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**RNASA’s 2017 Stellar Awards Winners Announced**

**HOUSTON, Texas** **(May 1, 2017**). The Rotary National Award for Space Achievement (**RNASA**) Foundation honored the dedication of the space workers at their annual awards banquet on Friday, April 28, 2017, by presenting the Rotary National Award for Space Achievement (RNASA) Stellar Awards.

Every year, the aerospace community anxiously awaits the announcement of the Rotary National Award for Space Achievement (RNASA) Stellar Award winners.

The 2017 Stellar Awards Evaluation Panel, **Dr. Glynn Lunney**, **Arnold Aldrich**, **Colonel Eileen Collins**, **and Michael Coats** selected the winners based on which accomplishments hold the greatest promise for furthering future activities in space and how well they meet the goal of recognizing heroes of the space program.

Out of 149 nominations received, the panel selected 25 individuals and 7 teams for recognition.

Prior to the evening's festivities, all nominees were treated to a behind-the-scenes tour of the Johnson Space Center and a luncheon at the Lakewood Yacht Club in Seabrook. Stellar Awards Committee Chair **Jennifer Devolites** welcomed the nominees and then said, "You are here because you are excellent.” She asked the nominees to consider using their excellence to provide leadership to others, take on mentoring, and to also take risks and get outside of their comfort zones with regard to what they already do well.

**Colonel Jeffrey Williams** was the featured speaker at the Stellar Awards Luncheon. His spaceflight experience includes four missions. His first flight was aboard Atlantis on STS-101 in 2000 where he served as the flight engineer and lead spacewalker. Williams would serve as Flight Engineer on three more missions including Expeditions 13 (March 2006), 21/22 (September 2009) and 47/48 (March 2016) all of which launched aboard the Russian Soyuz from Kazakhstan. During his 534 days in space, Williams conducted five spacewalks and contributed to hundreds of experiments in biology, biotechnology, physical science and Earth science.

Each nominee received a **Fisher Space Pen** donated by the company as well as a copy of the book “Hidden Figures” by Margot Lee Shetterly. 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.

All the Stellar nominees had their photo taken as they received a special commemorative certificate with a United States flag that was flown in space.

The Stellar Award winners were announced at the RNASA evening gala on April 28, 2017 by Astronaut **Dr. Kjell Lindgren** andAstronaut **Dr. Kate Rubins** who presented them with engraved marble trophies donated by Orbital ATK. The winners in each of the four categories, Early Career, Mid Career, Late Career and Team are:

2017 Stellar Award Winners in the Early Career Category

**Chelsea Shepherd of SGT** – Outstanding dedication, leadership, and support to assembly and maintenance operations for the ISS.

**Joey Edgar of Oceaneering Space Systems** – Outstanding technical knowledge, unwavering attention to detail and exemplary work ethic in contributing to the development of extravehicular activity spaceflight hardware.

**Russell Vela of U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory** – Exceptional technical expertise in solving significant radar engineering challenges to support space vehicle design and major ground based radio telescope upgrades.

**Peter Masi of Jacobs –** Exceptional contributions whichenable our continuous presence in low earth orbit aboardthe ISS and are shaping our capability to extend human explorationto Mars and beyond.

**Sarah L. Wallace of NASA Johnson Space Center** – championing of a game-changing biomolecule sequencer that was successfully demonstrated as a scientific tool on the ISS.

**Christopher Eby of SpaceX** – Outstanding technical contributions and leadership overseeing the Commercial Crew space suit qualification milestone.

**Jason Shapiro of Aerojet Rocketdyne** – Outstanding leadership in testing of large rockets from the Antares AJ-26 to the Orion jettison motor.

2017 Stellar Award Winners in the Mid-Career Category

**Kenneth J. Anderle of Jacobs** – Exemplary service to JSC and the James Webb Space Telescope in promoting the advancement of space exploration.

**Richard R. Beckman of the United States Air Force** – Exceptional program management and technical and programmatic problem solving leading to numerous successful classified military operations and GPS capabilities for a billion users worldwide.

**Kenneth Utley of The Boeing Company** – Sustained superior performance in electrical wiring design and wiring installation for human spaceflight applications.

**Jeffrey C. Bemis of Orbital ATK** – Outstanding leadership of the Orion Launch Abort Attitude Control Motor in reconstituting the team and guiding it though a successful critical design review.

**Robert A. Mase of NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory** – Outstanding management of exceptionally successful projects exploring the solar system.

**Carolyn Overmyer of Lockheed Martin** – Technical excellence in managing the design and development of the Orion service module.

**Charles V. Seal III of Aerojet Rocketdyne** – Invaluable contributions towards the 100% mission success of the Delta IV vehicle and RS-68 rocket engine through leadership, mentorship, technical excellence, and innovation.

**Ronald K. Baccus of NASA Johnson Space Center** – Outstanding leadership of the Orion heatshield block bond verification effort.

**Gary Lai of Blue Origin** – Outstanding leadership of the New Shepard technical team, which performed five launches and landings of the same booster in one year.

2017 Stellar Award Winners in the Late Career Category

**Mark Ferguson of Orbital ATK** – Exceptional technical and program management of the pressurized cargo module of Cygnus.

**Kenneth O. Todd of NASA Johnson Space Center** – Exceptional accomplishments in expertly and successfully leading day-to-day ISS operations.

**John B. Vollmer of The Boeing Company** – Outstanding dedication and leadership on ISS, supporting NASA’s mission to explore space and expand scientific research.

**Jeffrey R. Davis of NASA Johnson Space Center** – Exceptional career innovations and collaborative leadership as Director of NASA’s Human Health & Performance Directorate, greatly impacting agency strategic goals.

**Michael A. Melgares of Jacobs** – Exceptional technical and team leadership during an accomplished career from Apollo to Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle Orion.

**Dale Cloud of UTC Aerospace Systems** – Exceptional technical skill and leadership in engineering for the development of systems and components for both human and unmanned space.

**Kamal S. Ghaffarian of Stinger Ghaffarian Technologies, Inc.** – Visionary serial entrepreneur dedicated to creating companies that operate with the highest level of integrity, promote employee well-being, and deliver the best technical solutions to their customers.

**Marc D. Rayman of NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory** – Extraordinary and uniquely creative work to explore the solar system and open the frontiers of space to even more ambitious missions to follow.

**Scott R. McIntyre of The Boeing Company** – Exceptional leadership, sustained excellent performance, and dedication to the advancement of human spaceflight programs.

2017 Stellar Award Winners in the Team Category

**New Shepard Team of Blue Origin** – Outstanding accomplishment in performing the first landing of a vertical-launch rocket in history, and then four subsequent launches and landings in 2016. Accepting for the team was Steve Hobart.

**Dawn Flight Team of NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory** – Outstanding achievement exploring some of the last uncharted worlds in the inner solar system in a unique mission that reveals new insights about the dawn of the solar system. Accepting for the team was Marc Rayman.

**Falcon 9 Team of SpaceX** – Exceptional history of innovative and high quality spacecraft and launch vehicle designs for NASA, industry, and other government organizations. Accepting for the team was Jon Edwards.

**Extra Vehicular Activity (EVA) 35 Recovery Team of UTC Aerospace Systems** – Outstanding rapid performance torecover EVA capability on ISS after the US EVA 35 water inhelmet incident. Accepting for the team was Robert Rossato.

**Global Positioning System (GPS) IIF Team of the United States Air Force –** Successful acquisition, development,and delivery of 12 GPS space vehicles to orbit, ensuringgold-standard positioning, navigation, and timing capabilities

to over 2.7 million military personnel, one billion civilian users, and 57 Allied nations worldwide. Accepting for the team was Lt. Col. Brian Vesey.

**ISS Oxygen Generator Assembly (OGA) Recovery Team of The Boeing Company** – Successful resolution of complex and emerging issues resulting from the Oxygen Generator Assembly recovery that threatened ISS oxygen generation capability and potential ISS de-crew or delayed Soyuz launch due to depleted oxygen supplies. Accepting for the team was Steven Van Keuren.

**Next Generation Cygnus Design Team of Orbital ATK** – Outstanding technical leadership and teamwork in the design and implementation of the next generation Cygnus Spacecraft, resulting in increased capability, reliability, and science utilization for the ISS. Accepting for the team was Keith Davies.

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*