

## **MR. JAMES A. SAMUEL, JR.**

Mr. James A. Samuel, Jr. is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Raven Flight Foundation, a nonprofit Missouri corporation. He is also a federal Senior Executive officer in the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, U.S. Department of Defense. Mr. Samuel's career in the Department of Defense has provided a depth and breadth of knowledge and experience that has well-prepared him to found and lead the Raven Flight Foundation.

He began his military and flight experience with his appointment to the United States Air Force Academy. As a cadet at the Air Force Academy, Mr. Samuel excelled in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), as well as aviation education and training. He was the Distinguished Graduate of his introductory navigation course at the Academy: Aviation 110. Here, he was introduced to the fundamentals of navigating a military jet aircraft in various airspace structures, through advanced flight simulator training. He also began flying glider aircraft in the Academy's "Soar for All" program, soloing a Schweizer 2-33 Sailplane after only 10 instructional flights. This is when and where aviation permanently entered his blood! He went on to compete and be selected for the duty of Cadet Instructor Pilot, and he spent the next three years at the Academy as a glider instructor pilot, teaching his fellow cadets how to fly sailplanes such as the Schweizer 2-33 and 1-26 aircraft, as well as the Schleicher ASK-21 high-performance sailplane. In this capacity, he also excelled, being named Top Cadet Instructor Pilot in the Spring of his junior year and attaining his first Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) pilot rating: Commercial Pilot, Glider Aircraft.

Graduating from the Air Force Academy in 1994 with a Bachelor's Degree in General Engineering and being commissioned as a Second Lieutenant, Mr. Samuel entered the U.S. Air Force as a Telecommunications Engineer. During his first two Air Force assignments as an engineer, Mr. Samuel earned a Master's Degree and his FAA Private Pilot's License in his spare time. Afterward, Mr. Samuel transitioned to the Missouri Air National Guard and went to military pilot training: Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training. There, he learned to fly jet aircraft in all-weather, day/night and supersonic flight conditions, alongside German, Italian, Spanish, Turkish, Dutch and other allied pilots. Once again, Mr. Samuel excelled at flying, being named the Distinguished Graduate and Top Gun of his Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals (IFF) class at Shepherd Air Force Base. He completed his military flight training, also earning his FAA Commercial/Multi-Engine & Instrument ratings, and he returned to St. Louis to fly the F-15C Eagle with the Missouri Air National Guard, as a Combat Mission Ready fighter pilot.

Mr. Samuel separated from military service in 2003 and entered federal civil service as an Aeronautical Analyst in a predecessor agency to the current-day National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA). During his nine years with NGA, Mr. Samuel excelled in various, increasingly demanding assignments, including two six-month deployments to Kabul Afghanistan and Djibouti, Africa, respectively. His dedicated work ethic, leadership ability and continual pursuit of excellence propelled him into the senior executive leadership ranks in 2012, as a Defense Intelligence Senior Level officer, where he continues to lead and serve.

Mr. Samuel founded the Raven Flight Foundation in August 2013 to train, educate and expose the next generation of pilots, focusing on those from historically-disadvantaged backgrounds. He is happily married to Dr. Evelyn T. Samuel, and they reside in St. Louis, Missouri.