Lift
THE NEW UNION

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.

With the support of T. Higbee Embry, a flying student who became his partner, Riddle chose to pioneer the business of aviation. (For more, see Page 6.) The pair went to work, overhauling engines, selling aircraft and landing one of the first federal airmail contracts. Riddle went on to train the workforce for the first package express business and later trained military pilots for World War II. He opened a charter seaplane service. He established a technical aviation school for the Brazilian Air Ministry.

We continue the twin legacy of flight and business. I think both Embry and Riddle would be pleased — but not surprised — that a nationally respected business leader gave his name to our David B. O’Maley College of Business.

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
Emory-Riddle Aeronautical University

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.

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President
Emory-Riddle Aeronautical University
New Passenger Jet Service Touches Down in Prescott

Visitors 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 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 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 at United Airlines. Given her role with the project, she was invited to be a passenger 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 Kadah

Preparing the Unmanned Pilots of Tomorrow

Embry-Riddle earns TOP AUVSI certification for unmanned flight instruction

Embry-Riddle is the first academic institution in the world to receive the 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 welding photography to more dangerous situations, says Embry-Riddle Worldwide Campus Chancellor John R. Watre. “AUVSI has determined that our UAS curriculum is rigorous enough to prepare students for safe flights, even in the most challenging environments such as near chemicals, oil, gas, nuclear [power plants] or mining facilities.”

This program coordinates the most important applicable standards — including Federal Aviation Administration and local regulations and industry standards — to maximize safety, reliability and professionalism in the commercial use of UAS. “We leveraged existing UAS core curriculum and created learning objectives necessary for TOP certification,” says Joseph Cerreta, Embry-Riddle Worldwide Campus assistant professor.

Because Embry-Riddle will be certified at the highest level, TOP Level 3, 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
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 say that achievement — the reality of our industry tells a different story.

Looking for Former Teammates
I was enlisted in the airframe and powerplant program (1966-68) and then in the aviation management program (1968-72). After graduation, I basically spent my life in South Florida, owning a maintenance company for 38 years, non-aviation. Now I’m retired and living in Cocoa Beach, Florida, and Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. I was a member of the first baseball team in 1967. I’m in the back row, fourth from right (see photo). Anyone who played on the team or recognizes my name from attending classes or going to the Beachcomber, feel free to contact me at bandschuddie@edl.com.

William “Bill” Wurster (78, 71, 72)
Airframe & Powerplant Certificate
B.S. Aviation Maintenance Management
B.S. Aviation Management

Remembering ‘Mack’
I am an alumnus of the class of ’61 and remember “Mack” Makana’s very well (fall 2018: Gift from the Heart, Page 26). I recall that he cut up in pain several times in class and 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 Slusenski ($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

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.

Follow Your Dreams
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 Christmas (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 for $6000.

Teaching three or four economics courses each term, 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 teaching Embry Riddle courses for the Worldwide Campus. And, I approached retirement, I turned over my books to co-authors who eventually took over full authorship. These included Embry Riddle faculty Sefi Young, John Vrswen, Claudio Fattoruso, 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 Delray, 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.

As I approached retirement, I turned over my books to younger professors and are now in their seventh and eighth editions. I also served as an adjunct professor in the Miami and Fort Lauderdale area, and for 19 years I went to Europe every summer teaching Embry Riddle courses for the Worldwide Campus.

Alex and Mary Wells continue to support Embry-Riddle as Legacy Society members.

IN OTHER WORDS

Follow Your Dreams
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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)

Alumni 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.

Do 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.

The Embry-Riddle Company employees, circa 1926. Pictured center, left (bow tie) is T. Higbee Embry; and to his direct left is John Paul Riddle.
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 Embassy 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 mustered into the Ohio National Guard’s 37th Division, 136th Field Artillery, Battery E. In September, he started training at Camp Sheridan in Alabama.

Call to Duty

In June 1918, he traveled to New York for embarkation to France, to fight in the Great War. Once there, he manned 155mm Schneider Howitzer guns with a maximum range of 7 miles. T. Higbee was manning his gun on Nov. 11, 1918, when at 11 a.m., the guns were ordered silenced and he was witness to an eerie but welcome quiet: the armistice.

In a letter penned to his alma mater, published in The Asheville School Review 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, which is south of Verdun. There we stayed and maintained some semblance of a role at Greene, Embry & Company. She was the first woman to be flown in the tour. Riddle was the pilot and none other than T. Higbee’s mother was the passen-

genger. She was the first woman to be flown in the tour. In 1927, Tally Higbee competed again, in a Waco, in Ford’s National Air Tour. He came in seventh place.

In February 1927 T. Higbee married Ruth Miller, but this didn’t slow his business activities. Later that year, the Embassy-Riddle Company was awarded the OKM 24 airmail route, which allowed its aircraft to carry pas-
sengers and mail from Cincinnati to Chicago.

In September 1928, 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.edu/t-higbee.

Sold Out

In April 1929, the Embassy-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 Embassy-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 fol-

lowed 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 country 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 in Corona del Mar, California. He held this position for two years. He also sponsored the Embassy Trophy, aka Southern California Power Boat Trophy (400-mile race).

T. Higbee divorced his second wife, Ruth, in 1938, and in 1940, he married wife No. 3, Gertrude Anderson from Dayton, Ohio.

At about this same time (1939), Riddle revived the Embassy-Riddle Company in Palm Beach, Florida. T. Higbee reportedly gave Riddle permission to use his name but was otherwise uninvolved in the venture. In October 1939, Riddle partnered with attorney John McKay and established the Embry-Riddle Seaplane Base and flight training facility. This is where our university’s modern history begins.

It’s important to note that T. Higbee and Riddle were cut from different cloths. T. Higbee was a businessman who learned how to run a business. Without the benefits of an aviation background, 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, 1939.

Let’s see now … a flight from Arcadia Municipal Airport, Florida (XBI), 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.
The 178,000-square-foot Mori Hosseini Student Union sits at the heart of the Daytona Beach Campus.

Grand Opening

Eagles and government officials celebrated the opening and dedication of the Mori Hosseini Student Union.

“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.

“I could not have imagined [when I was a student] that I would be standing here tonight within the walls of this magnificent new building,” he said, before an audience that included U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao and Florida Gov. Rick Scott. “Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University runs through my veins and lives in my heart, and my commitment to the success of this university is something I will never let go of.”

Hosseini added, “This is not about me — this is about our children. This is about our students, and this is about the future of our country.”

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 Hurt 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.”

WATCH Alumni react to the new Union: lift.erau.edu/videos-spring-2019

Government officials celebrate the dedication of the Mori Hosseini Student Union, at the heart of the Daytona Beach Campus.
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 Mectron Odebrecht 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 had dreamed of working with the world’s premier aviation institution, Embry-Riddle. In 2017, he brought the company’s research and development department to Embry-Riddle’s Research Park in Daytona Beach, Florida. He also reached out to the David B. O’Malley College of Business.

In response, Embry-Riddle faculty members Dawn Phoades, Janet Trinco and John Longshore (‘81, ‘84) assigned some 100 students in five different classes to prepare comprehensive business assessments for SeaMax, at no cost to the company. 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” with its new M-42 model takes off, it could ultimately create 80 new jobs in Florida, says Shalom Confesor, 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,” Confesor 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 — from search-and-rescue operations to air taxis, says Longshore, an associate professor of management. The company will also need to look for and leverage product differentiators such as ISO-9000 certification, a set of global standards for quality assurance, adds Longshore, who earned a bachelor’s degree in management, marketing and operations, and an MBA — Aviation from Embry-Riddle.

Improved manufacturing efficiency is another key goal for SeaMax, which is why the M-42 will be based on composite rather than metal fabrication, says Miguel Rosario, the company’s chief operating officer and head designer. “We’ve developed the molds for the composite manufacturing of a family of aircraft,” Rosario explains. “That will allow us to create a reconfigurable and higher quality product based on new processes, which will be faster than metal fabrication done by hand.”

Phoades, professor of strategy and chair of the department of management, marketing and operations, says patenting that unique composite manufacturing process will help keep SeaMax a step ahead of its competitors. The company’s M-22 model had a market advantage because it was among the first designs to meet U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) standards for light-sport aircraft, she notes.

Imagining New Solutions

Nidhi Trambadia (‘18), president of the National Association of Women MBAs, was among the army of Embry-Riddle graduate students who dove deep into the SeaMax business plan. In particular, she and her classmates used Lean Six Sigma, a technique for modeling and improving business efficiency and capabilities, to evaluate customer versus company priorities.

Mengyuan Lu (‘17), currently an intern with the Airports Council International – North America, says she worked with a dozen students and faculty to analyze the U.S. market environment for light-sport aircraft sales for the project. “It was valuable work experience for me,” Lu says. “When I was applying for internships, interviewers wanted to know if I had worked on any practical, real-world projects. I was able to say, ‘Yes.’”

The SeaMax project helped students develop problem-solving skills, as well as learn how to deal with ambiguity and work with a client, says Trinco, associate professor of management and marketing: “They didn’t have all of the information sitting right there. They had to be entrepreneurial in seeking out the answers.”

Win-Win

Confesor says the students’ work is already paying dividends for SeaMax. “Their research helped us position the price of the M-22 based on its performance, range and useful load, compared to our competitors,” he says.

For SeaMax, the partnership with Embry-Riddle continues to provide business and technical insight — and critical additional support, especially valuable given Trivelato’s ambitious goal to someday market an unmanned version of his aircraft. “By working together,” Trivelato says, “we can imagine new solutions for the future.”

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A NEW LEASE

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

BY SARA WITHROW
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, 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.”

“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 Virgin 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 Virgin.

"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 negotiation [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 negotiation 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 — more than 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 alumnus 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 [Knittel] 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.

Team Zephyrus gains finance advantage with ABS

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] somehow 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 19 years old? Very few have advanced degrees and schooling. Yet they get to 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 Simple Charge

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

BY MELANIE STAWICKI AZAM

Emory-Riddle Board member David O’Maley recalls a time when he was a young man with a passion for aviation and someone helped him finance his flight training.

“He left me with a simple charge. And that was, if you are able at some point in your life, the charge to you, young man, is that you will do things to help other young people achieve their grade and success,” says O’Maley, a nationally prominent insurance executive who recently made a significant gift to support the Daytona Beach Campus’ College of Business.

University leadership, faculty, staff and students turned out to welcome and honor O’Maley and his wife, Karen, at a Nov. 13, 2018, naming ceremony for the David B. O’Maley College of Business.

O’Maley says he intends for his gift to enable the creation of a new generation of aviation business leaders. “We see this gift as a unique and powerful way to leverage aviation and business education into the future,” he says.

With O’Maley’s generous gift, Embry-Riddle will be able to elevate its College of Business — already widely regarded as offering the best aviation business administration program in the world — to even greater heights, says university President P Barry Butler. He describes the gift as “a key moment for business education at Embry-Riddle that helps us expand the reach and more closely integrate business education into our other areas of focus — engineering and aviation — as we move into the future.”

Catalyst for Change

O’Maley’s gift will lead the university’s effort to advance its business curriculum, which includes developing a robust focus on aviation risk management and insurance, adding an interdisciplinary certificate program for engineers, and devising a combination of certificates and executive education to support preparation of chief pilots for corporations.

Michael Williams, dean of the College of Business, says the O’Maley family’s gift will support breakthroughs in industry operations and safety and manufacturing through transformative ideas and technologies.

“It will allow our students to turn research into new business opportunities, moving their discoveries from our labs into the Micaplex Engineering and Innovation Complex as startups, and then out into the real world,” Williams says.

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.

Leading Through Business

A national business leader and innovator, O’Maley is currently lead director on the board of directors for U.S. Bank. O’Maley retired in 2012 from Ohio National Financial Services, a leading provider of competitive individual life and annuity products through more than 40,000 distributors nationwide. Through his leadership as CEO and president, the company grew from $4.1 billion assets under management in 1993 to more than $27 billion in 2018. He was elected chairman emeritus in recognition of his significant accomplishments.

In addition to his passion for business, O’Maley is an active pilot and aviation enthusiast, as well as a founder of the Tri-State Warbird Museum in Batavia, Ohio. The museum is dedicated to honoring America’s rich aviation history and features one of the largest collections of flyable World War II aircraft.

This gift is not the family’s first to Embry-Riddle. In 2013, they established the O’Maley Family Endowed Scholarship Fund to support students at the college.

Emory-Riddle’s College of Business, established in 2003 and with a history dating to 1966, offers a variety of degree programs, from the bachelor’s to the Ph.D. level. Students get not just the textbook knowledge, but also the practical knowledge about what’s going on in the aviation business industry, says Norbert J. Zarb, chair of the department of accounting, economics, finance, and information sciences.

O’Maley says he believes all students, regardless of program of study, need some grounding in business — so they can become leaders in the industry.

“Forget somebody ... provides some direction and takes the initiative to move things forward,” O’Maley says. “Together, with the outstanding leadership at Embry-Riddle, we can innovate, grow and watch the business college move forward to a dimension it has never seen before.”

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Learn how you can support the Business of Flight® at Embry-Riddle. givingto.erau.edu/support-business-daytona
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, observational methods developed for the project — supported by the Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR), the U.S. Air Force Test Pilot School and the National Science Foundation (NSF) — might someday suggest a way to peek inside human-made satellites in space, including non-U.S. satellites that could pose a threat to national security.

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

“Science at the South Pole

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A Marriage of Science and Engineering

The effort sprung 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 Shaw (’18), 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 time we know how Europa evolved around Jupiter, we want to extrapolate from that model to look for other moons that might harbor life,” says Udrea, who received a 2017 AFRL Summer Faculty Fellowship that supported this research.

Commercial Space Application

The potential for other applications for this science also exists. If researchers can model the interior of Jupiter using seismic signals detected by LANDIT and the resulting mathematical data, similar models might gauge how much fuel is left in the tanks of human-made satellites in orbit, Udrea says. His undergraduate students Zachary Henry and Graham Fox are working to model how the light reflected by a small satellite changes due to fuel sloshing in its tanks.

Nayak cites Stacie Williams, Ph.D., the project officer who runs the remote-sensing initiatives for the AFOSR, as an “inspirational human being” and a key champion of the LANDIT mission. He also credits his Embry-Riddle education.

“T o make something work over the winter at the South Pole, when it can reach negative 90 degrees Celsius — it’s a whole other level of engineering,” Nayak says.

EDITOR’S NOTE: In January 2019, Nayak started training at U.S. Air Force Test Pilot School. He expects to graduate in December as an experimental flight test engineer.
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"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 28)

✈ At the NIFA 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, sorority 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

― Being brother and sister means being there for each other.‖
— AUTHOR UNKNOWN
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

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 Trustee 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 of Trustees and a longtime supporter of the university.

Eagle 

Martin-Belitz helped start Southwest Airlines’ Adopt-A- 

Pilot Program and has mentored thousands of students. Additionally, through Southwest, 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 Flight School of the Year by the Aircraft Owners and 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.

Teammates Forever

Lacrosse club members return to campus for reunion

BY MELANIE STAWICKI AZAM

Arty Campanella (’88) 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 their own schedule and roster. We didn’t have coaches or referees, so we designed a team as a referee.”

Lacrosse games were played on a field that the team members lined themselves.

“Someone would bring a pickup truck with a keg of beer and some beach chairs,” Campanella recalls. “We didn’t have Gatorade, because that was too expensive, so we would drink beer during the game instead.”

One of their biggest fundraising events was having members sell snacks at the Daytona 500, Watson says.

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 scarved 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.

“Each of us would get $400 and get to see the Daytona 500 for free,” Watson recalls. “That was our one day of fundraising. You had to sell out your basket to get that cash, but it was fun.”

At the reunion this past summer, the former teammates threw the ball around a bit, says Campanella, but the event was more about camaraderie than competition, and there are plans to meet up again in a couple of years.

“We’re all in our 50s now, but to start off the reunion, we decided to meet at the Ocean Deck at 5 p.m., like in the old days,” Campanella says. “One guy showed up in his jersey that he’s had for 30 years. So it was déjà vu — except we were all ready for bed by 9 p.m.”

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

— MARY CAMPANELLA, ORGANIZER OF THE LACROSSE CLUB SUMMER REUNION
MARK YOUR CALENDARS
Join fellow Eagles for the largest reunions of the year!

OctoberWest & Wings Out West Air Show
PRESCOTT, ARIZONA
Oct. 3-5, 2019

Alumni Homecoming Weekend
DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA
Oct. 8-12, 2019

alumni.erau.edu/homecoming

Send us your news! Email your life events to: eraunews@erau.edu. For guidelines, visit alumni.erau.edu/notices_guidelines.

Class Notes

1970s

John Alger ('73) retired from US Airways/Alaska 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 Palm Beach, Florida, area.

Kenneth F. Wiegand ('76), a Worldwide Campus graduate, is the assistant product manager at Flexsys Aerospace, a principal of Business Aviation Group clients.

Career News

1990s

NASA Astronaut Capt. Dan Burbank ('91), who spent 188 days in space over three missions, retired from the agency 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.

Career News

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EVENTS ON THE RADAR

For the most up-to-date list of events, visit alumni.erau.edu/events.
of New York system. He has also embarked on a Ph.D. program and is expected to graduate in December 2018. The Worldwide Campus graduate has 32 years of federal service.

Arlando Teller ('99) was elected state representative for District 7 in the Arizona House Legislature. A Worldwide Campus graduate, Teller was deputy division director for the Navajo Division of Transportation. In 2017, he was inducted into the Prescott Campus Chancellor’s Hall of Fame.

Jake Cefolia ('96) was promoted to senior vice president of worldwide sales at United Airlines. Cefolia has been with United since 2007, most recently serving as vice president of sales for the Americas. A Worldwide Campus graduate, he has also served as vice president of Atlantic and Pacific sales, as manager of director of the Global Accounts Division and as managing director for United’s Pacific region, based in Hong Kong.

Xavier Samuels ('16) recently spoke to students at Yes Prep in Houston, Texas. A Daytona Beach Campus graduate and first officer at United Airlines, he is very involved in the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals.

Retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Brian A. Anderson ('97, '05) was recognized by Commercial Aeronautical Magazine as a Platinum Lifetime Member in the aerospace and defense field for his role as director of global business development at Textron Systems.

Anderson is a Prescott and Worldwide campus graduate.

Karl Makela ('91, '94) recently served as director of risk and opportunity for Leonardo DRS on its Advanced Pilot Training (A2X Trainer) program effort in Crystal City, Virginia. A Daytona Beach Campus graduate, he does consulting work in Colorado.

Sean Rogers ('91, '92) was named director of commercial aviation at United Airlines. Rogers has more than 30 years of service in the U.S. Air Force Reserve

Saekeero Sheik ('92), the founder and chairman of Titan Aviation Group, recently expanded his company’s presence into the United States. He joined PPM in 2010 and has earned a yearlong tour of duty at W.7.X. in addition to his current long-term assignment in Greifswald.

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Simone Drakes ('03) is a vice president of engineering for Florida-based aviation company AirCon. Drakes serves as the company’s engineering representative for the Federal Aviation Administration.

Michelle Gamble ('92, '93), a Worldwide Campus graduate, was named director of jet charter and marketing at Titan Aviation, based at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport.

San Lazorres ('92), a physicist for the U.S. Department of Energy's (DoE) Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory (PPPL) and a Daytona Beach Campus graduate, has won a 2018 Early Career Research Program award, sponsored by the DoE Office of Science. The five-year award will fund PPPL research. Lazorres is lead U.S. collaborator on experiments on the Wendelstein 7-X (W-7-X) stellarator in Greifswald, Germany, the largest stellarator in the world. He joined PPM in 2010 and has earned a yearlong tour of duty at W.7.X. in addition to his current long-term assignment in Greifswald.

Capt. Gokhan Ozener ('03), a Worldwide Campus graduate, upgraded to flying a Turkish Airlines Airbus A320.

David Bleha, D.O. ('93), who is a primary care and sleep specialist, joined Rodolfo Regional Medical Center and Stewart Medical Group in Brevard County, Florida. A Daytona Beach Campus graduate, Bleha has worked as a nocturnist at Wellmont Medical Center in Hialeah, Florida. A Worldwide Campus graduate, Bhola has worked as a nocturnist at Wellmont Medical Center in Hialeah, Florida. A Worldwide Campus graduate, Bhola has worked as a nocturnist at Wellmont Medical Center in Hialeah, Florida.

Kerry M. Franco ('02) authored 3 Feet to the Left, a memoir about his first year as United Airlines youngest captain. He self-published the book in September 2018, and officially launched it in October at the Eagle Authors Showcase at the Worldwide Campus. The book was the No. 1 new release for Amazon's Commercial Aviation category. Franco earned a B.S. in Aeronautics from the Daytona Beach Campus.

Gary Culbertson ('03) authored The Air Crash Files novels, which include Thrash Runaway and Jet Blast, published in 2016 and 2014, respectively. Culbertson earned a B.S. in Professional Aeronautics and a Master of Aeronautical Science from the Worldwide Campus. He currently teaches at the Federal Aviation Administration Academy in Oklahoma City.

Bijan Vasigh, professor of aviation business administration, Ken Fleming, adjunct faculty, and Thomas Tacker ('77), professor of economics, all at the Daytona Beach Campus, co-authored Air Transport Economics: From Theory to Applications, third edition. "This book weaves together the institutional and technical aspects of the aviation industry with economic theory," Tacker said. "It earned a B.S. in Management from the Daytona Beach Campus.

Ashley Andrews Lear authored The Remarkable Kinship of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Ellen Glasgow, published by Florida University Press in 2018. The book examines the deep connections between two pioneers of American literature, their friendship, and the correspondence that helped sustain them through a time of social upheaval and changing norms in the American South. Lear is an associate professor of humanities and communication at the Daytona Beach Campus.

Chester Bullock ('94) and Mark Pollard co-authored Salesforce® Marketing Cloud for Dummies®, published in 2018 by John Wiley & Sons. Bullock earned a B.S. in Aviation Business Administration from the Prescott Campus. He is the vice president of Solutions Consulting for Trendline Interactive, an email marketing agency.

Stephen Carbone ('92, '01) is the author of The Air Crash Files novels, which include Thrash Runaway and Jet Blast, published in 2016 and 2014, respectively. Culbertson earned a B.S. in Professional Aeronautics and a Master of Aeronautical Science from the Worldwide Campus. He currently teaches at the Federal Aviation Administration Academy in Oklahoma City.

Brian Delaney ('06) authored Barrier Rip, a science fiction, time travel thriller published in 2017 and From Within, a dystopian thriller published in 2016. From Within spent several weeks on Amazon’s Hot New Releases Top 100 Bestsellers list in the dystopian genre, and became an Amazon Top 100 Bestseller in both dystopian and post-apocalyptic genres. Delaney is an air traffic controller at Centennial Airport in Englewood, Colorado. He earned a B.S. in Aeronautics from the Daytona Beach Campus.

John Lowery ('95) authored A Pilot's Accident Review, published by Aviation Supplies and Academics in 2015. "Because we often learn from the mistakes of others, A Pilot's Accident Review is an in-depth analysis of aircraft accidents occurring in the various phases of flight. Also addressed are maintenance error and material failure, along with human factors, airspace and ski-plane accidents, and flying after scuba diving," Lowery said. He previously authored Professional Pilot, third edition (2008), and Anatomy of a Spin, third edition (1998). He earned a Master of Aeronautical Science from the Worldwide Campus. He also taught aircraft accident investigation and corporate aircraft management courses for 10 years as adjunct faculty for the Worldwide Campus.

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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 Varchia (’66) is the SpaceX-15 lead flight director and one of the flight directors for NASA in charge of International Space Station (ISS) operations at the Johnson Space Center’s Mission Control. He interned at the Daytona Beach Graduate Campus, he led the team conducting the SpaceX-15 cargo resupply mission, which launched June 29, 2018, to the ISS. Several lead officers for the mission were also former Eagles. They included lead robotic officer Billy Jones (’96), robotics analyst Brian Costello (’94), and ground segment Lead Casey Johnson (’11), who are all Daytona Beach Campus graduates. Also on the team were lead trajectory officer Victor Rice (’74), who is a Prescott Campus graduate, and lead ground controller Ronald Mosley (’96), a Worldwide Campus graduate.

Robotics crew instructor Mike Fenello (’07, 18) was also on the team and is a Daytona Beach and Worldwide campus graduate.

Laia M. Vega (’28, 14) was promoted to test manager in the U.S. Air Force Combat Rescue Helicopter Program. A Worldwide Campus graduate, Vega is a retired Air Force helicopter crew chief and a warfighters’ systems acquisition professional.

Henie Gilabach (’80) marked her 30-year anniversary working for the Department of Defense. She is a Worldwide Campus graduate.

Casey Pulliam (’18, 17), a Worldwide Campus graduate, was hired as general manager at Castle & Cooke Aviation in Van Nuys, California.


Retired U.S. Air Force Col. Mike Edwards (’09), a Daytona Beach Campus graduate, joined DigitalFiddle as vice president, senior advisor in defense programs.

Audrey Klifer (’08), a Daytona Beach Campus graduate, founded a tech company for buyers and sellers called Heroly, which launched July 2018. She does aviation consulting and brokering for clients on the side.

Jeremy Smith (’09), a Worldwide Campus graduate, is the new commander of Coast Guard Sector Columbia River, after a change of command ceremony at Air Station Astoria in Oregon.

Patrick Westmoreland (’90) was promoted to lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army. He is stationed in Fort Rucker, Alabama, where he works for the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center as an accident investigator. Westmoreland is also an adjunct assistant professor for the Worldwide Campus’ College of Aeronautics.

Josh Ods (’11, 15) is the vice president of operations and co-founder of the Unmanned Safety Institute, was named the first place winner in the annual Airmanship and Contribution to the Unmanned Industry category of the KECLENN Awards by the Association for Unmanned Vehicles Systems International. A Daytona Beach Campus student, Ods was an instructor-observer with Boston U-160 Systems. He went on to serve as an assistant professor and the Gaitt Aerospace Institute UAS program coordinator at Embry Riddle. In 2014, he co-founded the Unmanned Safety Institute.

Beau Tetsutama (’11) was appointed vice president for maintenance and engineering for Hawaiian Airlines. A Worldwide Campus graduate, he joined Hawaiian in 2014 and is most recently served as managing director of maintenance operations.

Shelby Hooker (’12) was promoted to director of client support at Cutter Aviation in Phoenix, Arizona. A Worldwide Campus graduate, she started at Cutter in 2009.

Aaron Trudell (’12) is an A&P mechanic inspector at the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office in Jacksonville, Florida. Trudell is also owner of O’Dowd’s LLC, which he established in 2014, and a Daytona Beach Campus graduate.

Hemali Virani (’12, 14) received a 2018 Technology Rising Star award at the 2018 Worldwide College STEM Conference in Detroit, Michigan. A Daytona Beach Campus graduate, Virani is a special analyst at Lockheed Martin.

Ravi Gondalpy (’13, 16) presented a Talon Talk at 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, Gondalpy is a materials and processes engineer at Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation in Savannah, Georgia.

Conde. William Schomer (’13), who is the air operations officer for Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida, was recently selected as the U.S. Navy Blue Angels’ 2019 executive officer. He is a Worldwide Campus graduate.

Megan McCullan (’15) is executive director for the Acadiana Regional Airport in Louisiana. A Worldwide Campus graduate, McCullan has more than 16 years of experience in the aviation industry and has served as the Department of Transportation and Development Aviation program manager.

Christopher A. Salley (’15), who is the sales and marketing manager for National Jet, was named one of Airport Business’ Top 40 Under 40. A Worldwide Campus graduate, Salley volunteers for the South Florida Business Aviation Association as its membership chairman and serves as the board’s vice president. Other alumni named as Airport Business’ Top 40 Under 40 include Scott B. Hill (‘09, ’11) and Zachary D. Oakley (’16). A Worldwide Campus graduate, Hill is an interim division manager of infrastructure—asset management at Houston Airport System. Oakley, also a Worldwide Campus graduate, is deputy director of operations and planning at Chicago Rockford International Airport.

Marc Skler (’15), a Worldwide Campus graduate, was named director of government affairs for the Smithsonian Institution’s National Air and Space Museum. Previously, he spent 16 years with The Boeing Company.

1st Lt. Jonathan D. Wright (15), son of Lt. Col. John A. Wright (’84), completed training as one of two first-year U.S. Air Force EA-18G “Growler” pilots. A Daytona Beach graduate, he is assigned to the 39th Elecromagnetic Combat Squadron “Wild Boars” at Naval Air Station Whidby Island in Washington, and deployed on his first combat tour.

Fátima González Carriles (’16), a Daytona Beach Campus graduate, is working at Sapphire Viajes, a Madrid, Spain, travel agency she co-founded with her sister. The agency specializes in customized luxury trips around the world, including itineraries for golfers. Carriles played on Embry-Riddle’s Women’s Golf Team and competed in the Symetra Tour, Santander Tour and NWGA Tour.

Dianna Dunham (’16, 18) is an office manager at Tread Corporation in Roanoke, Virginia. A Worldwide Campus graduate, she previously worked in a support role at the Florida NextGen Test Bed at Embry-Riddle’s Daytona Beach Campus.

James Avila (’17), a Worldwide Campus graduate, was promoted to program director/maintenance manager at Northrop Grumman Innovation Systems.

Joseph Chin (’18), a Worldwide Campus graduate, was hired as a senior manager and head of supply chain North America for Ceratizit Group in 2018.

Other

Brian Garza (’05) and Bob Temple (’93), who became friends while students at Embry-Riddle, recently met in Seattle, Washington. Garza, a Daytona Beach Campus graduate, is director of emerging solutions for Global Strategic Partnerships Georgia, a Prescott Campus graduate, Temple works for Disney, managing its移动 application development organization. Garza also recently met with Feith Rakam (95, 97), a Worldwide Campus graduate, in California. Hakam is a senior vice president of engineering at AirFly in California.

Stan Kallivas (’94) and Andy Wilson (’12), both Daytona Beach Campus graduates and sales representatives for Pilatus Aircraft, hosted a group of Associate Professor Black Wroxagique’s students at the 2018 NBAA-Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition static display at Orlando Executive Airport.

Capt. John “JC” Christian (’13), college relations consultant Louis Isaac, first officer Dane Berger (’18), second officer Mark Ley and first officer Samuel Lee (’18), all employees of Republic Airlines, visited the Daytona Beach Campus on Aug. 24, 2018.

Jorge and Kally Torres (’12), Daleo Doerper (’16, 18) and Robert and Rosanna Morehead ’16 traveled across the country to spend a week together in Daytona Beach. The group of alumni stopped at the Daytona Resort & Conference Center for an Alumni Engagement during their visit to the area, which was their fourth annual post-graduation reunion.

Toby Kliff (’10) and Gary Knight (’13), who are both active in the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals’

Marriages/ Engagements

1980s

Brian G. Porter (’95, 16), a Daytona Beach 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, he has been a capped flyng for USA Jet Airlines. He served in the U.S. Army from 1987 to 1993.

Capt. J.J. Garcia (’16), who is a Worldwide Campus graduate and Renal Burt married March 19, 2018, at a stone chapel in Prospect Plantation, Jamaica. After brief stays in Miami, Florida, and Minneapolis, Minnesota, the Garcias have been residents since July 2016 of Lantau Island in Hong Kong, where they manage business gigs globally for private clients.

2000s

Mirakel G. Mayoral (’10) and Robin Ramirez are engaged to be married. A Worldwide Campus graduate, Ramirez flew in a Cessna 182 to the Grand Canyon Airport on April 15, 2018, and proposed to the South Rim. They planned to wed on Jan. 28, 2019.

2010s

Helmuth Eggeling (’10) and Loida Guzman are engaged to be married. A Worldwide Campus graduate, Eggeling flew in a Cessna 182 to the Grand Canyon Airport on Oct. 31, 2018. They will be married on Dec. 1, 2019, in Houston, Texas.

From left: Mark, Max, Marc and Miriam Macedonia; Ravi Gondalpy; Fátima González Carriles,; Shae Berger, Megan Ley and Samuel Lee; and Kyle and Kally Torres.

From left: Dane Berger, Megan Ley and Samuel Lee; and Bob Temple.

From left: Dane Berger, Megan Ley and Samuel Lee; and Marc Skler.

From left: Marc Macedonia, Max Macedonia, Ravi Gondalpy and Samuel Lee.

From left: Dane Berger, Megan Ley and Samuel Lee.

From left: Bob Temple, Ravi Gondalpy, Fátima González Carriles, and Mark Ley.

From left: Dane Berger, Megan Ley and Samuel Lee.

From left: Dane Berger; and Capt. Jon Avila.

From left: Dane Berger, Megan Ley and Samuel Lee.
Systems. “Coming back to Daytona feels both at zeroG, a subsidiary of Lufthansa Lufthansa Consulting; Meintgens is a senior business students at the Daytona Beach Campus for 2018 are all from Frankfurt, Germany, returned (AMAC) 34th Annual Airport Business.
TAILWINDS

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

Photo courtesy of the Embry-Riddle Archives

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.