

The Vertical Flight Foundation
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THE AHS
VERTICAL
FLIGHT
FOUNDATION



Educating the Vertical Flight Leaders of Tomorrow

The Vertical Flight Foundation was established in 1967 as the philanthropic arm of the American Helicopter Society. The Foundation's operation is made possible solely through voluntary tax-deductible contributions.

In 1977, AHS began awarding VFF scholarships to promising undergraduate and graduate students planning to pursue careers in vertical flight, with three \$1,000 scholarships awarded the first year. In the ensuing years, the number and size of awards steadily increased, with eight scholarships being awarded annually in the early 1980s. Two of these VFF recipients look back and give their perspectives.

I have been exceptionally fortunate in my association with the rotary wing field ever since I happened by one of the Army Aviation research labs while on a tour of NASA Ames in 1977 and thought "Hmm, you mean people actually work on helicopters full time?" I was lucky to have Jim Biggers as my first boss (and AHS membership sponsor) as a very green summer intern at Ames in 1979; lucky to work for Norm Ham in my time in graduate school at MIT; and most fortunate of all to work so many years with Pat Curtiss, first as a student at Princeton and then as a colleague.

Such teachers and mentors are invaluable in launching a career, but it goes without saying that you have to keep body and soul together while learning, and for this the Vertical Flight Foundation scholarships were a tremendous help. The material assistance these scholarships provided was clearly important to me during my time in training, but as much as that was the gratification of knowing that I was in the process of joining a community that cared enough about its growth and the nurturing of its next generation of scholars, researchers, and engineers to make this resource available. It has been a pleasure to see how the VFF has grown and extended its reach in recent years and to see how many of the awardees have gone on to contribute so much to the field.

Todd Quackenbush
Senior Associate
Continuum Dynamics, Inc.
VFF Scholarship Winner 1980, 1983 and 1985



One evening [in college] a fraternity brother walked up and said I am going to give you \$2000. I looked at him funny as he handed me a flier pulled off a bulletin board. It was an application for a Vertical Flight Foundation Scholarship. Knowing I was building a remote control helicopter from scratch he figured I was a lock. In 1981 model helicopters were very expensive. I decided to build one myself. My friend's mechanical design projects received mentoring and scholarship opportunities. There were neither rotorcraft knowledgeable professors nor applicable scholarship categories available to me. The Vertical Flight Foundation scholarship changed things.

The Vertical Flight Foundation scholarship made me feel like someone out there appreciated my rotorcraft efforts. The scholarship gave me financial resources to complete the model and pay some tuition. The scholarship caught the school paper's attention who ran a story on my project. Someone at Sikorsky read it and I received an internship the next summer. I have been part of the rotorcraft fraternity ever since. We are in a unique field of engineering. We need to keep in contact with fellow professionals to exchange knowledge and support our cause. This is especially true in my research and development work. My AHS membership expands my research and professional resources well beyond what any single company could provide. Thinking back to how limited my resources were as a student, I really appreciate the AHS resources I now have as a professional.

Mark Scott
Senior Project Engineer, Advanced Concepts
Sikorsky Aircraft
VFF Scholarship Winner 1981 and 1982

Since 1977, the Foundation has awarded more than 425 scholarships, thanks to the generosity and support of its contributors. Please consider giving generously to the VFF scholarship fund to help draw the highest caliber students to careers in vertical flight technology. Go to www.vtol.org/vff to make a donation, or mail a check to the address at the top of this page.

