



FALL COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY PREPARES NEARLY 200 EMBRY-RIDDLE GRADS FOR LIFTOFF

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Nearly 200 Embry-Riddle students from the Fall 2024 class celebrated earning their degrees during the Fall 2024 commencement at the university's Prescott, Arizona, campus.

"Commencement is such a meaningful time for our graduates, their families and everyone here at our university," said Dr. Ken Witcher, chancellor of the Prescott campus, "It's the moment when all the hard work, determination and personal growth over the years come together."

At the [Prescott Campus](#) ceremony Dec. 14, a total of 192 graduates were awarded their diplomas, including six who received master's degrees. The class also included five ROTC students at Embry-Riddle who were commissioned as officers: three Air Force cadets and two Army cadets.

Student veteran Vincent Alexander Becerra, who earned his bachelor's in [Industrial/Organizational Psychology](#) in the [Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences](#) at Prescott, said he was feeling mixed emotions.

"After the military, coming here, I felt so uneasy," he said, "but the school welcomed me and I'm just so excited to be here, finally walking across that stage."

Kathleen Jolivette — a former Army sergeant who is head of Boeing's military rotary aircraft division — told Prescott Campus graduates to "embrace the limitless possibilities that lie ahead."

In her keynote address, she reflected on her life's journey. It began on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota, where 60 percent of the population lives in poverty, she said, "education is not properly funded," and unemployment is around 80 percent.

"I tell you this because the path was not always clear, and I certainly didn't envision myself standing here today as the vice president and general manager of Boeing Vertical Lift," Jolivette said. "I had to take risks, be flexible, be resilient, and follow my passion."

Jolivette offered lessons from her career path, which included eight years in the Army, followed by a bachelor's degree in accounting.

During her 20-plus years at Boeing, where she began as an intern in 2002, Jolivette has taken on assignments across the company, including all core areas of the company's financial operations. Her leadership roles have included director of the United States Army Services for Boeing Global Services, director for V-22 Domestic Programs, Chief of staff for the Office of President and CEO, and director of investor relations for Boeing Defense, Space & Security.



In 2019, Jolivette was appointed vice president of Attack Helicopters and the senior site executive in Mesa, Arizona, where she was responsible for the Army's AH-64 Apache and AH-6 Little Bird helicopters. In 2022, she became vice president and general manager of the Boeing Vertical Lift division, where she oversees the AH-6 Little Bird, AH-64 Apache, H-47 Chinook, MH-139 Grey Wolf and V-22 Osprey aircraft platforms, as well as future vertical lift solutions. In addition to her accounting degree, she holds an MBA from Washington University in St. Louis.

She encouraged Embry-Riddle graduates to "stay curious, be resilient and flexible, just say yes," and to surround themselves with "people who inspire you, challenge you and support you."

"Explore new avenues, collaborate with others and allow your dreams to guide you," she said. "The possibilities are endless, and your potential is limitless."

The ceremony's featured student speaker was Chancellor's Award winner Jaqueline Peterson, who earned her bachelor's in [Aeronautics](#). Peterson played on the women's soccer team, served as an academic mentor in the [College of Aviation](#) and was a member of several campus organizations, including the Chi Alpha Christian Organization. Vice president of the Airline Pilots Association Aviation Collegiate Education Club (ALPA ACE), Peterson is the first member of her family to become a pilot.

"As you go forward into your careers, further studies, or whatever path you may take, remember the beautiful potential you carry," she told her fellow graduates. "Remember the beauty in working towards things greater than yourself, living with humility and being a light in every corner of the world you enter."