



# NATIONAL SPACE TROPHY PRESENTER



NASA photo

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*Dr. Christopher  
C. Kraft at 2005  
RNASA banquet*

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A member of the RNASA Board of Advisors and former winner of the National Space Trophy (1999), Dr. Christopher Kraft, Jr., is pleased to present this year's trophy to Gene Kranz, whom he called "a natural flight director."

Born in Phoebus, Virginia in 1924, Kraft graduated from Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 1944, and joined the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, NASA's predecessor, at Langley Field in Virginia the next year. He spent fourteen years testing military aircraft and earned a reputation for solving conflicts among the various contractors and military agencies. After Sputnik in 1958, Kraft became one of the original members of the Space Task Group developing Project Mercury. He created the engineering and operations organization that developed and implemented standards for space flight operational control. He oversaw the design, development and implementation of the Mission Control Center in Houston.

The first Flight Director of the space program, Kraft led the development of flight mission rules and operations procedures that were major elements in ensuring the safety of human spaceflight. After serving as Flight Director for Mercury and the first seven flights of Gemini, he was Director of Flight Operations through Apollo 12. As director of Flight Operations, Kraft assumed the responsibility for defining the trajectory requirements and programming of the ground and onboard systems for complex maneuvers in space. He also directed the development of an advanced hardware-software system to provide comprehensive high-fidelity simulations of

space missions, including contingency operations. He remained director of Flight Operations through the second landing on the Moon. Kraft became Deputy Director of the Manned Spacecraft (now Johnson Space) Center in 1969. He rose to Director two years later and played a vital role in the success of the final Apollo missions and in the flight tests of the Space Shuttle.

Kraft remained director of Johnson Space Center until his retirement in 1982. Since his retirement, Kraft has been an aerospace consultant and served on the Board of Directors of a number of Houston companies. He is a member of the National Academy of Engineering, a corresponding member of the International Academy of Astronautics of the Internal Astronautical Federation, an honorary member of the Aerospace Medical Association, and a fellow in the American Astronautical Society. His bestselling book, *FLIGHT: My Life In Mission Control*, was published in 2001. He has received many honors and awards, including Honorary Doctorates from three universities and the National Order of the Legion of Honor of France. NASA awards include three Distinguished Service Medals and a special award in 1982, the distinguished service medal of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics. The RNASA Foundation especially appreciates his service as an expert evaluator of the Stellar Award nominees.

Kraft lives in the Clear Lake area with his wife, the former Elizabeth Anne Turnbull. They have two grown children; son Gordon of San Francisco, California; and daughter Kristi-Anne of Lake Jackson, Texas, and five grandchildren.