

The Vertical Flight Foundation
2701 Prosperity Ave., Ste 210
Fairfax, VA 22031-4314 USA
Telephone 1-703-684-6777
Fax 1-703-739-9279
E-mail: staff@vtol.org
www.vtol.org

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.

The responsibility for my lifelong professional love affair with helicopters falls squarely on the shoulders of Chuck Martin and P.T. Moore, the main characters of the TV series "The Whirlybirds," which started being shown in my native Italy while I was in first grade. Fast forward a few years, and the flamboyant Paolo Bellavita (who left us too soon) showed to us aeronautical engineering freshmen at the Polytechnic of Turin that you could be a super cool guy, nothing like the stereotypical engineer, and come up with the then breakthrough idea of a sleek fast twin, the Agusta A109. I was fortunate enough to have him as my first boss. Paolo introduced me to the person who had perhaps the greatest impact on my subsequent professional life, my PhD advisor at UCLA, Peretz Friedmann, and wrote



one of the recommendation letters for the 1980 VFF Scholarship. After almost 30 years in the faculty of the rotorcraft program at the University of Maryland, 35 since my first VFF Scholarship, and almost 40 of AHS membership, I look forward to seeing new technologies and new rotorcraft configurations with the same enthusiasm as in first grade. [The photo shows a recent elementary school outreach.]

If any of the members of the 1980 and 1982 VFF Scholarship selection committee happen to be reading these notes, I thank you for taking a chance on a student from another country, and hope with 35 years (and counting) of rotorcraft activity to have lived up to your trust and expectations. The monetary part of the VFF Scholarship is certainly very useful and greatly appreciated, but the pride and the sense of responsibility that comes from having been selected by the leaders of your profession is priceless for a young engineer at the very beginning of his or her career. We are a small, tight professional community with a common passion, almost like a family, and a VFF Scholarship – in 2015 as in 1980 – is a very special way to welcome a new member of the family.

Professor Roberto Celi
Department of Aerospace Engineering, University of Maryland
VFF Scholarship Winner 1980 and 1982



I came to Washington University in St. Louis from India as a graduate student in 1981 to pursue my doctoral research in the area of Helicopter Dynamics with Professor David A. Peters. Immediately I became a student member of the American Helicopter Society. When I received the VFF scholarship in 1982, I felt proud and honored. Also I got great recognition when it was published in the university newspaper, The Record. It also really helped to balance the financial need. I pursued research on rotorcraft with Dr. Peters, even after graduation.

During my academic life as a professor [at St. Louis University], I developed and taught a course on Helicopter Theory, organized a student chapter of AHS and served as faculty advisor, mentored students in helicopter research, and also served as regional vice president of AHS [on its Board of Directors]. I encouraged my students to apply for VFF scholarship and I felt very proud when one of my students received the scholarship. It is a great catalyst for motivation and success in pursuing a career in the area of rotorcraft.

Prof. Swaminathan Karunamoorthy
Chair of the Department of Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering
Saint Louis University
VFF Scholarship Winner 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.

