



AIR FORCE ACADEMY
FOUNDATION

2023



DEFINING OUR FUTURE

THE CAMPAIGN IN SUPPORT OF
THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

PREPARING CADETS FOR THE FUTURE

In his remarks to the AFA Warfare Symposium this spring, Gen. David Allvin '86, chief of staff of the Air Force, said, "We have an opportunity to upgrade and advance the cadet experience to ensure that those cadets, once they throw their hats in the air, are ready to lead in a complex environment."

Gen. Allvin's statement captures the essence of why, six years ago, we launched the Defining Our Future comprehensive campaign in support of the U.S. Air Force Academy. From its beginning, this campaign has been focused on "upgrading" the opportunities and experiences of Air Force Academy cadets so they are best prepared to serve, support and defend our nation in the decades to come.

And as donors, each of you has generously responded. You and thousands of fellow supporters have provided more than \$290 million for the Academy, highlighted by several major capital projects and scores of dynamic programs.

You helped "upgrade" the Academy's physical plant by restoring the Air Garden to its original design, modernizing Falcon Stadium and creating dedicated space — the Madera Cyber Innovation Center — to address the growing global cyber threat.

You improved the Academy's ability to prepare for the changing nature of conflict by establishing the Institute for Future Conflict. Its multi-domain approach to education and research is now embedded in the curriculum. Cadets are learning from subject-matter experts on space policy, logistics, China, cyber, and emerging technologies such as hypersonics, artificial intelligence and more.

You strengthened cadet opportunities to learn from and interact with an array of experts through the National Character and Leadership Symposium, the Strategy and Warfare Center Symposium, and the Academy Assembly.

You created leadership experiences and developed teamwork skills through support of athletic teams and new and evolving cadet clubs, which now number more than 100.

These efforts and many more enhance the Academy's timeless mission of developing leaders of character for the Air Force, Space Force and nation. During this closing year of the campaign, we remain focused on several priorities: funding for the modernization of Falcon Stadium, the development of the Institute for Future Conflict and overall graduate participation.

This annual report highlights your impact in 2023. By many counts, it was a year marked by the selfless generosity of our donors and the steady progress for the Air Force Academy Foundation. We raised more than \$46 million for key Academy and graduate programs, and we are proud of our careful stewardship of the growing number of funds and endowments held for the sole benefit of our mission.

I encourage you to read more about donor impact across the Academy, and I thank you for your continued support and engagement.



Mark Hille '97
CEO, Association of Graduates
and Air Force Academy Foundation



ANNUAL REPORT

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[USAFA.ORG/2023HONORROLL](https://usafa.org/2023honorroll)
USERNAME: Future
PASSWORD: 2023Protect

2023

BY THE NUMBERS

FINANCIAL SUMMARY



\$1.3 MILLION
CLASS GIFT COMMITMENTS

6,413
TOTAL DONORS

\$7.4 MILLION
NEW PLANNED GIFT COMMITMENTS

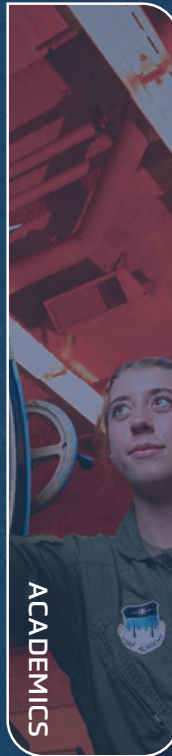
TOP 5 CLASSES

By Donor Participation Rate



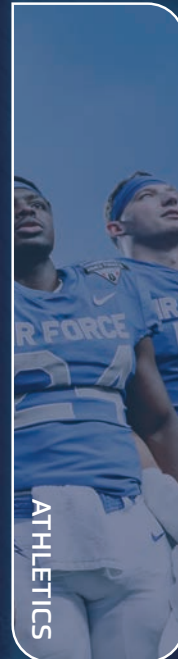
- 1970 - 30.2%
- 1963 - 27.6%
- 1959 - 25.3%
- 1966 - 24.4%
- 1968 - 23.6%

\$10.1 MILLION



ACADEMICS

\$6.5 MILLION



ATHLETICS

\$2.4 MILLION



CADET ACTIVITIES

\$824,328



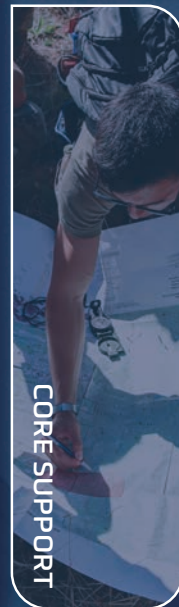
CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP

\$6.3 MILLION



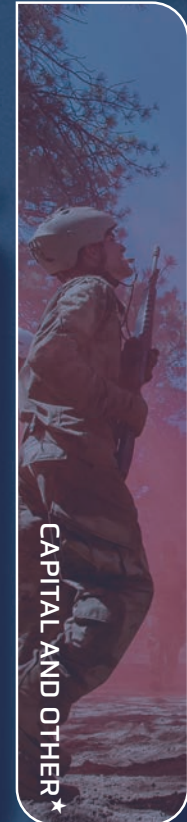
HERITAGE

\$5.2 MILLION



CORE SUPPORT

\$14.8 MILLION

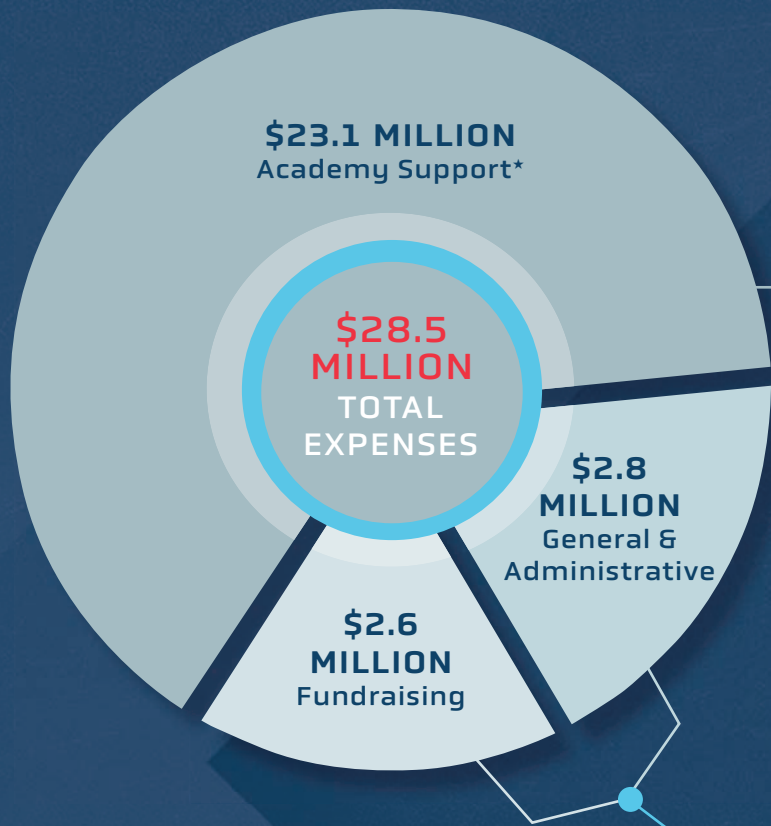


CAPITAL AND OTHER★

★ Includes capital projects such as the Madera Cyber Innovation Center, Hotel Polaris and Hosmer Visitor Center, and other funds for Chapel programs, admissions and the Peak Performance Center.

COMMITMENTS BY PURPOSE

2023 DONOR IMPACT



ACADEMICS
\$9.6 MILLION



ATHLETICS
\$3.9 MILLION



CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP
\$1.0 MILLION



HERITAGE
\$6.0 MILLION



CADET ACTIVITIES
\$0.5 MILLION



CAPITAL AND OTHER
\$2.1 MILLION



CORE SUPPORT
\$5.4 MILLION

*The Academy Support category reflects gift funds for the Academy, which are transferred as they are needed.



DEFINING OUR FUTURE CAMPAIGN

BY THE NUMBERS

[April 1, 2018-Dec. 31, 2023]

\$291.9 MILLION

CUMULATIVE CAMPAIGN
COMMITMENTS

97.3%

TO GOAL OF OVERALL
CAMPAIGN

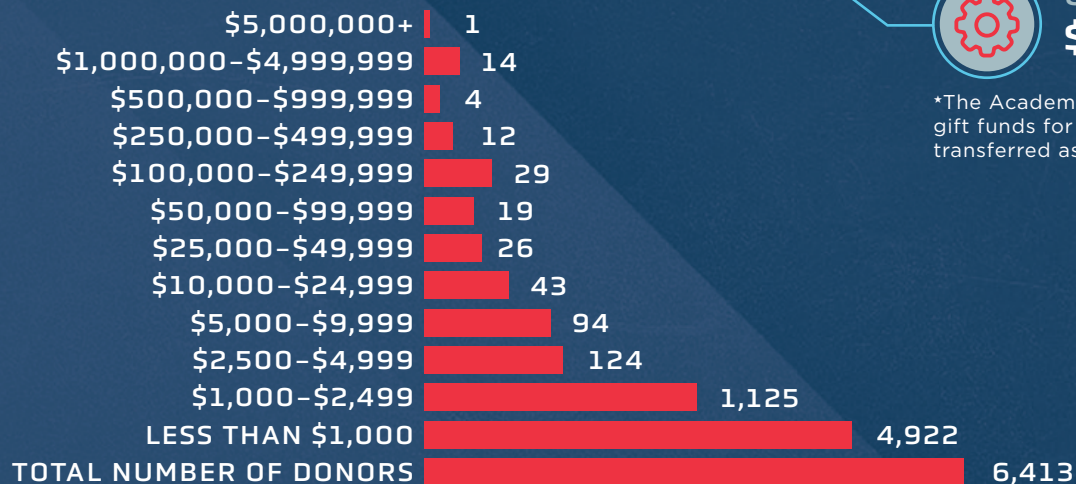
18,137

DONORS
TO THE CAMPAIGN

11,400

GRADUATE DONORS

DONORS BY LEVEL



MOMENTS OF IMPACT

GENEROSITY AND ENGAGEMENT MADE 2023 A TRANSFORMATIVE YEAR

U.S. Air Force Academy graduates, parents and friends continued to rise to the occasion, making a difference across the institution. Here are seven impactful moments in 2023 that donors made possible.

STRATEGY AND WARFARE SYMPOSIUM



1

Cadets learned from experts in January 2023 about technology's

role in future conflict at the donor-supported Strategy and Warfare Center Symposium themed "The Implications of Disruptive Technologies on Future Conflict: Autonomous Systems, AI, Hypersonics and Quantum Computing." Presenting sponsor Raytheon Technologies made the symposium possible. Organized by Col. Robert Grant '97, chair of airpower integration and innovation in the Department of Military and Strategic Studies, the event will take place annually. "The symposium is a flagship event for the research branch of the Strategy and Warfare Center," Col. Grant says. "We want to focus on developing warrior scholars and ensure the Academy remains at the leading edge of what is going on in the world."

65TH HARMON MEMORIAL LECTURE



2

Dr. Rana Mitter, S.T. Lee Professor of U.S.-Asia Relations at Harvard

Kennedy School, delivered the 65th Harmon Memorial Lecture in Military History on Oct. 12, 2023. His talk, "Why China Fought: Conceptions of Just War and Contemporary Applications," focused on how history shaped the idea of a just war and why it matters for the Asia-Pacific today. The Harmon Memorial Lecture is presented by the Department of History and funded with donor support.

MEDAL OF HONOR PANEL AT NCLS



3

During the donor-supported 30th annual National Character and

Leadership Symposium, organizers collaborated with the National Medal of Honor Institute and the Academy's Leadership and Conflict Resolution Program to host the inaugural Service Academy Character Summit. Medal of Honor recipients challenged cadets and midshipmen to elevate leadership through shared values. "Regardless of military affiliation, honor and character are universal traits that service members should embrace," says Medal of Honor recipient and retired Navy SEAL Master Chief Petty Officer Britt Slabinski. "When you're wearing the uniform, regardless of your service affiliation, we are all in the same family. We have some fun poking at each other a little bit, but we're all in the same family. So, it's very important for us to be here."

TWO-TIME CHAMPS

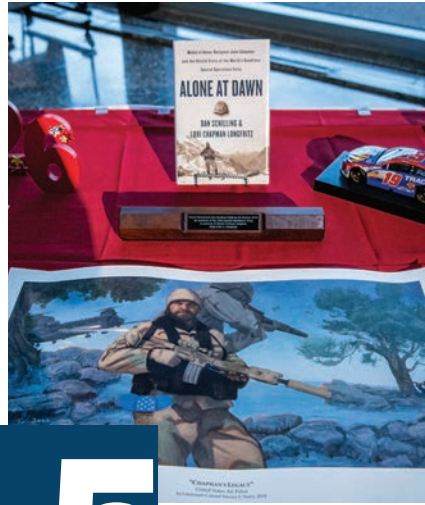


4

The Cyber Competition Team finished the 2022-23 competition

season by winning the National Security Agency Cyber Exercise for the second consecutive year. An endowment created by the Class of 1968 supports the team. For cyber cadets, competition means more than the opportunity to beat teams from sister academies and other institutions. Competing goes together with training, says Cadet 2nd Class Caleb Song. Team members train in cyber operations after classes four days a week. They use this time to hone their skills and talk about recent competitions. Each team member specializes in certain cyber areas.

CLASS OF 2026 EXEMPLAR

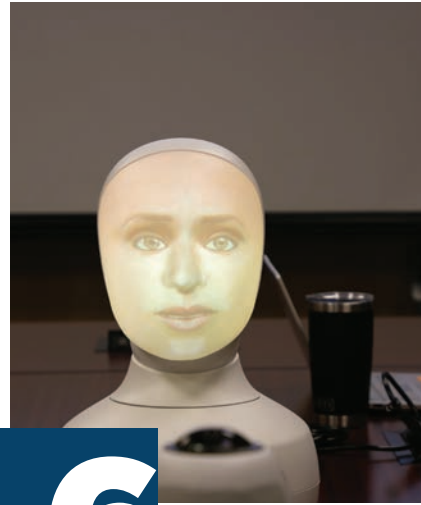


5

The Air Force Academy Class of 2026 hosted Medal of Honor recipient

Master Sgt. John Chapman's family and 24th Special Operations Wing members at its donor-supported Exemplar Dining-In at Mitchell Hall Sept. 14, 2023. The class became the first to select an enlisted airman as its exemplar. Chapman was an Air Force special tactics combat controller posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor 16 years after he was killed while protecting his teammates in Afghanistan on March 4, 2002. Then-Tech. Sgt. Chapman charged into al-Qaeda bunkers on the snowy 10,000-foot peak atop Takur Ghar. He was credited with saving the lives of an entire rescue team. Chapman is the only Air Force Medal of Honor recipient since the Vietnam War.

COMPUTER RESEARCH

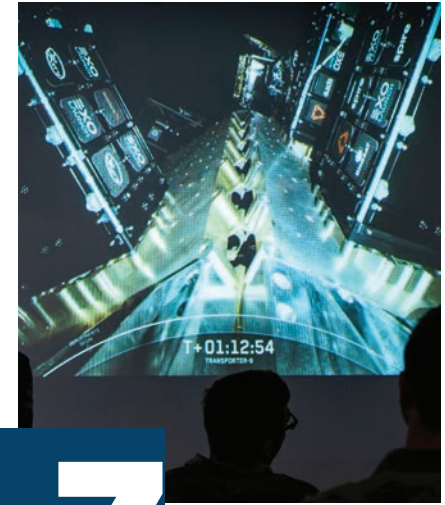


6

A grant from the Denver-based Daniels Fund helps create

research opportunities for cadets and faculty in the Department of Computer and Cyber Sciences. A Furhat Robot, also known as a social robot, provides computer programming opportunities for a capstone course. The robot also is used for STEM outreach. Cadet 1st Class Riley Deans worked on a capstone project using virtual reality goggles to visualize a computer network and optimize its use. The grant also assists Dr. Shannon Beck, assistant professor of computer and cyber sciences, in creating and improving a cybersecurity game for middle schoolers to help them learn essential online safety skills.

FALCONSAT-X



7

The successful launch of the FalconSAT-X satellite on Nov. 11, 2023, marked

a significant milestone for several classes of cadets. Since 2019, firstie cadets have worked on the donor-supported FalconSAT-X, engaging in hands-on learning to develop and operate real-world satellites. They design, analyze, construct, test and control small satellites that host technology experiments funded by the Air Force Research Laboratory. The satellite launched from SpaceX's Falcon 9 mission at Vandenberg Space Force Base, California.

FUTURE CONFLICT PREPARATION

“WE NEED TO CONTINUE TO TRANSFORM LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING TO PREPARE NEW OFFICERS TO EFFECTIVELY LEAD AIRMEN AND GUARDIANS IN THE CONTEXT OF GREAT POWER COMPETITION.”

– Maj. Gen. (Ret.) David Scott '78

ACCELERATING CHANGE: IFC GAINS MOMENTUM

Since its November 2019 launch, the Institute for Future Conflict has leveraged a combination of federal funding and private philanthropy to assist the Air Force Academy in preparing cadets for the changing nature of warfare.

In 2023, donors gave more than \$880,000 to 12 IFC funds that the Air Force Academy Foundation manages. This generosity, combined with gifts from 2022, allowed the Foundation to provide \$1.1 million in direct support to the IFC in 2023.

Philanthropy primarily supports the IFC by funding personnel, including a liaison, fellows and visiting faculty. Generous gifts from donors such as John Fox '63, Dr. Paul Kaminski '64 and Paul Rossetti '70 help the IFC secure the necessary expertise to accomplish its mission.

Maj. Gen. (Ret.) David Scott '78 is the IFC's liaison between the Foundation and the Academy. This donor-funded position focuses on staffing the IFC with experienced, accomplished individuals who enhance future conflict instruction and training. Gen. Scott says graduate and corporate donors are vital to the IFC's continued growth.

"The world has changed over the past 30 years, and as the secretary of the Air Force has said, we need to continue to transform leadership development and training to prepare new officers to effectively lead airmen and guardians in the context of great power competition," he says. "Donors have offered transformative resources that positively impact our future leaders' ability to do what our leadership is asking: Predict, prepare and respond to the challenges of this century."

Gen. Scott is also a regular speaker in an emerging technology course, teaching about hypersonics, artificial intelligence, autonomy and more.

Donors have brought a wide range of future conflict subject-matter experts to the Academy, including:

- Dr. Giles David Arceneaux, Rossetti Fellow for Future Conflict
- Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Sam Barrett '88, Rossetti Fellow for Logistics and Interdisciplinary Integration
- Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Chris Inglis '76, Milanovich Visiting Professor for Cyber Studies
- Matthew Russell, Kaminski Fellow for Decision Superiority
- Brig. Gen. (Ret.) David Stilwell '87, Fox Fellow for Future Pacing Threats
- Madison Walker, Space Policy Fellow



LEFT: Cadets use a flight simulator in the Multi-Domain Lab during their culminating experience. ABOVE: Firsties apply their knowledge in simulated warfare exercises during their culminating experience. (Photos by Trevor Cokley/USAFA)

Graduates and supporters have discovered several opportunities to engage with the IFC, including attending briefings during reunions. Late in August 2023, a contingent of IFC leaders and interested donors traveled to the INDOPACOM theater to personally witness and talk about the rising threat posed by the People's Republic of China.

The group stopped in Hawaii for a briefing on activity around the South China Sea and what experts believe the PRC's next steps could be. The nine-person team — led by Gen. Shwedo, Gen. Scott and Gen. Stilwell — then traveled to Taiwan to meet with key officials and get an up-close look at the complex situation there.

"When we came back, we had that condensed version to share with the cadets," reports Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Bradford Shwedo '87, the director of the IFC. "They get to learn about all sides of the conversation."

The IFC's influence on future warfare instruction is reaching across all Academy mission elements — academic, military and athletic — to help accelerate the development of innovative warrior-scholars.

TECHNOLOGY GIFTS ARE BACKBONE OF MADERA CENTER

Three technology companies have come together with gifts that will help Air Force Academy cadets remain at the forefront of cyber innovation and problem-solving — essential skills needed in the nation's defense.

Cisco Systems, Corning Optical Communications and Siemens Industry will outfit the Madera Cyber Innovation Center with generous gifts in kind to help create one of the most technologically advanced facilities in the Department of Defense:

- Cisco Systems, through its Country Digital Acceleration program, is providing the foundational information technology infrastructure to operate the facility securely, including network routers, switches and storage solutions, as well as collaboration and education tools.
- Corning Optical Communications is furnishing fiber-optic cable, hardware and connectors to ensure unlimited data transmission and accommodate future technology upgrades.
- Siemens Industry is contributing web-based energy management control systems that will integrate with Cisco and other third-party systems. The integration is part of a living lab that also coordinates with the Academy's Cyber City capabilities.

“The Madera Center is designed as an innovation center, increasing our ability to work with industry and academia, pulling from these communities to solve complex operational problems. The throughput and computational power represented by these gifts will make all of this possible,” says Col. Judson Dressler '05, permanent professor and head of the Department of Computer and Cyber Sciences.

Cisco, Siemens and Corning are supporting the Madera Cyber Innovation Center because of their interest in impacting how cadets prepare for future conflict. “Cisco is honored to partner with the U.S. Air Force Academy and Siemens to accelerate innovation, enhance the overall cyber posture at the Madera Cyber Innovation Center and ensure that cadets are prepared to meet the digital defense challenges of today and tomorrow,” says Dr. Cynthia Temesi, director of Country Digital Acceleration at Cisco.

Cisco and Siemens collaborated to ensure their technologies are complementary. With the addition of Corning's optical cables, the gifted technology will allow for future growth as needs evolve and expand, flexibly serving the Academy's educational mission for many years.



Construction of the Madera Cyber Innovation Center continued throughout 2023. CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The most recent artist rendering of the building; Crews install the building's windows. (Photo by Justin Pacheco/USAFA). The center's spiral staircase is an architectural centerpiece. (Photo by Rayna Grace/USAFA)

FINANCE LAB TO STRENGTHEN CRITICAL THINKING

With donor support, the Air Force Academy Department of Management plans to create a new finance lab for its majors and other cadets across the curriculum.

The double-size classroom, once funded, will feature a Bloomberg lab in one half and a collaboration space in the other. Faculty members and cadets will be able to use 16 Bloomberg terminals, accessing enormous amounts of macroeconomic and government policy information to allow cadets to integrate knowledge learned in core economics and political science courses into their analyses.

Through 2023, donors have provided nearly a quarter of the estimated \$400,000 cost of the lab. The estimate includes renovation costs, one-time lab purchases, annual Bloomberg service subscriptions and other equipment and software licenses.

Maj. J. Mintzmyer '12 and his wife, Christina, are among those supporting the project. A Department of Economics & Geosciences graduate, Mintzmyer wishes he had access to a finance lab during his time at the Academy.

"It is a great opportunity for cadets, from the knowledge they will gain to the decision-making they will practice," he says.

The Department of Management faculty members are excited about the expanded options for cadets once the finance lab is operational. Cadets in the nonprofit investment management capstone course will rely heavily on the lab, and it could be used for cadets to advise on an actual donor-funded portfolio.

"There's so much data available now that having the skills to turn that data into useful information that a commander can use to make decisions is a critical skill," says Col. (Ret.) Scott Heyler '94, Ph.D., associate professor of management. "A lot of these things that we're talking about here will help our cadets develop those skills and be prepared as young officers to do things with data visualization and decision-making."

These identified skills were important for donor Joe Capasso '96 when he served as a pilot in the Air Force and are even more so now as a corporate finance lawyer.

"I've had to do a lot of learning on the fly in order to be successful in my current position, certainly as it relates to the business and finance world," he says. "I think this is really something special, and I just wanted to be a part of it."

"IT IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR CADETS, FROM THE KNOWLEDGE THEY WILL GAIN TO THE DECISION-MAKING THEY WILL PRACTICE."

– Maj. J. Mintzmyer '12

A Bloomberg terminal, which will be part USAFA's new finance lab. (Photo courtesy Brandeis International School)

CADET EXPERIENCE



CLUBS ELEVATE CADET EXPERIENCE

Cadet clubs are a vital part of cadet life at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Clubs provide opportunities for personal growth and collective success. They also allow cadets to apply their knowledge and skills in practical settings.

Private support for clubs helps elevate the entire cadet experience and enables participation in transformational experiences far beyond life at the Academy. Philanthropy helps various clubs purchase uniforms and equipment, enhance practices and meetings, and travel to events and competitions.

Air Force Academy Foundation donors continued to bolster dozens of clubs in 2023, with contributions spanning the Academy's mission elements. Donor impact included gifts to the Cyber Competition Team, Marathon Club, Forensics Competitive Team, Special Warfare Club and more. Club funds benefited from significant support from the Dorothy D. and Joseph A. Moller Foundation and community giving efforts such as 1Day1USAFA and Falcon Funder campaigns.

In addition to supporting long-standing Academy staples such as the Drum & Bugle Corps and Falconry Club, donors assisted newer clubs. Notably, individual gifts to the Women's Hockey Club in 2023 helped fund travel, lodging and equipment that enabled the program to grow and thrive.

The Women's Hockey Club, established in 2018, initially competed against local teams. However, in the fall of 2021, the team joined the American Collegiate Hockey Association, a highly competitive, non-NCAA organization that concludes each season with a national tournament.

Philanthropy helped the Women's Hockey Club establish a national foothold. This includes an annual trip to Annapolis to compete against the U.S. Naval Academy's women's hockey team, a trip club leaders say encourages team building and allows for interaction with midshipmen and cadets from other service academies. As the U.S. Military Academy and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy also launch women's ice hockey programs, USAFA's club has set the goal to compete against all service academies each year.

"These contributions allowed us to grow the program with the goal of becoming a competitive team in the American Collegiate Hockey Association and eventually qualify for the national tournament," says Lt. Col. Eric Magnuson, Women's Hockey Club coach.

With over 100 clubs available, cadets can collaborate, lead and compete alongside their peers to pursue shared interests and passions regardless of class or rank. Clubs also serve as equalizers, fostering an environment where cadets work toward common goals and develop camaraderie, teamwork and resiliency. These character-defining experiences are fueled by generous donors and teach unforgettable leadership lessons.



Cadet clubs develop leaders by fostering leadership skills and personal growth. LEFT: Cadets on the Leader Challenge Tower (Photo by Ryan Hall); ABOVE: Equestrian Team; BELOW: Special Warfare Club cadets participate in Special Warfare career field pre-commissioning screening. (Photos by Trevor Cokley/USAFA)

INVESTING IN TOMORROW'S LEADERS

► FROM INPROCESSING TO GRADUATION, PHILANTHROPY SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCES THE CADET EXPERIENCE.

In 2023, parent and family donations to the popular Cadet Enrichment Fund helped the Association of Graduates and Air Force Academy Foundation host Heritage Days for incoming cadets, provide squadron improvement resources for the Cadet Wing and enhance Firstie Departure for the Class of 2023.

Heritage Days began in 2021 and has quickly become a powerful tradition that brings incoming cadets and the Long Blue Line together. Last summer, basic cadets from the Class of 2027 toured Doolittle Hall and the adjacent Heritage Trail, meeting with graduates to learn about Academy history and alumni accomplishments. In 2023, organizers renewed their focus on involving the legacy Class of 1977 to solidify the relationship between the two classes.

In addition to promoting the heritage and traditions of the Academy and its graduates, the Cadet Enrichment Fund provided each cadet squadron with \$1,000 for improvements. This gave cadet squadrons the financial resources necessary to build synergy and empower each other to achieve individual and shared goals.

On April 27, 2023, the Association and Foundation hosted Firstie Departure in the Arnold Hall Ballroom. This annual event, financed by the Cadet Enrichment Fund, provided a range of helpful information, including how to stay connected to the graduate community and successfully manage life after graduation.

“Our goal is to ensure firsties transition smoothly from the Academy by imparting essential life skills and facilitating connections within the broader graduate community,” explains Lt. Col. (Ret.) Naviere Walkewicz '99, senior vice president of alumni relations and business development for the Association and Foundation. “Firstie Departure offers cadets the chance to tap into the many resources offered by our alumni association, as well as those available at their initial assignments and beyond.”

During Firstie Departure, graduates and experts offered advice about financial wellness, work-life balance and more.



The Class of 2027 participated in Heritage Days. CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Visiting the Southeast Asia Pavilion; exploring the library in Doolittle Hall; speaking with Col. (Ret.) Max Miller '59 at the Class of 1959 Heritage Bridge. (Photos by Ryan Hall)



DONORS BOOST CADET MORALE



Cadet Squadron 36 celebrates its Outstanding Squadron Award for fall 2023, including a donor-funded \$5,000 award for cadet morale. (Photo by Ryan Hall)

The U.S. Air Force Academy fosters growth through rigorous academics, military training and athletics. Recognizing these challenges, USAFA graduates and families donate to morale-boosting initiatives such as the Cadet Wing Leadership & Morale Fund, the Class of 2010 Endowment for Cadet Morale and the Anderson Endowment for Cadet Wing Programs. These gifts help cadets build camaraderie and forge strong connections.

In 2023, approximately \$56,000 in gifts to the Air Force Academy Foundation's Cadet Wing Leadership & Morale Fund directly supported cadet morale initiatives, including a Valentine's Day event, personalized tents for each squadron, a celebration for graduating seniors and the renaming of CS-19.

The Class of 2010 worked to make a difference for current cadets. Each semester, the Outstanding Squadron Award honors the cadet squadron that finishes the highest in USAFA's ranking system. CS-34 received the award in spring 2023, and CS-36 won in fall 2023. Many cadets are pleasantly surprised to learn the award now comes with \$5,000 from the Class of 2010 Endowment for Cadet Morale.

The class established its endowment to encourage the Cadet Wing to foster camaraderie, celebrate accomplishments and enhance morale. Winning

squadrons have used the award to update their activity rooms with smart boards and speakers as well as to customize physical spaces.

"It means the world that donors care enough to contribute to our success here at USAFA," says Cadet 1st Class Daniel Smith, CS-36 squadron cadet commander. "Our squadron will be much better off from this generous gift, and I believe it sets a great goal for other squadrons to reach for this semester. All of the Proud Pink Panthers in CS-36 say thank you!"

Along with these collective giving efforts, several programs at the Academy received assistance from former Commandant of Cadets Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Marcus Anderson '61 and his wife, Ginger.

In 2023, the Anderson Endowment for Cadet Wing Programs provided support to the Cadet Wing Internship Program, helping cadets gain real-world experience in both military and political settings in Washington, D.C. These internships are a reciprocal opportunity that allows the Academy to share some of its most innovative thinkers and benefit from their experiences upon their return.

ATHLETIC EXCELLENCE

MAIN PHOTO: The final steel beam is placed during the official topping out ceremony for the Falcon Stadium construction project. (Photo by Trevor Cokley/USAFA) RIGHT: Artist rendering of the renovated east entrance



REDEFINING GAME DAY: FALCON STADIUM MODERNIZATION

The physical transformation of Falcon Stadium's east side kicked off with a groundbreaking in January 2023. At the end of the year, construction crews celebrated a topping out ceremony, signifying the placement of the final steel beam. The project is on track, and the east side modernization is expected to be ready for the fall 2024 football season.

"The east side project is, by far, the biggest improvement [to the stadium] to date and will be a great step in modernizing our home field," Lt. Gen. Richard Clark '86, USAFA superintendent, said during the groundbreaking ceremony. "This project is not only going to bring fans into our stadium, but athletes to our teams, cadets to our wing and people to see the great things that happen here at USAFA. We are elevating our Academy as a Division I school for all of our athletic programs."

While construction moved forward in 2023, so did fundraising to help pay for the upgrades. The Falcon Stadium modernization project is one of the signature priorities of the Defining Our Future comprehensive campaign. Private philanthropy is slated to fund \$35 million of the \$90 million project. To date, donors have contributed nearly \$30 million toward the fundraising goal, including Jack '78 and Vianne Kucera's \$10 million lead gift.

In addition to the updated entrance and seating — both boosting the overall experience — the project focuses on attracting more fans to games and events at the stadium. The football program plays a vital financial role in the Department of Athletics' overall success.

"It is going to be the revenue generator that drives our athletic department for the next generation. Football is that piece in every athletic department at the Football Bowl Subdivision level," says Nate Pine, director of athletics.

"THIS PROJECT IS NOT ONLY GOING TO BRING FANS INTO OUR STADIUM, BUT ATHLETES TO OUR TEAMS, CADETS TO OUR WING AND PEOPLE TO SEE THE GREAT THINGS THAT HAPPEN HERE AT USAFA."

— Lt. Gen. Richard Clark '86, USAFA superintendent



Cadet 2nd Class Robert Mbroh runs the ball during the Air Force vs. Wyoming game at Falcon Stadium in October 2023. (Photo by Ryan Hall)

In 2003, former lacrosse player John Muse '73 donated to the stadium project to ensure the lacrosse team plays in a first-class facility. Many other former athletes also are honoring the leadership and teamwork lessons they learned as Air Force Falcons by contributing.

Falcon Stadium's impact and the reach of the events it hosts extend well beyond football, lacrosse and graduations. Its influence permeates the athletics mission element, which prepares all USAFA cadets to be leaders of character for the Air Force and Space Force — leaders trained in the profession of arms to, when called upon, fight and win the nation's wars.

"Frankly, the leadership lessons you learn here prepare you," Jack Kucera, a former Air Force football standout, said at the groundbreaking. "They prepare you for good times and hard times, so you know how to bear down when the pressure is on."



GAME-CHANGING GENEROSITY

Cadet 4th Class Maggie Slife is rushed by excited teammates after an exceptional performance on the uneven bars. (Photo by Trevor Cokley/USAFA)

Since the Air Force Academy's inception, athletics and competitive excellence have united young people from every background to pursue a common goal and promote teamwork, perseverance and mutual respect. Because these qualities are essential for cadets to develop into the leaders of character the Air Force, Space Force and nation require, athletics is one of the Academy's mission elements.

Philanthropy provides sustainable support for many of USAFA's athletic clubs and intercollegiate athletic programs. Athletic endowments and operational funds help provide comprehensive support systems, attract top-tier coaching talent and recruit exceptional athletes with a service mindset.

The Air Force Academy Foundation manages several athletic endowments, including the Weichers Endowment for Boxing Excellence, the Wayne Baughman Endowment for Men's Wrestling and more. John Muse '73 helped launch the Men's Lacrosse Program Endowment in 2023 with an initial fundraising goal of \$100,000. By the end of the year, donors contributed \$32,000. The Frushour Family Men's Gymnastics Endowment, established in 2023, also benefitted from generous donations totaling \$105,000.

In addition to athletic endowments, the Air Force Academy Foundation administers several athletic-focused funds donors can support. In 2023, donors

gave nearly \$240,000 to a variety of athletic funds. Combined with support from endowments, these gifts allowed the Foundation to disperse almost \$480,000 to a wide array of athletic clubs and intercollegiate athletic programs, including men's and women's rugby, men's boxing, women's gymnastics and baseball.

Col. (Ret.) Malia '87 and Lt. Col. (Ret.) Kurt '87 Spranger are among those who support athletics at USAFA. "Whether in the batter's box, on a beam or in a ring, we know that Air Force athletic teams were the source of our greatest leadership challenges, most treasured camaraderie and even pivotal defeats," says Col. Malia Spranger.

Each year, the Sprangers support men's baseball, women's gymnastics, men's boxing and the Weichers Endowment for Boxing. "Our intercollegiate experiences made us and our three sons [Kurt '10, Craig '12 and Zachary '14] athletes for life. We hope that our donation will make this possible for Academy athletes now and in the future," says Col. Malia Spranger.

Ultimately, the grit and determination cadet-athletes consistently show will help them excel on the fields of modern warfare. Gifts to USAFA athletics enable cadets to pursue their passions and grow as both competitors and warfighters.

HERITAGE AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE

ACADEMY FRONT DOOR TAKING SHAPE

Dan Schnepf '83, founder and president of Matrix Design Group in Colorado Springs, Colorado, has been involved with reimagining the Air Force Academy's North Gate for more than a decade. Throughout 2023, his tenacity in transforming the visitor experience paid off as the TrueNorth Commons development showed significant construction progress.

TrueNorth Commons was made possible, in part, through Colorado Regional Tourism Act tax revenue, which supported the city of Colorado Springs' City for Champions initiative to add dimension, energy and economic vitality to the Pikes Peak region. In addition to public funding, Jerry '70 and Pam Bruni have championed the TrueNorth Commons project, providing a significant gift for Hotel Polaris and the lead gift for the Hosmer Visitor Center.

Hotel Polaris, operated by CoralTree Hospitality, and the new Hosmer Visitor Center will flank North Gate Boulevard between Interstate 25 and the North Gate security checkpoint.

"This is a transformational project for the Academy," says Mark Hille '97, CEO of the Association of Graduates and Air Force Academy Foundation. "Moving the visitor center outside the North Gate will make a huge difference in our visitor count, and the hotel will generate as much as \$10 million a year to support the Academy once the bonds are paid off.

Dan Schnepf's vision and planning is a true game changer for philanthropy at the Academy."

As part of the overall vision, Schnepf, whose company is the developer, wanted the hotel to operate as a nonprofit entity, with the "profit" — after payoff of the bonds — benefiting the Air Force Academy through the Association of Graduates and Air Force Academy Foundation. For Schnepf, his role in the project is about service before self and supporting the Academy after all it has done for him. "This is one way I could give back to my Academy," he says. "It shows my gratitude for the institution, and I am blessed to be able to do this for our Academy."

The Foundation is focused on raising \$20 million for the hotel and visitor center projects. Donor generosity will accelerate paying down the debt incurred by

issuing bonds. The hotel property can then be turned over to the Association and Foundation earlier, which will help fund other mission-focused projects and programs at the Academy.



Artist rendering of Hosmer Visitor Center



Artist rendering of a completed Hotel Polaris with the Hosmer Visitor Center in the background

HOTEL GIFTS DEFINE FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Two major gifts to the Hotel Polaris project at the Air Force Academy's North Gate will impact philanthropy at the Academy for the foreseeable future.

As these gifts and other donations support the hotel, Provident Resource Group can pay down the debt more quickly. Hotel ownership will then transfer to the Association of Graduates and Air Force Academy Foundation, providing significant perpetual financial support for the Academy.

In late 2023, Hugh '64 and Nan Williamson made a \$5.5 million gift that supports Hotel Polaris and a new way to recognize the accomplishments and contributions of USAFA's Distinguished Graduates.

"In everything we do, we try to move the needle a little bit," says Hugh Williamson, a 2020 USAFA Distinguished Graduate and founding director of the Air Force Academy Foundation. He spent his Air Force career as an instructor pilot and academic leader before embarking on an extensive and successful business career.

"When I learned the details about the benefit of paying off the most expensive tranche of capital for the hotel early, which would mean reducing the interest by a huge number, it just connected all the dots," says Hugh Williamson.

A portion of the Williamsons' gift will support a planned memorial to recognize and honor future Distinguished Graduates of the Academy. Beginning with the 2025 honorees, Distinguished Graduates and their

achievements will be highlighted as part of a prominent architectural feature and gathering space on the Heritage Trail north of Doolittle Hall.

Jerry '70 and Pam Bruni made a \$4.2 million gift to support the Hotel Polaris project in the fall. They have been major supporters of the entire TrueNorth Commons project. In 2022, the Brunis made the lead gift in support of the Hosmer Visitor Center, named for Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Bradley C. Hosmer '59 and his wife, Zita.

Jerry Bruni was an operations research officer and later a faculty member in the Air Force Academy's Department of Economics. He is the founder and president of Colorado Springs-based J. V. Bruni and Company, the largest independent money management firm in southern Colorado. He is a founding director of the Air Force Academy Foundation.

Hugh Williamson hopes all members of the Long Blue Line recognize the benefits of their experiences and leadership lessons as cadets and are therefore inspired to give back to the institution as he and his wife, the Brunis, and many others have.

"It is very important to the Foundation's ability to secure contributions from numerous supporters and constituents that they see large percentages of the graduates stepping up as donors. The fact that many graduates are supporting our Academy is often equally as important as the amount one is able to donate," Hugh Williamson says. "Every graduate has gotten a very extensive free education. All of them could make a meaningful contribution, because otherwise they, too, would not be where they are today."



ENCOURAGING CONNECTION TO SUPPORT USAFA'S FUTURE

Since its founding in 2007, the Air Force Academy Foundation has raised more than \$400 million to support and advance the Air Force Academy mission — all while staff have been officed in various locations without a permanent home. That's about to change with the addition of a new administration building that will bolster the work of the Air Force Academy Foundation and Association of Graduates in supporting the Academy, serving graduates and preserving the institution's heritage.

Bill '63 and Mary Linn Wecker are the lead donors for Wecker Hall, a new 25,800-square-foot building set to begin construction in 2024.

Although Wecker Hall will serve as Air Force Academy Foundation headquarters, it will house Association and Foundation staff and provide space for other nonprofits dedicated to the USAFA mission. Doolittle Hall will continue to serve as the official alumni center and as an event space for the Long Blue Line.

Yost Plaza will connect Wecker and Doolittle halls. The outdoor gathering space will honor graduates and major donors and serve as an inviting entrance to the Heritage Trail to the north. It is named in honor of Dave '69 and Jean Yost. Dave Yost is a 2016 USAFA Distinguished Graduate.

For 16 years, the Foundation has operated from disparate, temporary office spaces. It currently has offices in Doolittle Hall, headquarters of the Association

Artist rendering of Wecker Hall and Yost Plaza, to be built west of Doolittle Hall of Graduates, and in the 10th Air Base Wing headquarters building near the Academy's South Gate.

"The new Foundation headquarters building will bring the entire staff together so that they can work more effectively and enjoyably in a first-class working environment," says Bill Wecker, a 2021 USAFA Distinguished Graduate and a co-founder of the Air Force Academy Foundation. "From a small startup operation with grand ideas and no track record to what the Air Force Academy Foundation is today — more than \$400 million raised to benefit cadets. And now a Foundation headquarters building to match that accomplishment."

Wecker Hall is slated to be occupied in 2025.

"Our staff is grateful for every gift in support of our Academy, but Wecker Hall and Yost Plaza are especially personal to all of us. This will be our new home," says Mark Hille '97, Association and Foundation CEO. "There is no doubt that Doolittle Hall has served us well for more than 30 years and will continue to be our alumni house and the center of heritage and events missions. But we will finally have a purpose-built office to house our whole team — one that will encourage connection and is designed to support our future."

MILESTONES AND LEGACIES

Donor generosity manifests in different ways. Class reunion giving through the Association of Graduates and Air Force Academy Foundation celebrated several impactful projects in 2023. The Office of Gift Planning also helped donors plan for their own and the Academy's futures.

CLASS GIVING

Class reunion giving has transformed the U.S. Air Force Academy, producing some of its most iconic landmarks and influential programs. In 2023, several classes reached significant fundraising and project milestones.

The Class of 1963 raised \$1 million for the Leader Challenge Tower. The class was the lead donor for the project, with additional funding coming from the Dorothy D. and Joseph A. Moller Foundation.

Located within the 12-acre Outdoor Leadership Complex, the impressive 55-foot-high tower replaced the original wooden tower constructed in 1996. The new structure is dedicated to the first USAFA graduate to serve as chief of staff of the Air Force, Gen. (Ret.) Ronald Fogleman '63. The class held a dedication ceremony on Aug. 10, 2023, to coincide with its 60-year reunion. Gen. Fogleman, a 2001 Distinguished Graduate, attended the ceremony and shared a message of gratitude with his friends and classmates.

The Class of 1966 raised over \$1 million to develop the Legacy Walk at Falcon Stadium. The project will celebrate and honor Air Force Academy heritage and introduce tens of thousands of stadium visitors to impactful and inspiring stories.

The class leaders say that Falcon Stadium's public nature and potential exposure make it a perfect spot for a broader audience to experience the

Academy's storied heritage. "That stadium has been there for a long time. This is going to be there for another long time. And so, I think it's important to do something enduring," says Col. (Ret.) Vic Andrews '66.

The Class of 1974 raised \$1.1 million for the Forevermore Overlook. The new addition to the Academy grounds provides current and future generations of cadets with an outdoor space for contemplation, conversations and more. The Class of 1974 rallied behind the project, with more than 40% of the class donating in celebration of its upcoming 50th reunion in 2024.

After four years of planning and fundraising, the Class of 1974 officially opened the first phase of the overlook during a ceremonial ribbon-cutting ceremony on Nov. 17, 2023. Referring to the class's motto, "To Meet the Challenge," Col. (Ret.) Ed Whalen '74, class president, said the class set a participation record for the project and met the challenge.

The Class of 1979 raised \$1.8 million, including a \$500,000 gift for the Spirit 03 warfighting heritage memorial now on display on the Academy's Honor Court, and \$1.3 million for the nearly complete Madera Cyber Innovation Center.

On May 5, 2023, the class dedicated the replica of the AC-130H aircraft, sculpted by Jim Nance '71, to recognize the class's

40th reunion. The class wanted to remember the example set by the Spirit 03 crew, led by classmate Maj. PJ Weaver. "Their devotion to duty and selfless service to their fellow warriors should be learned and emulated by every airman and guardian," Col. (Ret.) Michael Van Hoomissen '79, class president, said at the dedication.

GIFT PLANNING

As an Association of Graduates board director, Dr. Ginny (Caine) Tonneson '80 says she understands the impact of philanthropy at the Air Force Academy. She has now added support for the Academy to her will, earning her recognition as a Polaris Society member.



“I am thankful for the opportunity to be on the AOG board, which has shown me the importance of providing programs and services to meet our graduates’ needs throughout their lifetimes, but also the importance of providing the cadets with an extra margin of excellence through programs and services while at the Academy,” she says. “Two easy ways of supporting the Academy are making Sabre Society-level gifts and qualifying for the Polaris Society.”

The Air Force Academy Foundation recorded donors’ future legacy commitments valued at more than \$7.3 million in 2023. When those gifts are realized, they will support various programs, including the Soaring Club, ice hockey, an endowed fund to benefit the

departments of Management and Economics & Geosciences, the Class of 1973 endowment for the National Character and Leadership Symposium and graduate programs through the AOG.

However, most gifts are not designated for a specific fund.

“If the Foundation may not receive these generous gifts until far in the future, who knows what the Academy’s needs will be at that time?” asks Dale Zschoche, P’10, executive director of gift planning. “When those gifts are realized, future leadership can help direct them to the current priority needs.”

Zschoche and others at the Foundation can help with those discussions. Email legacy@usafa.org.

“Everyone should have an effective estate plan to protect themselves and their heirs,” Zschoche says.

FROM LEFT: Class of 1963 Leader Challenge Tower dedication; Class of 1974 Forevermore Overlook ribbon-cutting ceremony; Class of 1979 Spirit O3 dedication. (Photos by Ryan Hall)



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