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**Rotary Space Awards Gala Honors Heroes of the Space Program**

**HOUSTON, Texas (March 30, 2017).** The Rotary National Award for Space Achievement (**RNASA**) Foundation will recognize people in the space industry at their annual space awards gala on Friday, April 28, 2017, at the Houston Hyatt Regency.

The RNASA Foundation was formed by the Space Center Rotary Club in 1985, to publicly recognize the heroes of America’s space program. This year, the RNASAFoundation will present the 2017 National Space Trophy, to **Dr. John Grunsfeld**, NASA Associate Administrator of the Science Mission Directorate.

Former NASA Administrator, **Dr. Michael Griffin**, will present the prestigious award to Dr. Grunsfeld, who was nominated by **Dr. Matt Mountain**, President of the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy. The National Space Trophy honoree is selected each year by the RNASA Foundation's Board of Advisors. This board represents a Who's Who of government and corporate aerospace leaders, including former Trophy and Space Communicator Award recipients.

The 2017 Space Communicator Award will be presented to Johnson Space Center Public Affairs Office (PAO) Mission Commentator, **Rob Navias.** RNASA Advisor and Griffin Communications Group President **Jeffrey Carr** will present the award to Navias.

**Miles O’Brien** will serve as Emcee and Gemini/Apollo Astronaut **Lt. Gen.** **Thomas Stafford**, USAF (Ret.), will present an **OMEGA** watch to Grunsfeld at the closing of the program.

In addition to the National Space Trophy, and Space Communicator Award, stellar awards will be presented to people in early career, mid career, late career, and team categories. RNASA Chairman Rodolfo González said, “We received an impressive 149 stellar nominations this year, 38 government and 111 corporate.” The nominations came from a.i. solutions, Inc., Aerojet Rocketdyne, Blue Origin, The Boeing Company, CACI, Jacobs, Leidos, Lockheed Martin, NASA Glenn Research Center, NASA Headquarters, NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, NASA Johnson Space Center, NASA Kennedy Space Center, NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, Oceaneering Space Systems, Orbital ATK, SAIC, Schafer Corporation, SpaceX, Stinger Ghaffarian Technologies, Inc., United States Air Force, USAF Air Force Research Laboratory, and UTC Aerospace Systems.

Of all the nominations, only a few Stellar awards are given, and are announced the evening of the banquet. The winners will receive engraved marble trophies generously sponsored by Orbital ATK. The trophies will be presented by NASA Astronauts **Dr. Kjell Lindgren** and **Dr. Kathleen Rubins**.

The RNASA Stellar Awards Evaluation Panel ranks the nominations received from industry and government in all categories, based on whose accomplishments hold the greatest promise for furthering activities in space and the extent to which the nominee meets the goal of recognizing "unsung heroes”. The 2017 Stellar judges are **Dr. Glynn S. Lunney**, **Arnold D. Aldrich**, **Colonel Eileen Collins**,USAF (Ret.), and **Michael L. Coats**.

The Stellar Award nominees and team representatives will enjoy a behind-the-scenes tour of the Johnson Space Center and a luncheon where all are recognized with framed certificates and a **Fisher Space Pen** donated by the company. The **Fisher Space Pen** was originally carried by the astronauts of the Apollo moon missions and is still used on manned space flights to this day. They are precision assembled, hand tested, and guaranteed to perform underwater, at any angle including upside down, in extreme temperatures, and of course in zero gravity. The keynote speaker at the luncheon will be **Colonel Jeffrey Williams**.

The Stellar Awards Committee Chairman **Jennifer Devolites**, RNASA Foundation Chairman Rodolfo González, RNASA Committee member **Duane Ross**, and Space Center Rotary Club President **Darryl Smith** will also address the nominees at the Stellar Awards luncheon.

The reception begins at 6 p.m., and the program starts at 7 p.m with a welcome by RNASA Chairman **Rodolfo Gonzalez.** Following will be a presentation of the colors by **Clear Brook High School Army JROTC**, accompanied with the national anthem sung by

Members of the **High School for the Performing and Visual Arts Girls Chorus**. **Rev. Madella Williams**, Senior Pastor, Taylor Lake Christian Church, will do the invocation. After dinner, the awards ceremony will kick off with a multimedia show summarizing the year's space events produced by **Space City Films**.

The RNASA Foundation invites members of the public and the aerospace community to attend the black-tie event. Individual tickets are $300, and corporate tables range from $2,000 to $5,000. Please use <http://www.rnasa.org/tables.html> to reserve your table for the RNASA Banquet, and for information about sponsorships and tickets. To reserve a hotel room, please use <http://www.rnasa.org/houston.html> at the Houston Hyatt Regency.

*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.*