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**Dr. John Grunsfeld, Associate Administrator of the Science Mission Directorate, NASA Headquarters, to receive the 2017 National Space Trophy**

**Bay Area, Houston, Texas** (January 23, 2017). The Rotary National Award for Space Achievement (RNASA) Foundation has selected Dr. John M. Grunsfeld, NASA astronaut on STS-67, STS-81, STS-103, STS-109, and STS-125, and former Associate Administrator of the Science Mission Directorate at NASA Headquarters in Washington D.C., to receive the 2017 National Space Trophy. The banquet honoring Dr. Grunsfeld will be held on April 28, 2017, at the Houston Hyatt Regency in Houston, Texas.

Rodolfo Gonzalez, President of the RNASA Foundation said, "The RNASA Board of Advisors made an excellent pick for the 2017 National Space Trophy and the RNASA Foundation looks forward to recognizing Dr. Grunsfeld as the guest of honor at the RNASA Space Award Gala.”

Dr. Grunsfeld was nominated for the award by Dr. Matt Mountain, President of the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy. Dr. Mountain remarked, “One of Grunsfeld’s unique strengths is his ability to demonstrate the relevance and excitement of spaceflight by bringing together the scientific community, NASA’s international partners, Congress, the Administration, with NASA’s Science, Human Spaceflight, Technology and Aeronautics programs. His unique experience as an astronaut, a teacher, scientist, and senior leader at NASA has enabled him to make unique contributions to all of NASA’s activities.”

Grunsfeld said, “I am honored and humbled to be awarded this distinguished recognition for my contributions to science and space exploration. The quest to unravel the mysteries of the Universe and to extend human presence beyond planet Earth has propelled me for most of my life, in part inspired by previous trophy winners. I have been successful only as a member of the extraordinary teams with whom I’ve shared this journey of discovery, and I regard this honor as a team award.”

Dr. Grunsfeld earned his bachelor of science degree in physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1980. He went on to earn a master of science degree in 1984 and a doctor of philosophy degree in physics in 1988 from the University of Chicago. After serving as a Senior Research Fellow at the California Institute of Technology from 1989-1992, he was selected by NASA to join the astronaut training program in March of 1992.

Dr. Grunsfeld’s first flight was aboard STS-67 in March 1995. He and the crew were tasked with conducting round-the-clock observations of the ultraviolet universe using three telescopes in the payload bay.

Grunsfeld served as flight engineer during his second flight on STS-81 which docked with Russia’s space station Mir and exchanged U.S. astronauts living aboard the International Space Station. It was during this mission that John had a little fun with Tom and Ray Magliozzi, hosts of Car Talk, NPR’s call in radio show. During his flight home aboard the Space Shuttle Atlantis, John called in and described some trouble he was experiencing with his “government vehicle” explaining that it had excellent acceleration but runs extremely rough for 2 minutes, quieter for six and a half, at which point the engine stalls. The hosts didn’t take long to figure out that the caller was John Grunsfeld.

Grunsfeld flew on three more shuttle missions to service the Hubble Space Telescope. The first was on STS-103 in December 1999 in which he performed two space walks. Upon his return home from this successful mission, John was asked to lead the Extravehicular Activity (EVA) Branch and led the development spacewalk training courses for astronauts that are still used today.

STS-109 came next in March 2002 where John served as Payload Commander. It was after this mission that he spent time serving as NASA’s chief scientist in Washington D.C. helping develop President Bush’s Vision for Space Exploration following the tragic loss of Space Shuttle Columbia in 2003. His final mission was aboard STS-125 in May of 2009. This time, he served as the lead spacewalker on a mission to perform a major renovation on Hubble which had been in orbit for 19 years. All told, Grunsfeld has logged five missions, eight space walks, and 58 days in space. He was inducted into the Astronaut Hall of Fame in 2015.

Affectionately known as the “Hubble Repairman”, John’s contributions have extended well beyond his missions to space. In 2010, John left NASA to take on a role as Deputy Director of the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore. It was here that Dr. Grunsfeld helped prepare the institute for their joint efforts with NASA to develop the James Webb Telescope which will be launched in 2018.

After returning to NASA in 2012 as Associate Administrator for Science, Grunsfeld managed more than 100 missions including the Curiosity Mars rover landing, the new Horizons Pluto flyby and the Deep Space Climate Observatory. These and dozens of other projects have laid the foundation to understand how our own planet is changing while inspiring a whole new generation of explorers.

Beyond space, Dr. Grunsfeld enjoys mountaineering. In 2000 he appeared on the PBS NOVA show “Deadly Ascent” when he climbed Denali, the highest peak in North America. He and companion, Dr. Howard Donner were researching the effects of body temperature at high altitudes. He was forced to turn back at 17,200 feet but later led a NASA team to the top of Denali in 2004. John also enjoys flying, sailing, bicycling, and music. He is married and has two children.

The RNASA Foundation invites members of the public and the aerospace community to attend the black-tie event on April 28, 2017, at the Houston Hyatt Regency, where Dr. John Grunsfeld will be recognized with the National Space Trophy. This year will be RNASA’s 31st annual National Space Trophy Banquet. Please visit <http://www.rnasa.org/tables.html>to reserve your table for the RNASA Banquet and find information about sponsorships and tickets. To reserve a room at the Houston Hyatt Regency, please visit <http://www.rnasa.org/houston.html>or call 713-654-1234 and request the RNASA group rate.

*About RNASA: The Rotary National Award for Space Achievement (RNASA) Foundation was founded by the Space Center Rotary Club of Houston, Texas, in 1985 to organize and coordinate an annual event to recognize outstanding achievements in space and create greater public awareness of the benefits of space exploration. The nonprofit Foundation presents the National Space Trophy and Stellar Awards each year. The RNASA website is* [*http://www.rnasa.org/*](http://www.rnasa.org/)*.*