Awards from the University Aviation Association and AIA were flattering but even more important was the satisfaction and joy I received in following my dreams. Mary and I will continue to support Embry-Riddle through a gift to the university in our estate. I truly feel blessed and proud to be a member of the Embry-Riddle Legacy Society, where my contribution can be used to provide scholarships to needy students aspiring careers in aviation.

**Follow Your Dreams**

BY FACULTY EMERITUS ALEXANDER T. WELLS

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The Riddle of T. Higbee Embry

A spotlight on the life and times of Embry-Riddle’s enigmatic co-founder

BY WILLIAM R. “BILL” GOEBEL (’82)

Alumnus Bill Goebel spent six months combing the social pages of digital newspaper archives, and scanning census reports, ancestry websites, court records and other public sources to compile the following treatise on Embry-Riddle’s little-known namesake, co-founder and financier Talton Higbee “T. Higbee” Embry.

D o you ever have random thoughts? I do. I recently pondered: Wouldn’t it be novel to fly from one Embry-Riddle founder’s gravesite (John Paul Riddle) to the other’s (T. Higbee Embry)? I wondered how long a flight that would be.

With help from the internet, I discovered that portions of John Paul Riddle’s ashes were at various locations, including scattered over the Atlantic Ocean and at a graveyard in Arcadia, Florida — down the road from Embry-Riddle’s former World War II flight training facility at Carlstrom Field. The burial marker in Arcadia would make a good enough starting point for Riddle. One down, one to go.

I entered “T. Higbee Embry grave” into my internet search engine. Nothing. Nada. Zip. Many online entries uniformly summarize T. Higbee as a “successful businessman who co-founded the Embry-Riddle companies.” Period. Not only could I find nothing regarding his burial plot, I also couldn’t find much of anything on the man himself.

I dug deeper and found some information on Talton Embry, T. Higbee’s father. A point of clarification: The Embry family apparently liked the name Talton, a lot. I’m pretty sure there was a Talton Embry for at least six generations of the family. To avoid confusion, I’ll refer to our Embry-Riddle founder as T. Higbee, and to his father as Talton.

The Embry Family Empire

Talton originally hailed from Kentucky and established himself in the Cincinnati, Ohio, area as a livestock merchant. He had interests in numerous stockyards in the United States, as well as in Cuba and Brazil, and was regarded as one of the “best authorities” on livestock in the United States. In addition, he established numerous business ventures such as banks and hotels. Talton was also one of the first Americans to conduct sugar refining in Mexico, where he owned several plantations.

Talton married Susan Higbee of Fort Worth, Texas, in April of 1895. Two years later, T. Higbee, our founder, was born in Cincinnati on May 17, 1897.

The Embry family was among the financial royalty of Cincinnati. Groomed to assume the reins of his father’s livestock trading empire, T. Higbee received the finest education of the time. He attended Asheville School in North Carolina, a private college preparatory boarding school for grades 9-12, and graduated in June 1916. And then, his world fell apart.

Tragedy Times Two

On July 9, 1916, Talton passed away at home at the age of 56. Shortly thereafter, his estate was divided between his wife, Susan, his son, T. Higbee, and numerous nieces and nephews to varying levels. When the dust settled, 19-year-old T. Higbee had inherited a trust held in his name worth more than $250,000 (adjusting for inflation, that’s nearly $6 million in 2018). The trust stipulated lump payments be parsed to T. Higbee as he reached the ages of 21, 25, 30 and 35.

T. Higbee continued working at his father’s livestock firm, Greene, Embry & Company, but in December 1916 (just five months later), tragedy struck again.

T. Higbee was involved in a nighttime automobile accident that killed a 10-year-old girl and injured another young girl. Court filings from February 1917 document that charges and exemplary damages in excess of $45,000 were considered against T. Higbee. And, because he was not of “legal majority,” age 21 for Ohio, the vehicle owner and responsible party, his mother, Susan Embry, was also sued for another $40,000.
After just one flight with John Paul Riddle, T. Higbee Embry was hooked. This was the beginning of a relationship that gained T. Higbee his flying credentials and led to the eventual joining of the Embry and Riddle names.

At the time, T. Higbee was only 19; he did not yet have access to his trust fund. The outcome of the lawsuit is unclear. I can only assume that T. Higbee’s mother paid the damages and fines. I’d like to think that a conversation followed, where she encouraged her son to “grow up” and get out of Cincinnati while this whole mess cools down. I do not know if military service was a condition of the legal settlement, but in August 1917, T. Higbee volunteered for service in France, to fight in the Great War. Once there, he manned a 155mm Schneider Howitzer guns at the age of 16. T. Higbee was manning his gun on November 11, 1918, when the guns were ordered silenced – a column in each issue. Note: Sky Traffic can be accessed online at lift-erau.edu/t-higbee

In February 1919, he wrote:... On October 29th we pulled out at night (when most artillery moves) and went to the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the western front, Bois Thilot, the highest point on the eastern United States, barnstorming after the war and offering rides in his Curtis Jenny.

Airspeed Ahead
In 1919, the Embry-Riddle Company was expanding into all facets of aviation: flight training, aerial photography, passenger flights and aircraft sales. In addition, the company sponsored a free Air Circus for the citizens of Cincinnati, with T. Higbee as one of the featured pilots performing parachute drops and acrobatics. Also in 1919, the Embry-Riddle Company sponsored the Ford Reliability Tour on its stopover in Cincinnati. As a Waco aircraft dealer, the company entered a Waco in the tour. Riddle was the pilot and none other than T. Higbee was the passenger. She was the first woman to fly in the tour. In 1927, Riddle competed again, in a Waco, in Ford’s National Air Tour. He came in seventh place.

In October 1922, T. Higbee married Ruth Miller, but this didn’t slow his business activities. Later that year, the Embry-Riddle Company was given the DVM 24 airmail route, which allowed its aircraft to carry passengers and mail from Cincinnati to Chicago. In September 1929, the company published its first issue of Sky Traffic, a company newsletter, to help promote its aviation businesses. T. Higbee had a column in each issue. Note: Sky Traffic can be accessed online at lift-erau.edu/t-higbee

Sold Out
In April 1929, the Embry-Riddle Company was sold to the Aviation Corporation (AVCO) conglomerate. Timing is everything. The stock market crash occurred in October.

T. Higbee and Riddle remained officers of the Embry-Riddle Aviation Corporation division at AVCO until 1932, when AVCO combined its assets under the American Airways moniker (the predecessor of American Airlines).

Now, at age 35, T. Higbee’s active run in the aviation business had come to an end and his passion for the livestock business had long since passed. His mother had previously moved to Los Angeles. With no binding attachments to the Cincinnati area, he followed her there in 1932.

Sadly, a year later, Susan Higbee Embry died in Los Angeles during a medical procedure.

Trading the Air for the Sea
It didn’t take long for T. Higbee to become involved in the Los Angeles-area county club set and to trade his penchant for air travel for that of the sea. In 1934, he purchased a 75-foot motor yacht and was named Commodore of the Balboa Yacht Club’s Time and America. Without the bringing forces, though, neither of these individuals would have built the organization and legacy that is Embry-Riddle.

Resting Place Found
On April 17, 1946, T. Higbee passed away at the age of 49. Oh, and I did locate his final resting place.

T. Higbee is buried in the Lexington Cemetery in Lexington, Kentucky, right next to his parents, and his son, Tally, who died April 24, 1933.

Let’s see now ... a flight from Arcadia Municipal Airport, Florida (X38), to Lexington, Kentucky (KLEX), is only 665 nautical miles. That’s not too bad a trip in a Cessna.

EDITOR’S NOTE: The author is a 1982 graduate of the Daytona Beach Campus and the Federal Aviation Administration Organization Designation Authorization Certification Projects Manager for Airbus Helicopters, based in Grand Prairie, Texas.
At 178,000 square feet, the Mori Hosseini Student Union is the most significant addition (in size and scope) to the Daytona Beach Campus in its 50-year history.

More than 6,100 pieces of structural steel anchor the building.

A 360-foot, 250-ton capacity crane placed the exposed steel beams that support the exterior superstructure.

The beams were fabricated in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, at a plant that makes structural steel for the largest bridges in the United States.

A special ceramic coating on the 300-foot-long skylight protects the interior from heat and sun.

The building won a Design Award for Excellence from the Society of Registered American Architects.

The Union

A longtime champion of the new Student Union at the Daytona Beach Campus, Board of Trustees Chairman Mori Hosseini (HonDoc ’13, ’79, ’82) is now also its namesake. Hosseini expressed his gratitude at the honor during a dedication ceremony on Oct. 25, 2018.

“As I look around this magnificent new building, and see the students and faculty I’ve had the privilege to get to know over the years here today, I see our future,” he said. “It is an honor to be able to witness this moment in the history of Embry-Riddle.”

Embry-Riddle President P. Barry Butler lauded Hosseini’s efforts to secure more than $60 million in grants for the university throughout his time on the board. “I have never known one person to make such a profound difference in an institution and to give so much of their time and treasure to one place,” Butler said.

Located at the heart of campus, the building offers unique opportunities for students to collaborate. A towering, triple-height commons anchors and integrates the collaborative social and learning interiors.

Wrapping this space are lounges and study rooms, dining options and quiet corners, as well as the Jack Hunt Memorial Library. An outdoor terrace provides a view of aircraft on final approach to Daytona Beach International Airport’s runway 25R-7L, and even rocket launches from Cape Canaveral.

“It is the students’ union, first and foremost,” Butler said, noting that Embry-Riddle students have committed to supporting half the cost of the $75 million building. “It is an open-hearted and welcoming space for our alumni, friends, families and community. We thank everyone who has been a part of this monumental project, and we hope everyone in the community will stop by and visit the Mori Hosseini Student Union.”

Government officials celebrated the dedication of the Mori Hosseini Student Union with its namesake, Mori Hosseini, center, and members of the Embry-Riddle Board of Trustees.
When a Brazilian aircraft maker asked Embry-Riddle for business insights, more than 100 students leaned into an initiative that could bring up to 80 new jobs to Florida.

The plan is bold and the stakes are high: SeaMax, a light-sport aircraft company based in Brazil, is launching operations in the United States. Known for producing the award-winning M-22, the company is transitioning to an all-composite model: the M-42. The vision, says SeaMax CEO Gilberto Cunha Trivelato, is to market a safe amphibious aircraft, with or without foldable wings, and a computer platform that allows users to load their own applications.

To succeed, the former executive at Mextron O&lbrecht and systems engineer at Embraer knew he would need deep insights to the U.S. light-sport aircraft market. For 20 years, Trivelato says, he knew he would need deep insights to the U.S. light-sport aircraft market. For 20 years, Trivelato says, he knew he would need deep insights to the U.S. light-sport aircraft market. For 20 years, Trivelato says, he knew he would need deep insights to the U.S. light-sport aircraft market.

In response, Embry-Riddle faculty members Dawna Rhoades, Janet Tinoco and John Longshore, among others, brought up to 80 new jobs to Florida. They launched an initiative that could create a reconfigurable and higher quality product based on new processes, which will be faster than metal fabrication done by hand.

The analyses encompassed the SeaMax business plan for U.S. operations, including project management, competition, customer base, value proposition, supply chain logistics, importing and exporting challenges, and product quality and performance.

If Trivelato’s plan to sell a “flying business platform” for U.S. operations, including project management, competition, customer base, value proposition, supply chain logistics, importing and exporting challenges, and product quality and performance, it can ultimately create 80 new jobs in Florida, says Shalorn Confessor, executive director for the company’s U.S. headquarters.

The company is in the advanced stage of prototype development and new technologies testing for the aircraft. “We expect to start test flights by September 2019,” Confessor says. The plan, now, is to do final assembly in the United States and then gradually transfer the entire production to the states, he adds.

Marketing for Sport or Business

Customer service will be a critical selling point as SeaMax ramps up to market an aircraft with customizable software modules to various businesses—sport aircraft, including project management, competition, customer base, value proposition, supply chain logistics, importing and exporting challenges, and product quality and performance.

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If Trivelato’s plan to sell a “flying business platform” for U.S. operations, including project management, competition, customer base, value proposition, supply chain logistics, importing and exporting challenges, and product quality and performance, it can ultimately create 80 new jobs in Florida, says Shalorn Confessor, executive director for the company’s U.S. headquarters.

The company is in the advanced stage of prototype development and new technologies testing for the aircraft. “We expect to start test flights by September 2019,” Confessor says. The plan, now, is to do final assembly in the United States and then gradually transfer the entire production to the states, he adds.

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A NEW LEASE

Business savvy, hard work and ‘secret sauce’ fuel aircraft leasing startup

BY SARA WITHROW

ANEW
BY SARA WITHROW

BUSINESS SAVVY,
HARD WORK AND ‘SECRET SAUCE’ FUEL AIRCRAFT LEASING STARTUP

JAMES MCENTEE

SPRING 2019
In 2018, a trio of Embry-Riddle alumni accomplished a previously unheard of aviation business feat. Over a 90-day period ending Oct. 9, they stood up a new aircraft leasing company, solidified a purchase agreement for 21 commercial aircraft and raised about $800 million in debt and equity that included an asset-backed securitization (ABS).

“That was a big deal,” says Damon D’Agostino (’94), president, CEO and co-founder of Zephyrus Aviation Capital. “We were investment-grade rated by S&P and Kroll. That [ABS] had never been done before by a startup aircraft leasing company.”

But Zephyrus is no ordinary startup. “These guys have been around. You add up the years of experience that they’ve had ... and it’s a bit difficult to call it a startup, per se,” says Michael Halaby, the head of aviation debt origination at Deutsche Bank in London, which issued the ABS for the company.

“I think their success speaks for itself,” Halaby says. “They were able to access the ABS market in the same year that they started their company. There’s a lot of faith and respect that the market has for that management team.” [To learn more about the ABS market, see sidebar, Page 19.]

Collectively, D’Agostino and non-executive chairman Tony Diaz (’80) have more than 50 years of aircraft leasing experience. The company’s other two founders, Richard Genge (’09, ’13), vice president, and Robert Meade, chief commercial officer, together have another 20-plus years of experience in the business. Meade, an Air Force veteran, is the sole non-Embry-Riddle alumnus on the management team.

Aviation Business Foundation

All four founders of Zephyrus Aviation Capital are “alumni” of CIT Group’s Aerospace Division. It was at CIT that they earned their aircraft leasing chops. In fact, Diaz and fellow Embry-Riddle alumnus C. Jeffrey Knittel (’80), now chairman and CEO of Airbus Americas, built the aircraft leasing business at CIT from the ground up.

“In 1987 when Jeff hired me, the CIT aviation group consisted of Jeff and myself. The last thing I thought was that I would be there for 30 years,” Diaz says. Avolon Holdings Limited acquired CIT Group’s aircraft leasing business in April 2017 for $10.38 billion. The CIT Aerospace management team essentially performed itself out of jobs. An international aircraft leasing company, Avolon already had an executive staff.

At the time of the acquisition, Diaz was the president of CIT Aerospace, D’Agostino was the chief commercial officer, Genge was the assistant vice president for marketing and asset sales, and Meade was the director of marketing strategy and asset sales. The foursome started searching for their next big opportunities, individually.

A Startup Takes Flight

At an informal meeting at the end of summer 2017, the four former colleagues had an epiphany. “We were all thinking the same thing,” D’Agostino says. “That there is space for a mid- to late-life aircraft leasing company. [And] we realized that together we could make a really great team.”

First, they took stock of the industry. “Fuel price was low (2017) and forecasted to stay relatively low for the foreseeable future,” D’Agostino says. “As we dug into the market further, our analysis showed that there were about 8,000 aircraft at that time that fell into our age and equipment sweet spot. The older aircraft require a lot more ‘metal’ knowledge — meaning it isn’t just a financial transaction. You need to understand the inherent value and nuances of the aircraft, down to scrap value. This played to our strengths.”

Because mid- to late-life aircraft require more “high touch” and expertise on the part of the lessor, the barriers to entry in that segment are greater, Diaz says. This creates an environment that is less crowded, he adds. “We saw an opportunity in that sector.”

In 2016, Embry-Riddle launched the nation’s first Ph.D. in Aviation Business Administration. Learn more: erau.edu/aba

DID YOU KNOW?

“These guys have been around. You add up the years of experience that they’ve had ... and it’s a bit difficult to call it a startup, per se. I think their success speaks for itself.”
To bring the plan to fruition, Diaz leveraged his existing relationships with Virgo Investment Group and Seabury Capital, now the majority and minority owners of Zephyrus, respectively. The company name came from a smaller, pre-existing aircraft leasing entity operated by Virgo.

"It took about 12 months to form up," Diaz says. "We had the equity and the management team. What we needed was aircraft." Their history at CIT Aerospace (now owned by Avolon) and insight into its fleet assets made Avolon an ideal prospect for the aircraft acquisition. "Avolon liked the idea of selling former CIT aircraft that were not core to its business plan to the former CIT management team," Diaz says. The aircraft, primarily A320s and Boeing 737s, are all presently leased to major commercial airlines. The Zephyrus management team constructed each of these leases while working for CIT. "The thought was that since we were familiar with the aircraft and airlines, the novation (lease transfer) process with the airlines would go smoother," Diaz explains. And it has. As of the end of December, Zephyrus had closed on three-quarters of the aircraft. "The novation process is the hardest part. It takes a little time," Diaz says. He expects all 21 aircraft will be novated by March 31, 2019.

The Embry-Riddle Formula

Diaz and D'Agostino say their shared Embry-Riddle roots — and even more, their passion for aviation — is what makes their team work. It’s also the basis of a successful hiring formula that started at CIT Aerospace and continues to this day.

Diaz explains: "When we were at CIT in the early days, CIT would hire a lot of people out of college or interns. They tended, however, to come from finance schools." Although they were high-caliber employees, there was an unintended result for the aerospace group: high turnover. The new hires were hungry to learn all aspects of finance and the various industries served at CIT, so they would only stay a month or six weeks in the aircraft leasing sector, Diaz says.

One day, he recalls, "the lightbulb went off." Diaz suggested the group try to hire new graduates who had an affinity for aviation. One of the first people hired under that program was D'Agostino, who spent the next 23 years in the CIT Aerospace division.

"Our success rate in keeping people went from almost zero to nearly 90 percent. That was one of the best decisions we made," Diaz says. With their firsthand knowledge — as alumni — and the university’s reputation as a leader in aviation business education, Embry-Riddle graduates became top prospects for internships and jobs at CIT Aerospace.

"We didn't try to have a bias for Embry-Riddle, but that's frankly where we found the best qualified candidates," Diaz says. "The secret sauce was that they had an affinity for aviation... Embry-Riddle was fertile ground." D'Agostino, who in 2009 hired Zephyrus co-founder and fellow Eagle, Richard Genge, at CIT, agrees. "Embry-Riddle brings graduates with a solid foundation of a top-tier business education, along with the passion for aviation that we all have in this industry. It’s a home run for us."

Zephyrus is now in full-growth mode and is poised to add another Embry-Riddle alumni to its team. "At CIT, we had a lot of Embry-Riddle graduates, and I'd like to think that we were very successful. So, I see no reason why we shouldn’t do the same thing again," D’Agostino says.

Financing the Future

D’Agostino and Diaz see only blue skies ahead for the aviation industry — and the operating lease business. And why wouldn’t they? "Back in 1987, when I first started with Jeff [Krentel] at CIT, operating leasing was 1 to 2 percent of the market. Today it’s about 45 percent of the market," Diaz says.

"All indications are that the leasing sector will continue to grow," D’Agostino affirms. "Passenger demand continues to increase, and historically, air travel has doubled in size roughly every 15 years. There doesn’t seem to be any slowdown in sight when looking at long-term trends. That means the number of aircraft that need to be financed will continue to grow."

With the expertise of its management team and a name like Zephyrus — the Greek god of the west wind and the messenger of spring — this startup will likely bloom.

EDITORS NOTE: D’Agostino holds a B.S. in Aviation Business Administration, Diaz has a B.S. in Aeronautical Studies, and Genge has a B.S. in Aviation Business Administration and an MBA – Aviation, all from Embry-Riddle. D’Agostino also holds an MBA – International Business from the University of Miami and is a member of Embry-Riddle’s David B. O’Malley College of Business Industry Advisory Board.

Michael Halaby, the head of aviation debt origination at Deutsche Bank in London, says it is rare for a new aircraft leasing business to secure financing through asset-backed securitization (ABS). A debt finance alternative, the ABS market teams businesses with a select group of investing institutions, pension funds, insurance companies, asset managers and other sophisticated investors, he explains. The business is then obligated to repay interest and principal on a collateralized loan to this group of investors. "It’s just a different form of secured financing outside of the bank market," Halaby says.

When Zephyrus Aviation Capital first approached Halaby about finance options for the startup, he says it became evident that ABS would be the optimal route. The ABS market offered several benefits, including a higher loan-to-value ratio. There was just one problem: The ABS market is historically for companies that have been around for a while, and Zephyrus was only incorporated last year," Halaby says. Despite this, ABS investors signed on. "In a way, [Zephyrus] somewhat leapfrogged the markets by going straight to ABS," Halaby says. An ABS market strengthened by the recent and rapid growth of the aviation industry and worldwide demand for passenger aircraft helped, but the real dealmaker was the expertise and reputation of the Zephyrus management team.

"If it were a true startup, with inexperienced management, it would not go to the ABS market. ABS investors would likely want to see a successful track record first," Halaby says. To start an aircraft leasing company, basically, four things are needed, Halaby explains. "You need the equity to come in; you need the debt to come in; you need a management team that you trust and support; and you need someone to sell you the aircraft. For some market participants it’s a vicious circle, because you can’t get one without having the other three. It’s very difficult to break in.

"We were able to take what could be a vicious circle for folks and helped make it a virtuous one," Halaby says. "We are very proud to have helped get Zephyrus off the ground."
Imagine a Boeing 777 crashing every day, with no survivors. In 1999, that's how Steve Powell ('08) visualized the estimated 98,000 Americans who died each year due to medical errors, according to a report in that same year from the Institute of Medicine (IOM).

Around that time, Powell was by his father's side for two years of treatments, procedures and hospital stays in a struggle against lung cancer. That struggle ended suddenly in 2002 — after a routine treatment went wrong. His father's death was emblematic of the common, preventable medical errors outlined in the IOM report, and Powell was determined to change it.

“What I saw was a really broken system,” Powell says, “where there was very little coordination, little cohesiveness between the care teams, little cooperation, communication — all the ‘C’ words were just not there. You weren’t the quarterback, you were the football, and you were getting kicked around from one place to another with no one in charge.”

Powell considers the IOM report a seminal industry moment, in the same way that fatal airline accidents led to crew resource management (CRM) training starting in the early '80s. With nearly two decades of safety and flight experience in the U.S. Navy and Delta Air Lines, his father’s death spurred him to look beyond aviation to see if he could apply his experience to the world of healthcare.

Mission Readiness Model

While still working as a pilot at Delta, Powell opened his medical training and consulting business, Synensys, in 2004 and began pursuing a master’s degree in human factors from Embry-Riddle’s Worldwide Campus in Atlanta.

Powell looked to a high-reliability organization in a high-risk environment for a model to apply to healthcare. “How could someplace that’s so dangerous — an aircraft carrier flight deck — be so safe, when the average age of a person working the flight deck is 18 years old? Very few have advanced degrees and programming. And yet they recover and launch airplanes 24/7 all over the world,” Powell says. “It comes down to mission readiness.”

Synensys found a kindred spirit in the military medical system, where it earned some of its first contracts. “They could see the readiness benefits right away,” Powell says.

Applied Aviation Science

Seeing the evolution of aviation error management gave Powell perspective on the healthcare industry. “What’s interesting is that the same factors that were causing aircraft accidents prior to CRM were causing medical errors as well, with communication being No. 1. You can’t take away the root causes, but training can mitigate and manage them.”

While still at Embry-Riddle, Powell’s graduate studies helped expand his product offerings. “I took electives on learning science, learning technology and training. The degree wasn’t just human factors; it was everything that I needed to develop a portfolio of services for our clients.”

By 2010, Synensys had a comprehensive safety software solution and training programs available in English, Japanese and Arabic. It also had an office in Qatar.

But Powell says, “The elephant in the room is that the same mandate that’s there for aviation isn’t there for healthcare. To ‘sell’ safety, he has to appeal to the industry from a cost basis. “You have to reach for things like, how much it might cost the hospital if there’s a malpractice claim. We use that to incentivize healthcare organizations to do CRM, implement a safety culture and perform safety audits.”

In 2015, Powell took his knowledge to consumers. He co-authored The Patient Survival Handbook, a book that promotes patient awareness and self-advocacy to prevent medical mishaps.

Now in his 28th year as a pilot at Delta and his 15th year as CEO of Synensys, Powell is still honing his craft. “I’m just finishing up a Ph.D. program in healthcare administration. It’s helping me better understand healthcare leadership and move our organization into its next season,” he says.

A Human Factors Remedy

Steve Powell and his company, Synensys, are using aviation safety science to combat fatal medical mishaps.
A Simple Charge

Trustee David O’Maley pays forward a special gift he received as a young man

BY MELANIE STAWICKI AZAM

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A Simple Charge

Trustee David O’Maley pays forward a special gift he received as a young man

BY MELANIE STAWICKI AZAM

O’Maley’s gift will lead the university’s effort to advance its business curriculum, which includes developing a robust focus on aviation business leadership. In addition to his passion for business, O’Maley has served on Embry-Riddle’s Board of Trustees since 2014, and is currently a member of the development and finance committees. He is also chair for the board’s committee on business initiatives and was appointed by President Butler to chair a special committee that’s reviewing the strategy and direction of the College of Business. The College of Business was renamed the David B. O’Maley College of Business to honor his service and contributions to Embry-Riddle.

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n 2018, an Embry-Riddle alumnus installed the only optical telescope currently at the South Pole to better understand how our solar system evolved and, in particular, why Jupiter orbits in an icy realm beyond the asteroid belt. The knowledge gained could overturn popular scientific theory and narrow the search for extraterrestrial life forms.

“What we learn through this project could change the way we think about our solar system,” says Capt. Michael “Mikey” Nayak, Ph.D., a scientist with the U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL).

In many other solar systems, explains Nayak (’10), hot Jupiter-like planets spin closely around their stars. “They’re fairly common in all of the exosystems we’ve studied so far,” he notes. That begs the question: Why is our own solar system so different?

Nayak’s mission to set up the Long-Duration Antarctic Day and Night Imaging Telescope (LANDIT) promises to provide new clues to this fundamental mystery of planetary science. In addition, observa-
tional methods developed for the project — sup-
ported by the Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR), the U.S. Air Force Test Pilot School and the National Science Foundation (NSF) — might some-
day suggest a way to peek inside human-made satel-
ilites in space, including non-U.S. satellites that could pose a threat to national security.

U.S. Air Force Capt. Michael Nayak installs the only optical telescope currently at the South Pole to begin studying Jupiter and Saturn.

Science at the South Pole

U.S. Air Force Capt. Michael Nayak is chasing clues to Jupiter’s evolution to better understand our solar system and support national security

BY GINGER PINHOLSTER

A Marriage of Science and Engineering

The effort sprang from a unique agreement, signed by the heads of the Air Force and the NSF, to marry scientific and engineering basic research. With a bachelor’s and master’s degree in aerospace engineering from Embry-Riddle and two Earth and planetary science degrees from the University of California, Santa Cruz, Nayak’s expertise and military background were perfect for the mission.

Co-directing the project with Nayak is astronomer Ryan Swindle, Ph.D., an AFRL research physicist.

During the Antarctic summer in November and December 2018, Nayak flew to the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station to install a small prototype telescope, make measurements of the atmosphere, and practice observing Jupiter, as well as Saturn, during continuous daylight hours. The only active military member resident at the South Pole during the 2018-19 season, he will return next December with a seven-person team to test-drive a larger telescope during Antarctic days and nights.

If all goes well, Nayak and Swindle’s Ph.D. student, Embry-Riddle alumnus Cody Shav (‘19), a space physicist, will return in 2020 to capture the first-ever 100-day set of long-term, or “seismic,” signals from Jupiter and Saturn. These signals — minute changes in reflected light, uninterrupted by the rising sun — are only possible to observe from Antarctica.

Harmonic Vibrations

Using those signals, researchers can glean what’s inside Jupiter and Saturn, and how they have changed over time. If the signals remain uninterrupted, the background noise should be low enough to determine the acoustic modes that continuously vibrate around and through planets. These “spherical harmonics” are a kind of gravitational song that can be mathematically expressed to reveal the shape of a planet. After they identify a planet’s song at the surface, researchers can better understand its interior. Interior shapes such as lumps can be imagined as musical notes that tell a story about the planet’s formation and evolution. The approach is an adaptation of a field known as helioseismology.

The key question is whether Jupiter evolved closer to the Sun in ancient times, but then hurtled into its current position after engaging in a game of gravitational tug-of-war with Saturn. Nayak says. If it evolved closer to the sun — a popular theory — its core and mantle would be shaped very differently than if it formed farther out in the solar system, under much lower temperatures.

“What we learn could provide insights to the past and future evolution of our solar system,” Nayak says.

Extraterrestrial Life

Understanding Jupiter’s ancient origins might also help narrow the search for life on distant moons, says Nayak’s former teacher, satellite expert Bogdan Udrea, associate professor of aerospace engineering at Embry-Riddle. Europa — a moon, or natural satellite of Jupiter — is covered with ice, but some researchers think it may harbor water, and thus, microbial or other life forms.

“One thing we can say from here is Europa has much lower temperatures, than if it formed farther out in the solar system, under much lower temperatures,” Udrea says.

In January 2019, Nayak started training at the Embry-Riddle Air Force Test Pilot School. He hopes to gradua-
te in December as an experimental flight test engineer.

“Science at the South Pole promises to provide new clues to this fundamental mystery of planetary science.”

—CAPT. MICHAEL NAYAK

Michael Nayak, far left, tests the remote automation functions of the LANDIT telescope at the Air Force Research Laboratory in Maui, Hawaii, prior to deploying to the South Pole. LANDIT must now recently in 2019 for 100 days during the winter, with ambient temperatures of -90 degrees Celsius. Co-directing the project with Nayak is astronomer Ryan Swindle, pictured left, with Nayak.
“Being brother and sister means being there for each other.”

— AUTHOR UNKNOWN

The Eagle bond is strong. It’s exemplified in the pride, friendships, business connections, shared passions, brotherhood and sisterhood that all Eagles share. When our alumni come together, this bond is especially prevalent. I’ve had the recent privilege of witnessing this collective Eagle spirit firsthand:

✈ At the second annual Black Alumni Network Reunion, industry leaders told stories of hardship, persistence and success to a roomful of attentive students — and bonded together to establish a Black Alumni Scholarship fund.

✈ At the 25-year reunion celebrating the founding of the WIKD radio station at the Daytona Beach Campus, Eagle DJs expressed their shared love of connecting fellow students through music.

✈ At the Hockey Club reunion, a group of 25 alumni and friends reminisced about the bond they built over ice, sweat, beer and blood.

✈ At a Lacrosse Club reunion, former teammates celebrated the friendships they formed through bruises, teamwork and banter. (See story, Page 29)

✈ At the NIHFA Golden Eagles Reunion, aviators from the Prescott Campus reunited over their shared dedication to team, school and a winning legacy.

✈ And, at 150-plus other alumni gatherings held across the globe in 2018, Eagles shared their stories, laughter and support for their alma mater and each other.

As graduates, we are driven to excel in our professions on an individual basis, but we also help our own. Every week, I hear of an alumnus who was hired by, guided to or learned of an opportunity from a fellow graduate that advanced their career. An example of this is Zephyrus Aviation Capital [See story, Page 14]. Three of the founding members of this startup aircraft leasing company are Embry-Riddle alumni. And the company is poised to hire another Eagle, as its business grows.

It is amazing how often I hear stories of relationships that started with the statement: “You graduated from Riddle, too?” It isn’t about campus or program. It’s about shared experiences — and offering a helping hand.

As the years pass so quickly, we often take our relationships for granted, but I encourage all Eagles to reach out to one another, reconnect, say “hello,” “thank you” and “how can I help you?” In addition, reach out to your unit, team, club or fraternity and come back as a group for a reunion. The office of alumni engagement will gladly assist.

Our campuses proudly sport the best resources and facilities, but you — our alumni — are the bricks and mortar: the bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood that have shaped who we are today as a university. Please continue to build and strengthen your Eagle bond, because the rewards are infinite.

God bless you, and remember, you are Forever an Eagle.

Bill Thompson (’87)
Executive Director

Facebook.com/eraualumni
Twitter.com/erau_alumni
Alumniераu.edu/linkedin

Alumni Homecoming Weekend
DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA | OCT. 11-13, 2018
Alumni joined students, faculty and staff for the Grand Opening of the Mori Hosseini Student Union.

OctoberWest & Wings Out West
PRESCOTT, ARIZONA | OCT. 4-6, 2018
The Eagle community celebrated the campus’ 40th Anniversary.

Being brother and sister means being there for each other.

— AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Bill Thompson (’87)
Executive Director

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Alumni.erau.edu/linkedin

**Standout Celebration**

Prescott Campus Chancellor inducts three Hall-of-Famers and names two honorary alumni

**BY MELANIE STAWICKI AZAM**

One of the first students enrolled at Embry-Riddle’s Prescott Campus in 1978, Capt. Mark Overley ’81 never imagined the fledgling Golden Eagles Flight Team he helped found would become one of the top collegiate flight teams in the nation. “We always knew the team would grow to be competitive but never dreamed they would grow into the exceptional team they became over these 40 years,” says Overley, now a senior captain at the Citation Corporation Flight Department and a mentor/judge to the Golden Eagles. For more about his involvement with the Golden Eagles, go to lift.erau.edu/flight-team-story

Martin-Belitz, a standards check airman at Southwest Airlines and a pilot since age 16, was recognized for her contributions to their profession, their industry and technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) at the Prescott Campus. Additionally, she volunteers at St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital, Ronald McDonald House and The Salvation Army.

Patterson-Simes is the founder and owner of SkyTrek Alaska Flight Training, which was designated the 2017 National Black Flight School by the Aircraft Pilots Association (AOPA) Flight Training Experience Survey and Awards. She spent most of her time as a full-time student at the Prescott Campus (1989-1992).

“When I opened my flight school in 2014, I never dreamed that AOPA would name it No. 1 in the nation in 2017,” says Patterson-Simes, who is one of only four Master Flight Instructors in Alaska, as designated by the National Association of Flight Instructors. “It was an amazing experience to realize that my education and training helped get me to this place.”

Patterson-Simes is actively involved in Alaska’s aviation community, serving on numerous boards related to airport development. SkyTrek Alaska is based at Merrill Field in Anchorage.

**Honorary Alumni**

Also at the awards reception and dinner, David Robertson and Tonia Fortner were named honorary alumni.

Robertson is a member of the Embry-Riddle Board of Trustees and a longtime supporter of the university. As a professional pilot for more than 30 years, Robertson’s piloting experience has ranged from gliders to jet airliners. Through the Robertson family’s support, the Prescott Campus established the Robertson Safety Institute and the Robertson Aircraft Crash Investigation Laboratory.

He and his wife also established the David and Andrea Robertson Endowed Scholarship in 2006. Robertson currently serves as chairman of the Embry-Riddle Board’s Scholarship to assist female students studying science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) at the Prescott Campus. Additionally, she contributed, along with others, to name the Professor Emeritus Fielding McGehee Scholarship.

Robertson has been a professional pilot for more than 30 years, Robertson’s piloting experience has ranged from gliders to jet airliners. Through the Robertson family’s support, the Prescott Campus established the Robertson Safety Institute and the Robertson Aircraft Crash Investigation Laboratory.

Fortner is a member of the Prescott Campus Board of Visitors and a benefactor and advocate for Embry-Riddle since the Prescott Campus opened. Fortner established the Tonia Knight Forrest Women and STEM Endowed Scholarship to assist female students studying science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) at the Prescott Campus. Additionally, she contributed, along with others, to name the Professor Emeritus Fielding McGehee Physics Lab at the STEM Education Center, which opened in 2017 at the Prescott Campus.

**Lacrosse Club members return to campus for reunion**

**Teammates Forever**

**BY MELANIE STAWICKI AZAM**

Marty Campanella ’89 recalls his teenage daughter teasing him that he was sitting in his armchair too much and needed to do something fun. “So I said, ‘I am going to call 10 of my best friends and meet them for a long weekend in Daytona Beach,’” says Campanella, a corporate pilot in Maryland. And he did.

He organized a July 27-28 Lacrosse Club 2018 Summer Reunion, which was attended by more than a dozen of his old teammates at Embry-Riddle’s Daytona Beach Campus. Thanks to their shared love of aviation, he says he was still in touch with several club members and was able to track down the rest.

“Out of the 14 of us, eight of us are still active pilots,” he says. “Aviation is what kept us together.”

Lacrosse Club members — many who had not been back to campus in 30 years — toured the campus and were amazed at its growth.

“The new student center was just about completed, and everyone unanimously said it’s amazing how far the school has come,” Campanella says. “We couldn’t believe it. They have a whole athletic center. We had a swimming pool. Now they have a real lacrosse team.”

Lacrosse was added to Embry-Riddle’s intercollegiate athletics program in 2017-18, when the school transitioned from the NAIA to NCAA III competition.

**For the Love of the Game**

The Lacrosse Club members used to make their own uniforms out of white T-shirts, with ERAU and a number scrawled in black marker on the back, says Chris Watson ’90, who attended the reunion and started a Facebook page for Embry-Riddle Lacrosse Club alumni. The referee wore a white T-shirt striped with black electrical tape.

*Left: DARYL LABELLO*
EVENTS ON THE RADAR

APRIL 2-3 Sun ‘N Fun Fly-In & Expo Lakeland, Florida Alumni Reception, April 2

APRIL 4 Fort Lauderdale Network – Corporate Run Fort Lauderdale, Florida

APRIL 5 Eagle Alumni Awards Daytona Beach, Florida

APRIL 8 Lift Off The Page Daytona Beach, Florida, and Livestreamed alumni.erau.edu/LiftTalks

APRIL 9–11 Aviation Week’s MRO America Atlanta, Georgia Alumni Reception, April 9

APRIL 14 JFR Rotary Club: JFR Runway Run Ossining, New York Alumni Reception, April 14

APRIL 17 West Palm Beach Network – Corporate Run West Palm Beach, Florida

APRIL 25 Miami Network – Corporate Run Miami, Florida

APRIL 27–28 Worldwide Campus Conference Somerset, Germany Alumni Reception, April 27

APRIL 30–MAY 2 Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International XPONENTIAL McLean, Virginia Alumni Reception, May 1

MAY 4 Prescott Campus and Worldwide Campus Conference Prescott, Arizona

MAY 6 Worldwide Campus Conference Daytona Beach, Florida

MAY 25–26 Bethpage Air Show at Jones Beach State Park Wantagh, New York

JUNE 1 Worldwide Campus Conference* Pensacola, Florida

JUNE 2–3 Eagle Explorers 2019: Great Trains & Grand Camps Sedona, Arizona alumni.erau.edu/explorers

JUNE 16–19 American Association of Airport Executives Conference and Exposition Boston, Massachusetts

JUNE 30 Worldwide Campus Conference Tokyo, Japan

JULY 14 Worldwide Campus Conference* San Diego, California

JULY 21–23 EAA AirVenture Oshkosh, Wisconsin Alumni BBQ, July 24

JULY 31–AUG. 2 Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals Los Angeles, California Alumni Reception, Aug. 1

AUG. 4–6 Space & Missile Defense Symposium Huntsville, Alabama Alumni Reception, Aug. 8

AUG. 13 Worldwide Campus Conference* Quincy, Virginia

SEP. 7 Worldwide Campus Conference* Seattle, Washington

OCT. 20–23 Air Traffic Control Association Conference and Exposition* National Harbor, Maryland

OCT. 22–24 NASA-ACE* Las Vegas, Nevada

OCT. 25–NOV. 1 Human-Factors and Ergonomics Society International Annual Meeting Seattle, Washington

OCT. 30–NOV. 3 Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers* Phoenix, Arizona

NOV. 7–9 Society of Women Engineers Anaheim, California

*Alumni receptions are pending.

For the most up-to-date list of events, visit alumni.erau.edu/events.

Career News

1970s

John Alger (’73) retired from US Airways/american Airlines on Oct. 3, 2018, after more than 30 years as a flight crew training instructor. A Daytona Beach Campus graduate, he also recently stopped down as chairman of the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, the youth program of the Navy League of the United States. Alger spent nearly 25 years active and reserve in the U.S. Navy as a pilot and later as a navigator, retiring in 1997 at the rank of commander. He and his wife, Joan, plan to relocate to the Daytona Beach, Florida area.

Kenneth F. Wiegand (’71), a Worldwide Campus graduate, is president of Business Air Consulting LLC, which provides airport consulting services to Business Aviation Group clients.

Jerry LeBaron (’71), a Daytona Beach Campus graduate, was inducted into the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame on Oct. 20, 2018, at the EAA Aviation Museum in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. LeBaron was airmen in the U.S. Navy for four years. He worked for Lockheed Aircraft Corp., becoming its youngest commercial aircraft engineering manager. Later he moved to Rockwell International. He founded LeBaron Aviation Inc. at Burbank Airport and offered advanced flight training. In 1987, he joined Northrop Aircraft to work on the B-2 Stealth Bomber program. LeBaron currently lives in Waunakee on the Waunakee Airport with his travel and consulting company. He remains an active consultant to Northrop Grumman, since retiring from the company in 2008.

Steven Zehr (’79) was appointed head of the Airports Division for Getty Oil Bexis Facility Management, a service provider in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. A Daytona Beach Campus graduate, Zehr has more than 25 years of specialized aviation experience in managing and planning.

1990s

Daytona Beach Campus graduate John Maria (’92, ’93, ’17) was inducted into the Canadian Aviation Hall of Fame at a June 7, 2018, ceremony in Calgary, Alberta. Maria is president of Maritime Corporation, a Canadian aviation firm based in Montreal. A Canadian Armed Forces submarine pilot and test pilot, Maria was also a team leader in the Canadian Space Agency and a key person in the development of the robotic arm used on the International Space Station.

Bob Barton (’83), a Daytona Beach Campus graduate who retired in 2017, is a part-time career transition consultant at Hecht Horison.

Kemp Huitt (’86) is a hardware/software integration engineer, and a search and rescue emergency medical technician team lead for King County in Washington. Huitt is a Daytona Beach Campus graduate.

Derry Huff (’88), a Worldwide Campus graduate, was promoted to vice president of sales and marketing at Amerijet International.

Mike Kienast (’81), a Prescott Campus graduate, was named vice president of MBI Management Services in Salt Lake City, Utah. Kienast is a licensed real estate broker.

David Lincoln (’89) currently works for Delta Air Lines flying the Boeing 777-200LR. A Daytona Beach Campus graduate, he is based in Los Angeles and resides in Henderson, Nevada.

NASA Astronaut Capt. Dan Burbank (’91), who spent 188 days in space near three missions, retired from the company on June 29, 2018. A Worldwide Campus graduate, Burbank was selected as an astronaut candidate in 1996 and flew his first mission aboard Space Shuttle Atlantis in 2000. Most recently, he served as chief of the vehicle integration and test office in the Flight Operations Directorate at NASA Johnson.

Herman Harbecke (’91), a Worldwide Campus graduate, retired after 21 years of Department of Defense civil service and 21 years of U.S. Navy active duty service.

New York Air National Guard Lt. Col. David Pansera (’84) a Daytona Beach Campus graduate, made his final flight as a military pilot on July 17, 2018, after a 25-year career. He is now a pilot at JetBlue Airways.

Brian Rosa (’83) was hired as regional sales manager at Elbit Aviation, an aviation MRO services company. Rosa has nearly 30 years of aviation experience and is a Daytona Beach Campus graduate.

Retired 1st Sgt. Michael Bateman (’91, ’93), a Worldwide Campus graduate, is the assistant product manager for the Army’s Rapid Battle Air Traffic Control Office at Redstone Arsenal in Alabama.

Christopher Martinez (’95) is developing and teaching criminal justice and homeland security courses as a professor in the City University
of New York system. He has also been a professor at Princeton University and is currently serving as chairman of the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory.

Kathak (91) recently received a promotion to chief executive officer of the German aerospace company Airbus. He also serves as director of risk and opportunity for Leonardo DRS on its Advanced Pilot Training (A/P Training) program effort in Crystal City, Virginia. A Dayton Beach Campus graduate, he is currently involved in the organization of the California Airshow at Palm Springs.

Sean Rogers (92) recently received a promotion to chief executive officer of the aerospace company Avionica. He is a graduate of the Dayton Beach Campus and serves as director of marketing for the company.

Michelle Gamble (92) recently received a promotion to chief executive officer of the aerospace company Titan Aviation. She is a graduate of the Dayton Beach Campus and serves as senior vice president of worldwide sales and leasing broker.

Kat Makela (92) recently received a promotion to chief financial officer of the aerospace company Aerion. She is a graduate of the Dayton Beach Campus and serves as chief financial officer of the company.

Sakeer Sheik (92) recently received a promotion to chief executive officer of the aerospace company Avion. He is a graduate of the Dayton Beach Campus and serves as chief executive officer of the company.

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Lynch helped launch its Pilot Mentor Program. He is also an active member of the Indianapolis chapter of Pilots For Kids and the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals.

Anthony Vareha ('06) is the SpaceTech 75 lead flight director and one of the flight directors at NASA in charge of International Space Station (ISS) operations at the Johnson Space Center Mission Control. A Worldwide Campus graduate, he led the team conducting the SpaceTech-75 cargo resupply mission, which launched June 28, 2018, to the ISS. Several lead officers for the mission were also Eagle students. They included lead robotics officer Billy Jones ('98), robotics analyst Brian Costello ('93), and ground controller Karen Johnson ('11), who are all Daytona Campus graduates. Also on the team were lead trajectory officer Victor Rice ('74), who is a Prescott Campus graduate, and lead ground controller Ronald Mosesley ('80), a Worldwide Campus graduate.

Ravi Gondaliya ('13, '16) presented a talk on the “Daytona Beach Campus 2018 Homecoming.” The topic was based on a TEDx talk that he delivered earlier in the year. A Daytona Beach Campus graduate, Gondaliya is a mentor and process engineer at Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation in Savannah, Georgia.

Christopher A. Salley ('15) was appointed vice president of the National Association of Volunteer Fire Services. A Worldwide Campus graduate, Salley volunteers for the Association for Unmanned Vehicles category of the XCELLENCE Awards by the Association for Unmanned Vehicles Industry. He recently served as the Department of Transportation and Development Aviation program manager.

A Worldwide Campus graduate, Scott B. Hill ('09, '11) is a worldwide operations analyst for this General Electric business. At GE, Hill has worked as a senior process engineer at the Aircraft Line of Business, and as a senior process engineer at the Aviation Line of Business. Hill has also worked as a senior process engineer at the Aircraft Line of Business, and as a senior process engineer at the Aviation Line of Business. Hill has also worked as a senior process engineer at the Aircraft Line of Business, and as a senior process engineer at the Aviation Line of Business.

Jill Meier ('97) is a retired U.S. Air Force Col. Mike Ferullo ('06) is a Worldwide Campus graduate. He is also an active member of the Association of Unmanned Vehicles Industry (AUVSI) and its national board of directors. At AUVSI, Ferullo has served as the director of the Unmanned Systems Division, and as the chair of the AUVSI Unmanned Systems Division. He has also served as the chair of the AUVSI Unmanned Systems Division, and as the chair of the AUVSI Unmanned Systems Division.

Megan McCullan ('15) is a World Wide Campus graduate. McCullan has more than 16 years of experience in the aviation industry. She has served as the director of the Transportation and Development Aviation program manager.

Christopher A. Salley ('15) is the sales and marketing manager for National Jets, an aviation company that operates out of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA). A Worldwide Campus graduate, Salley has worked for National Jets for more than 10 years, and has served as the board’s vice president. Other alumni named at Aerospace Alumni include Robert Connor ('13), who serves as the board’s vice president. Other alumni named at Aerospace Alumni include Robert Connor ('13), who serves as the board’s vice president. Other alumni named at Aerospace Alumni include Robert Connor ('13), who serves as the board’s vice president.

Fathi Hakam ('13) is an operations analyst at NASA in charge of International Space Station (ISS) operations at the Johnson Space Center Mission Control. A Worldwide Campus graduate, Hakam is the board’s vice president. He has also served as the board’s vice president.

Brian G. Porter ('95, '96), a Worldwide Campus graduate, married his partner of 18 years, Rick Howard, in a ceremony in Key West on Nov. 21, 2017. For more than 18 years, they have been partners in the Smithsonian Institution’s National Air and Space Museum. Previously, they spent 16 years together. The couple has been married since 2012.

Fátima González Carriles ('16), a Daytona Beach Campus graduate, is working at SpaceX in Austin, Texas. She recently joined SpaceX as a full-time employee.

Ravi Gondaliya ('13, '16) presented a talk on the “Daytona Beach Campus 2018 Homecoming.” The topic was based on a TEDx talk that he delivered earlier in the year. A Daytona Beach Campus graduate, Gondaliya is a mentor and process engineer at Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation in Savannah, Georgia.

Enrique S. Sandoval ('17, '20) is the co-founder of Sandoval Aerospace, a design and engineering company that specializes in the design and development of unmanned aerial systems. At Sandoval Aerospace, Sandoval is the co-founder and CEO.

Christopher A. Salley ('15) is a Worldwide Campus graduate. Salley volunteers for the Association for Unmanned Vehicles (AUVSI) and its national board of directors. At AUVSI, Salley has served as the director of the Transportation and Development Aviation program manager.

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Cory Berros ('08) is the chief operating officer and COO of Berros Capital, a private equity firm based in Atlanta, Georgia. A Worldwide Campus graduate, Berros is the president of the Florida Alumni Chapter. He is also an active member of the Florida Alumni Chapter.

Gary Knight ('11) is a college relations consultant for Latin American Airlines. A Worldwide Campus graduate, Knight has been with Latin American Airlines for more than 10 years, and has served as the board’s vice president. Other alumni named at Aerospace Alumni include Robert Connor ('13), who serves as the board’s vice president. Other alumni named at Aerospace Alumni include Robert Connor ('13), who serves as the board’s vice president. Other alumni named at Aerospace Alumni include Robert Connor ('13), who serves as the board’s vice president.

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was in the 1988 graduating class at Embry-Riddle's Daytona Beach Campus. An old classmate, Tara Alexander (’91), contacted me when the fall 2018 edition of Lift came out. She spotted me in the Tailwinds picture. I am in the first row, in the middle, lying on the ground and wearing very big glasses (the style at the time). I am wearing short shorts and no taso (the style at the time). Oh god! I was about 20 years old. I was at the Prescott Campus in 1986 and 1987. This was taken around August 1987, right before I transferred to the Daytona Beach Campus.

If my memory recalls, we were just finishing up an intramural flag football game. A photographer was there and he asked if we wanted a group photo to remember the day by. As far as for the others in the photo, they faces look familiar but I cannot remember their names. The gentleman in the second row, wearing big sunglasses, on the left side with his right foot in the air was one of my suite mates. His first name is James, but that is all I remember.

My Story
March 22, 2018

I went back to Pennsylvania to continue my education at Marywood University in Scranton. I went for a masters in management information systems. While at Marywood University, I started dating a girl by the name of Mary, and we were married in 1993. In my last semester at Marywood, I was employed by a German software company called SAP. I was with SAP until 1996, when I formed my software company, Integrated Software Solutions Inc. In 2013 I left the consulting world and went to work full time with The Walt Disney Company in Orlando, Florida, as an integration analyst for Global HR Operations. I have been married to Mary for 25 fantastic years. We have two sons, Danial and Joseph, who work for the Cape Canaveral Port Authority and Florida Fish and Wildlife, respectively.

Go Eagles!
John Mohlar (’89)

In Memoriam

Helen Wessel - July 4, 1925 - Jan. 12, 2019
Artist and educator Helen Wessel (HonDoc ’17), of South Daytona, Florida, had a relationship with the university that spanned nearly two decades and left an indelible mark on the Daytona Beach Campus. “Helen Wessel’s generosity to Embry-Riddle encompassed all of the arts and sciences. She funded an entire artwork throughout the Daytona Beach Campus and enriched cultural life with an endowed position that brings live performers to campus,” said Embry-Riddle Provost Dr. Barry Butler. “Additionally, her support made our aerospace physiology degree possible.”

Growing up in Cincinnati, Wessel studied at the Cincinnati Art Academy in high school and earned degrees in art and education from the University of Cincinnati College of Design, Architecture and Art. Later, she became one of the first students to earn her master’s degree from Harvard University’s art education program. She earned a Ph.D. in art education from the University of Cincinnati and then spent 20 years educating art teachers there, eventually becoming head of the department.

One of Wessel’s most popular stories to tell was how she and her late husband, Bob, first discovered Embry-Riddle when Bob was flying a Piper Cub out of Lunken Airport in Cincinnati. (Bob — Embry-Riddle’s birthplace). She and Embry-Riddle shared the same birth year (1956) and birth city. For more about Wessel, visit lift.erau.edu/art-arts-sake.

1990s

James B. Woodfill (’56) Sept. 14, 2018
Garland Frederick Withers (’56) Sept. 14, 2018
Andrew C. Deos (’56) May 12, 2018
Loren “Jake” A. Jacobson (’56) Sept. 30, 2018
George B. Sullivan (’56) July 12, 2018
Daniel Andrew Yaklin (’62) Nov. 17, 2018
Chester Allen “A.I.” Stine Jr. (’65) July 9, 2018
Elmo Torres Jr. (’66) Oct. 10, 2018

1980s

James “Jim” Ray Garner (’65) Sept. 27, 2018
George F. “Jeff” Conroy (’72) July 21, 2018
Fay Jung (’75) July 31, 2018
Retired U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Carl E. Midkiff (’76) April 24, 2018
James “Jay” Shannon McKinnon (’77) Nov. 17, 2018

2000s

Michael P. LaPlante (’00, ’02) Sept. 3, 2018
Todd Lee McNamara (’02) ’04 Nov. 1, 2018
Retired U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Donald Allen Bricker (’05) Oct. 26, 2018
Reagan Kyle “Shaggy” Whitlow (’03) Sept. 29, 2018
Retired U.S. Army Capt. Charles D. “Chip” Ladd (’05) July 26, 2018
Retired U.S. Army Capt. Charles D. “Chip” Ladd (’05) July 26, 2018
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Retired U.S. Army Capt. Charles D. “Chip” Ladd (’05) July 26, 2018

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Jonathan D. Bahr April 24, 2018
Retired U.S. Army Capt. Jamel F. Noes November 18, 2018
Retired Col. Jerry L. Sinclair June 3, 2018
Retired U.S. Marine Capt. Jamel F. Noes December 6, 2018
Retired U.S. Marine Capt. Jamel F. Noes December 6, 2018
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Are You in This Picture?

Do you remember this moment, captured at the John Paul Riddle Student Center at the Daytona Beach Campus? We’re guessing this photo was taken at an on-campus concert of some kind, circa 1980s. Help us fill the gaps in Embry-Riddle’s institutional knowledge. Tell us about the story and people in this photo. We’ll share the details in our next issue of *Lift*.

Email: liftmag@erau.edu

NOTE: With the construction of the new Student Union, the John Paul Riddle Student Center was demolished in February 2019, to create a multi-purpose green space for students.