

WEST MICHIGAN AVIATION ACADEMY

FOUNDATION



Winter 2023
Alumni Update

Reconnect with Classmates at the 12TH Annual *Leaders of Tomorrow Gala*

This is our signature annual fundraiser in support of WMAA programs and students. We've arranged special pricing and extra events for our alumni so that you can celebrate all the great things that are happening at your alma mater!



Taylor Hall, Class of 2020, speaking at the 2022 Gala.

Leaders of Tomorrow Gala: Thursday, May 18, 2023

WMAA graduates and one guest can register for \$100 per person (save \$100 per ticket). You can mingle with friends during the reception and enjoy the program from your alumni seating area. Seating is limited, so register soon. Registration deadline is April 28, 2023.





Register online using the QR code
or visit wmaafoundation.org/events.

Gala Alumni Event: Friday, May 19, 2023

We invite you to join us for coffee, donuts, and a tour of the new Flight Training Center that opened in September 2021. You'll have a chance to reconnect with former classmates, and also to talk with this year's graduates at their Senior Breakfast. (Free Event)

REGISTRATION

-  If you're coming to the Gala, you can RSVP when registering. Registration deadline is April 28, 2023.
-  If you are not attending the Gala, please visit wmaafoundation.org/alumni beginning May 1 to sign up. Space is limited, and preference will be given to those alumni who are attending the Gala.

Please Support Your School

You've experienced firsthand the amazing opportunities WMAA offers to students. Donor gifts of all sizes help make those opportunities possible. We welcome and appreciate all gifts. You may give online at wmaafoundation.org/donate, or use the enclosed remit envelope. Thank you!

Stay Connected!



Register for updates at wmaafoundation.org/alumni



Follow us on Instagram (@wmaafoundation)



Attend the annual *Leaders of Tomorrow Gala*

Family & Alumni Engagement Committee

Jeff England, WMAA Parent

Larry Fisher, Retired Dean of Students,
WMAA Foundation Board Vice President

Meggan George, Director of Development & Marketing
Taylor Hall, Class of 2020

Terry Russell WMAA Parent,
WMAA Foundation Board President

Winston Weibel, Class of 2018



Catching Up With Brian Erhart



After attending WMAA, Brian Erhart (2014) graduated from Western Michigan with a degree in Aerospace Engineering. He says, “I worked eight months for Gulfstream as an intern. Then I got connected to Cessna, where I installed flight data recorders on the Sky Courier planes. I also earned my instrument rating flying new Cessna 172s.”

But as Brian is quick to point out, “Life is not linear. I met someone else who hooked me up with The Spaceship Company in Mojave, California, where I was part of the operations side of two space launches.” Thanks to his engineering salary, he was also able to buy a 1946 Cessna 120. “I’ve logged 500 hours in that plane, and it has fueled my true passion, which is to fly. So now I’m working on my Certified Flight Instructor Certificate and pondering a host of options, like becoming a bush pilot in Alaska. Eventually I want to become a corporate pilot and fly Gulfstreams.”

Brian Erhart, Class of 2014

WMAA set Brian up for career success. “Engineering allowed me to pay off my student loans, have some cool experiences, and learn from a ton of people who love small airplanes and doing crazy things. And it allowed me to buy my own plane. I love that I was part of something special.”

The *Flight Plan* Campaign is Complete!



In 2018, the WMAA Board voted to initiate the *Flight Plan* campaign in support of our students and our mission. We are thrilled to report that, thanks to our generous donors and supporters, we have completed our campaign and exceeded our \$6.4 million fundraising goal. This campaign was designed to accomplish three important objectives for our school:

- Expand our flight training capacity with our own hangar, a third plane, and classroom/lab space for aviation. The new Flight Training Center opened in September 2021.
- Reconfigure our existing building to make room for our popular and growing engineering course offerings.
- Provide supportive resources related to aviation scholarships, teacher retention and student services, and sustain them for at least 10 years.



Presentation of the commemorative plaque.



Room for our two planes, plus a new one gifted by Peter and Joan Secchia.



We welcomed students to the Flight Training Center in September 2021.



Thank you to our board, campaign cabinet and donors for helping us reach our goals and bring this campaign to a successful conclusion.