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**RNASA Foundation Honors Dr. John Grunsfeld**

**HOUSTON, Texas (May 1, 2017**). The Rotary National Award for Space Achievement (RNASA)Foundation presented the 2017 National Space Trophy (NST) to **Dr. John Grunsfeld**, former NASA Associate Administrator of the Science Mission Directorate, at the RNASA 31st annual Gala on **April 28, 2017** at the Houston Hyatt Regency.

**RNASA Foundation Chairman Rodolfo González** welcomed the guests to RNASA's 31st annual gala, saying that **“**RNASA’s mission is to encourage, recognize, honor and celebrate U.S. space achievements from across the entire country and across all sectors.”

The **Clear Brook High School** **JROTC Color Guard** presented the colors, followed by members of the **High School for the Performing and Visual Arts Girl Chorus**, who sang the National Anthem, and **Reverend Madella Williams**, Senior Pastor of Taylor Lake Christian Church, gave the invocation.

The RNASA program kicked off with a year-in-review film by **Space City Films**. **Miles O’Brien**, former CNN correspondent and current science correspondent for PBSNewsHour served as the emcee. Miles said, “John is a national treasure, who helped make this country great, long before that was a campign slogan, and we thank him for that, and I’m proud that I’ve got to know him along the way.”

**Jeff Carr**, Griffin Communications Group President, presented the 2017 Space Communicator Award to **Rob Navias**, Johnson Space Center Public Affairs Office Mission Commentator, saying that Navias’ “…gift for sharing the human space flight experience are absolutely second to none. His impact on public awareness and understanding of human space flight are immeasurable.” In his acceptance remarks, Navias said, “Incredibly, my career has spanned the highest of human triumph, and the depths of human failure, the cheers and the tears of human endeavor. It is called the sublime symmetry of history. But whether triumph or tragedy, it all came down to communicating the news. Relaying the information to the media and to the public in very clear, unambiguous words.”

Stellar Awards were presented to 25 individuals and 7 teams. The Stellar Award winners were announced by NASA Astronaut **Kjell Lindren,** and NASA Astronaut **Kate Rubins,** who then presented them with engraved marble trophies donated by **Orbital ATK**. The Stellar Awards were presented in Early Career, Mid-Career, Late Career, and Team categories.

Astronaut **Peggy Whitson**, from ISS Expedition 51, who spoke from onboard International Space Station, sent a congratulatory message to Grunsfeld, telling him “as an astrophysicist, an astronaut, and a senior leader, you helped unlock the mysteries of space and champion the best that science and engineering, working together, can achieve.”

**Michael Griffin**, former NASA Administrator and recipient of the 2009 National Space Trophy, presented the prestigious 2017 Rotary National Award for Space Achievement NST Award to **Dr. John Grunsfeld**. In his introductory comments, Griffin said “…if in John’s career he had done nothing but succored the Hubble Space Telescope in its many hours of need, he would still be worthy of tonight’s recognition, but he has done so much more. I think it is safe to say we would not have a future Mars program today without John’s efforts as head of the Science Mission Directorate.” Accepting the NST, Grunsfeld said, “I’m optimistic and excited about our future in space and on Earth. Thank you for your attention, thank you for awarding me the Rotary National Award for Space Achievement. I’m truly honored and humbled.”

Lt. Gen **Thomas P. Stafford,** USAF (Ret.), Gemini and Apollo astronaut, and the 1993 National Space Trophy winner, presented an **OMEGA** speedmaster watch to Grunsfeld, saying “congratulations on the National Space Award John. Outstanding career as an astronaut, then later on associate administrator of NASA, you’ve done so much.”

**TASC** donated the portrait of Grunsfeld by **Pat Rawlings,** which was on display at the gala and used as the cover of the souvenir program. The portrait will become part of the National Space Trophy display at Space Center Houston for one year.

RNASA Chairman Rodolfo González concluded the evening by thanking the Foundation’s corporate sponsors whose support and achievements made the event possible: a.i. solutions, Inc.,

Aerojet Rocketdyne, The Aerospace Corp, ARES Corporation, Barrios Technology, Bastion Technologies, Inc., Blue Origin, The Boeing Company, Booz Allen Hamilton, CACI International, Caltech/JPL, Fisher Space Pen, Jacobs, KBRwyle, Leidos, Lockheed Martin, MEI Technologies, Inc., Millennium Engineering & Integration Company, MORI Associates, Inc., MRI Technologies , Oceaneering International, Inc., OMEGA, Orbital ATK, SAIC, SGT, Inc., SpaceX, Systems Planning and Analysis, Inc., TASC, University of Houston-Clear Lake, UTC Aerospace Systems, Vericon Technical Services.

Visit <http://www.rnasa.org/photos.html> for images from the event. Individual photos of each nominee and winner are available upon request.

The Rotary National Award for Space Achievement (RNASA) Foundation’s black tie Gala on April 28, 2017, was recorded live, in its entirety, by Space City Films and will air on NASA TV on Tuesday May 2, at 3 pm and 7 pm CDT. NASA TV is carried by DirecTV, Dish Network, TVRO, several cable providers, and <http://www.ustream.tv/nasahdtv>.

*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.* *See*[*http://www.rnasa.org*](http://www.rnasa.org) *for more information*