

Donor Profile

Winnipeg Airports Authority Queen Elizabeth II Scholarship

A special visit from our royal monarch in 2010 inspired a local corporation to fuel new ideas to support youth in our community.

On July 3, 2010, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness Prince Philip marked the first official passengers to the new terminal at the Winnipeg James Armstrong Richardson International Airport. During her visit, the Queen addressed the youth of tomorrow in a signed and sealed letter meant to be opened in 50 years. This thoughtful gesture on behalf of the Queen resonated with those in attendance.

President and CEO of Winnipeg Airports Authority (WAA) Barry Rempel said, "That sparked in us the idea of, 'What else can we be doing particularly for the youth in our community?'"

Since 2006, WAA has offered the Silverwing Youth Volunteer Program to local high school students. The program is an opportunity for students to gain knowledge of airport operations and the many different career paths intrinsic to the field. The volunteer program, paired with Her Majesty's vision, motivated WAA to launch a scholarship to help support students interested in a career in aviation.

"I see a bright future for aviation in our community and for this campus," said Rempel. "We want to encourage students, particularly those who already have an awareness of the airport, to consider pursuing careers in aviation."

After managing The Queen Elizabeth II Aviation Scholarship for a few years independently, WAA reached out to the St. James Scholarship Foundation to further establish the award. This partnership seemed like a natural fit as the airport is located in St. James-Assiniboia and frequently collaborates with the aviation program at Collège Sturgeon Heights Collegiate. Through a generous donation of \$10,000 to the foundation, the scholarship is now going to be offered in perpetuity for years to come to students graduating in St. James-Assiniboia School Division. The scholarship will be awarded in June of 2018 to an applicant who demonstrates a strong interest in pursuing a career in aviation.

"If we are going to keep growing the benefit of the airport and our community, we are going to need more and more people," explained Rempel. "Just the straight economic growth of our community requires more people get involved in aviation."

He explains how a common misperception in aviation is the idea that industry workers are primarily pilots. While pilots are essential, Rempel says they are currently hiring professionals in an array of fields to meet



the diverse needs of the industry, including planners, mechanics, engineers and financiers, to name a few. For the past 20 years, since the federal government transferred control of the airport to WAA, the corporation has created more than 500 jobs per year, totalling over 10,000 jobs.

"It's a significant engine of our economy," said Rempel. "Many people don't know that Winnipeg led the country last year in domestic aviation growth."

With 4.3 million passengers in 2017, the airport is consistently looking for new opportunities to expand and offer more services to the local community. While this can mean providing more non-stop flights or more options for destinations, it can also translate into large-scale innovations for our province. For example, a series of discussions between Standard Aero, WAA, General Electric and WestJet led to the development of a jet engine testing facility in the middle of Winnipeg's airfield in 2011. This facility, which is where the 787 received its certification, enables large engines to be fixed closer to home in Canada compared to in the southern U.S. The facility has since been expanded twice to accommodate the growing demand.

"We just want students in aviation not overlook the potential within the industry," said Rempel.

For WAA, this scholarship aligns with the corporation's strategic mandate to be responsible members of the community and supports their desire to be advocates for the future of aviation. Rempel says what excites him the most are the stories that will follow the recipients of this scholarship and being able to watch the successes they experience throughout their careers.

Written by Information Officer, Jen Cameron