

# The Embry-Riddle Trust

**Oscar Garcia ('02, DB)** hedges his bets in the high-stakes, high-wire aviation industry by investing his time, resources and trust in Embry-Riddle's alumni network



**F**or Oscar Garcia ('02, DB), an Embry-Riddle Executive MBA alum and the founding partner, chairman and CEO of InterFlight Global Corporation (IFG), operating an aviation and aerospace consulting firm with global reach has its share of risk. But, like all successful entrepreneurs, Garcia knows a thing or

two about managing business challenges in today's global marketplace. One of the first things you have to do, he says, is establish a strong network of people you can trust.

"Today, more than ever, it is important to have a network to intellectually, professionally and commercially support each other," Garcia says.

That's one of the reasons he has taken such an active role in supporting Embry-Riddle and its alumni network. "If our alumni network is active, no matter where we go or end up, we'll have a professional support system," he says. "We all must do our part."

For his part, Garcia is pursuing a vision to expand his company's reach from its headquarters in Miami to several continents, in particular North America and South America. "Since my business was started here in 2002, I have watched Miami continue to grow as a trading and finance center for North and South America, the Caribbean and Europe, and recently Asia. Miami would be the

equivalent of what Hong Kong is to Asia, or Dubai is to the Middle East and India," Garcia says. "I think Miami will be the aviation and aerospace gateway city that leads to the Americas, and this is why I chose to put my business here."

## A GLOBAL VISION

Garcia's global vision isn't limited to his own company. As a member of the newly established Alumni Advisory Council, he hopes to contribute his international perspectives to benefit other alumni, the university and its students. "I am very happy



**Oscar Garcia ('02, DB)** proudly holds the Eagle of Excellence Award he received at the 2009 NBAA Alumni Reception. Pictured with him (left to right): IFG Executive Director Yvette Garcia, Executive Director Cyntia Garcia ('09, DB) and Embry-Riddle student Associate Director Intern Megha Bathia.

By Ashlee (Fiser) Ilg ('03, DB)

to be a part of this group, and I think we can bring insights and feedback from the outside world to the university leadership to do a lot of good things,” he says. “Because my business projects and clients are all over the world, I want to bring a global vision of how aviation and aerospace are perceived worldwide and how we can internationalize even further the Embry-Riddle brand.”

Helping to spread and strengthen the Embry-Riddle name is a big goal for Garcia, who gives credit to his education for his career success. “My Embry-Riddle education has made a profound impact on the way I look at the aerospace and aviation industries and has no doubt been instrumental in the growth of my consulting and advisory firm,” he says. “I want to give back to the university for everything I have learned.”

#### LEARNING TO INVEST IN OURSELVES

In recent years, Garcia has developed a new appreciation for the ways in which a thriving alumni association can play a role in helping professionals weather the ups and downs of the aviation and aerospace industry. “In our industry, especially in today’s economy, many people will change jobs and career paths, and it is more important than ever to keep the value of our degree,” he says. “Everything we do will be an investment in ourselves and our future.”

Garcia has experienced firsthand the benefits of investing in a strong and stable alumni network. When he started his company in 2002, he had already made a key alumni connection that changed the course of his business. “Originally, I was going to open a subsidiary of my company in Dubai,” Garcia explains. “It would have taken me about three years to learn the culture and successfully start over there. But, I was able to open it in a joint venture with a fellow ERAU EMBA alum and, in only three years, we were operating seamlessly in Dubai, catering to the Gulf region and India.”

Opening in Miami has been a good move for Garcia and his company. Not only does he have the support of two Embry-Riddle Worldwide campuses and a thriving South Florida Alumni Chapter, but his company also is ideally situated near Miami International Airport, among such aviation and aerospace giants as Airbus, Bombardier, Embraer, GECAS,

Boeing and others. “Miami is definitely a hot spot for global aviation and aerospace, and it keeps growing,” Garcia says.

#### IN RIDDLE WE TRUST

While Miami and the Embry-Riddle alumni network have been good for Garcia, Garcia has been great for Embry-Riddle and its alumni. At his own firm, he continues to build what he calls “a fraternity of Embry-Riddle alumni.” To date, at different times, he has hired 15 alumni as full-time employees, consul-

tant contractors, instructors and student interns. In addition to having a joint venture with the aforementioned Executive MBA alumnus at his Dubai office, Garcia will open an office in Madrid, Spain, in June 2010 with a fellow Eagle MBA at the helm.

“I enjoy hiring other alumni because they are academically qualified, they speak the same language as I do, and truly share my passion for aviation and aerospace,” Garcia says. “But most importantly, I can trust them personally and professionally. We have a code of ethics because we all know we’re part of a bigger picture and the Embry-Riddle family.”

Cynthia Garcia ('09, DB) is one such alumna who shares Oscar Garcia’s “big picture” perspective. The recent Embry-Riddle MBA grad and

InterFlight Global executive director has been working at IFG since she graduated in May 2009, and she can already see the advantages of working with a fellow alumnus.

“It has truly been a fulfilling experience,” says Cynthia Garcia. “Oscar is not only an outstanding professional, he is also an excellent person, and so is the rest of the team. At IFG, we all have a lot in common and work very well together, and I feel that our common Embry-Riddle heritage has a lot to do with that.”

This common bond of trust is the central thing that motivates Oscar Garcia to stay engaged and give back to his alma mater in many ways. “I can go anywhere in the world and find Embry-Riddle alumni to work with and trust them to deliver an outstanding and passionate work product,” he says. “This is most important to me.”

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# Meet Embry-Riddle's Alumni Advisory Council

In October 2009, Embry-Riddle convened its Alumni Advisory Council (AAC). Comprising many of Embry-Riddle's most involved and active alumni, the AAC's mission is to help support a vision for the Alumni Association by engaging, coordinating and serving the university's 95,000-plus alumni. *Lift* is pleased to introduce its AAC members:



**Ken Dufour ('85, '89, DB)** serves as the chairman of the Alumni Advisory Council, as well as a member of the Embry-Riddle Board of Trustees. He is the president of Aviation Management Consulting Inc., which he established seven years ago in Rockford, Ill.



**Andrew Broom ('97, '00, DB)** is vice president of communications for Aircraft and Owners Pilots Association (AOPA). He is an instrument-rated flight instructor and commercial pilot, rated for both land and seaplanes. He also has worked as the director of Embry-Riddle's Career Services department.



**Oscar S. Garcia ('02, DB)** is the founding partner, chairman and CEO of InterFlight Global Corp., which he started in 1992 in Los Angeles, and moved to Miami, in 2002. Oscar also serves on the Space Florida Advisory Committee and Embry-Riddle College of Business Industrial Advisory Board. He is the past president and chairman of the Aerospace Committee of the Greater Miami Aviation Association. (Read more about Garcia on page 15.)



**Alvin Jackson ('90, DB)** serves as vice president of sales and government relations for Insitu, a leading provider of unmanned aircraft systems. He is also a member of the Embry-Riddle President's Advisory Board.



**Rick Larsen ('78, '79, DB)** has served as EAA's vice president of marketing and communications since 2004. Prior to EAA, he spent 13 years with ATA Airlines as vice president of marketing. Rick also serves on the Embry-Riddle President's Advisory Board.



**Janet Nortrup ('06, DB; '09, WW)** currently works as a program manager for PAC Seating Systems. She also has worked with her husband, **Peter Nortrup ('04, DB)**, to establish and develop the Alumni Association's successful South Florida Chapter.



**Amanda O'Brien-Brown ('02, '05, DB)** works for TD Securities as a vice president in the investment banking group. She serves as co-president of the Embry-Riddle NYC-Area Alumni Chapter and is a member of the Wings Club of New York City.



**Michael Pepin ('86, DB)** and his wife, **Joyce ('81, DB)**, own Pepin Realty in Ormond Beach, Fla. He has previous experience in marketing with General Electric, Grumman Aerospace and ADT Security Systems.



**Tim Perry ('86, PC)** began his Air Force career at Embry-Riddle's Prescott Campus. As an ROTC student he was honored as the USAF Cadet Commander and graduating class speaker. He is employed by Zurich Financial Services with the Human Resources Group.



**John Phillips ('90, '92, DB)** became Embry-Riddle's first-ever director of sports marketing and promotions in 1997 and is currently the associate director of athletics. While a student at Embry-Riddle, he was a member of the baseball team.



**Lisa Spencer ('99, DB; '03, WW)** is an instrument-rated, commercial pilot. She is currently the director for TransSolutions, Washington, D.C., branch. She has more than 16 years of experience in business development, with more than eight years specifically dedicated to the aviation industry.



**Wendy Stanley ('09, WW)** is a former regional airline pilot and certified flight instructor. She currently works as an aviation analyst for PAI Consulting Inc. Wendy is an authorized OSHA outreach trainer for the general industry and holds a certificate in Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response.



**James Sterioff ('83, DB)** is a captain with Delta Air Lines and resides in Atlanta. He and his wife own MSK Concepts LLC, which is the lead supplier for Embry-Riddle Alumni Association gifts and supplies.