

University of Florida Association of Military Alumni Press Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

University of Florida Association of Military Alumni to Honor William Emerson with Inaugural Alumni Hall of Fame Award

Gainesville, Fla. (Oct. 27, 2025) – William “Bill” Emerson will be inducted into the University of Florida Association of Military Alumni Hall of Fame Nov. 21 in recognition of his distinguished military service and significant contributions to the University of Florida, UFAMA officials announced today.

Emerson, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II and graduated from the University of Florida in 1946, will be the inaugural recipient of the UFAMA Hall of Fame award, which was formally established this year.

“We are truly honored to recognize Bill Emerson for his incredible accomplishments,” said Curt Ebitz, UFAMA president. “Not only for his distinguished service to our nation in uniform, but also for his lasting and impactful support to the University of Florida.”

“As a retired Marine and former Marine Corps combat pilot myself, it’s a special privilege to share that bond of service with Mr. Emerson,” said Ebitz. “The University of Florida Association of Military Alumni is proud to honor his legacy by announcing his selection as our inaugural recipient of our prestigious Alumni Hall of Fame award.”

The award will be presented during an awards ceremony and hall of fame banquet Nov. 21 in Gainesville, Fla., at the University of Florida’s Emerson Alumni Hall. The event will also honor the top military-affiliated alumni for 2025, including veterans, service members, family members, and Department of War civilians.

Immediately following the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, Emerson enlisted in the U.S. military and saw duty in the Pacific theater of operations as a U.S. Marine Corps combat pilot. Following the war, he enrolled at the University of Florida, graduating in 1946 with a degree in business administration. He went on to a successful decades-long career in the financial services industry, afterwards retiring in his hometown of St. Petersburg, Fla. During their lifetimes, Emerson and his wife, Jane, became major benefactors of the University of Florida, to include gifting the Emerson Courtyard to the university’s business school. Their contributions to the university ultimately resulted in the construction of Emerson Alumni Hall. Emerson, who also served from 1990-1992 as the President of the University of Florida Foundation, passed away in 2017 at the age of ninety-five.

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