



**For more information contact:**  
John Niehaus  
Director of Program Development  
National Association of Flight Instructors  
(269) 355-6500  
[jniehaus@nafinet.org](mailto:jniehaus@nafinet.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **CARLOS RIVERA EARNS NAFI MASTER FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR ACCREDITATION**

**KALAMAZOO, MI — 5/7/2024** The National Association of Flight Instructors is proud to announce that NAFI member Carlos Rivera has earned accreditation as a NAFI Master Flight Instructor.

Growing up in Brooklyn, New York, Rivera's dream of flying began at the age of five. When he wrote an essay in the 6th grade claiming he'd be a military instructor pilot, most of his classmates laughed at him. Rivera took first flight in a Cessna 172 at age 15 flying to the Poconos in Pennsylvania. He began flight lessons at age 19, riding his bike 10 miles to Flanders Valley Airport in New Jersey. He soloed in a Cessna 150 at age 20 on an amazing July afternoon.



Rivera joined the United States Army at age 21 as a helicopter crew chief and eventually became an Aeroscout Observer and entered U.S. Army flight school at age 28. He graduated as a Distinguished Honor Graduate and realized his dream of 21 years by becoming a military helicopter instructor pilot at 28 years old.

After an incredible career flying as a news helicopter pilot in New York City, covering events from September 11 to the miracle on the Hudson, Rivera earned two Emmy awards. After 10 years of intense flying, he became an EMS helicopter pilot in southwest Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee for 11 years.

Rivera met a retired designated pilot examiner who mentored and encouraged him to earn his civilian CFI helicopter, airplane instrument, commercial, and airplane CFI at age 57. Rivera earned his CFII and IGI at age 59, and CFI-NVG, ME, MEI at age 60. He became a tailwheel instructor at age 61. Rivera is now working on his ATP-ME and AGI.

Rivera currently has 13 students in all phases of flight from private pilot through CFI. In 42 years, he has accumulated 2,000 hours of flight instruction and more than 15,000 total hours. He gives back as an EAA Young Eagles pilot and FAASTeam Representative. He is affiliated with the AOPA Airport Support Network, American Bonanza Society, and is a member of Vertical Aviation International.

*The **NAFI Master Flight Instructor Accreditation** is earned by aviation educators based upon a system of advanced professional standards and peer review. The accreditation identifies and publicly recognizes those teachers of flight who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to excellence, professional growth, and service to the aviation community. The NAFI Master Instructor accreditation is for two years and may be used to renew an FAA flight instructor certificate. Applicants must have been a CFI for two years and have given 1,000 hours of flight instruction. In addition, candidates must meet and document activity in four NAFI Master Instructor categories (Instructor, Educator, Service to the Aviation Community, and Professional Activity).*

*Members of the **National Association of Flight Instructors** work as independent instructors, at flight schools, universities, FBOs, corporate flight departments and in the military. Since 1967, NAFI and its members, who teach in thirty countries, are dedicated to increasing and maintaining the professionalism of flight instruction. NAFI members influence active pilots daily: students working to become pilots, current pilots training to advance their skills with new ratings or certificates and pilots who seek to improve their skills with recurrent training. NAFI also serves as an advocate with industry and government as a voice for flight instruction. NAFI helps shape the current and future direction of flight training. For more information about NAFI or the NAFI Master Instructor program call **866-806-6156** or visit [www.NAFINet.org](http://www.NAFINet.org).*