

The Speakman Brothers

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ASBURY UNIVERSITY

Major Ric Speakman '01

B.S. Biochemistry
Air Force flight surgeon

Sky Speakman '03

B.S. Applied Math
Research scientist

Luke Speakman '06

B.S. Chemistry, B.S. Computational Science
Software engineer

Mark Speakman '06

B.S. Financial Mathematics
Production engineer



“Asbury turns out strong, competitive professionals in the science, math and medical fields—my brothers and I are a testament to that. The faculty are subject matter experts in their fields and the small class sizes are conducive to an engaged, focused and personalized learning experience...Excellence goes a very long way, but excellence without relationships that demonstrate a central core belief is hollow... It is when professional relationships match professional work where Christ is exemplified.”

-Ric Speakman

For more about the Speakmans' story go to: asbury.edu/speakmans

Asbury University
Wilmore, KY



inspiring

THE Guide interview with Dr. Richard “Ric” Speakman of Dayton, OH, aerospace medicine physician and flight surgeon appears below.

Employer: United States Air Force

University(s) attended: Asbury University, University of Kentucky, Wright State University

Year graduated and degree earned: Asbury '01, BA in Biochemistry; UK '06, MD, WSU '16, Masters of Public Health (MPH)

Major: Biochemistry and minor in history (AU), Endorsement in Emergency Preparedness (WSU)

What stood out most to you when you selected Asbury University for your education?

That is a multifaceted answer. AU was where my parents and many of my extended family members went to school, so there was a family connection. What I remember considering most was AU's tumbling team. I had a decent amount of experience with tumbling and partner stunting, and the tumbling team helped seal the deal.

Are you currently working on any research? What previous research projects have you participated in?

I worked for a couple of years in a cardiovascular physiology. We looked at the nervous system's ability to regulate different aspects of cardiovascular health, heart rate and blood pressure for example.

I most recently finished looking at differences between the USAF components in terms of aircraft mortality rates, considering on- and off-duty flying.

In your opinion, what are the benefits of a Christian education?

The Christian liberal arts education must focus on worldview. The filters through which we see life are a reflection of what we believe and communicate to others. Theology, ethics, biology, music/art appreciation, and communication courses all can be presented differently based on assumptions of the professor and in-classroom discussion. Understanding the bias, being able to see it all around and acknowledging it is a huge benefit to Christian education.

The most important **formation of the worldview** occurs outside of the classroom—friends and relationships will either solidify what the course work suggested or provide alternatives. Peer relationships are much more formative than the classroom.

You mentioned worldview as an important benefit of Christian education. How was your worldview impacted during your time at Asbury?

I grew up in a Christian home and our family was very involved in church. At Asbury I started seeing different worldviews both as sub cultures within the Christian worldview, such as what Methodists, Calvinists, reformist believe. In the dorms we would sit and talk about these things and flush them out. I was exposed to many worldviews within Christianity that allowed my worldview to **develop and become robust**. We learned about different world religions and how they approach problems in the world through courses in philosophy and ethics.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

I never get bored. My day-to-day tasks are very diverse. I don't perform surgery in flight like the job title says, but I do practice medicine in flight. There is something very fun about aviation. I have flown over 420 hours on various aircrafts.

What does a typical day look like for a flight surgeon?

There is a no typical day. Lately I've been focused full time on my masters in public health. However, when I am focused on my role as a flight surgeon I analyze data to determine the number of people on base who are medically ready to be deployable and communicate this information. We ensure immunizations and annual physicals are up to date. I also see Air Force patients on base, similar to a primary care or family practice clinic.

How do you incorporate your faith in your work? How are you making an impact for Christ on the job?

This is really the crux of the Christian life—how and when is your personal faith lived out. In view of the Christian worldview education, it is not that Christians should retreat from secular worldviews, but actually **excel in your workplace**. Excellence goes a very long way, but excellence without relationships that demonstrate a central core belief is hollow. It is when professional relationships match professional work where Christ is exemplified. I don't pray with all of my patients, but I have seen the physician-patient relationship grow with prayer in the exam room. I have also seen patients dismiss the offer.

What has been your most rewarding professional experience?

It is always rewarding when someone says, “Thank you for saving my life.” On one occasion, it wasn't a patient but a coworker. She approached me out of trust and wanted some advice on her unplanned pregnancy. Later watching the precious little toddler and her mom was worth more than a thank-you note.

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