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**For Immediate Release**

May 8, 2018

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**RNASA’s 2018 Stellar Awards Winners Announced**

**HOUSTON, Texas** **(May 8, 2018**) The Rotary National Award for Space Achievement (**RNASA**) Foundation honored the dedication of the space workers at the annual Space Awards Gala on Friday, April 27, 2018, 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. Out of 175 nominations received, the panel selected 29 individuals and 9 teams for recognition.

The 2018 Stellar Awards Evaluation Panel, **Glynn Lunney**, **Arnold Aldrich**, **Eileen Collins**, **Michael Coats, and Kevin Chilton** selected the winners based on which accomplishments have advanced U.S. space capabilities and hold the greatest promise of future capabilities.

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. Stellar Awards Committee Chair **Jennifer Devolites** welcomed the nominees, as did RNASA Chairman **Rodolfo Gonzalez**, and former Space Center Rotary President and current RNASA director **John Branch.**

**Randy Bresnik** was the featured speaker at the Stellar Awards Luncheon. Selected for the astronaut program in 2004, Bresnik is a veteran of STS-129 and has trained as an Aquanaut for NASA’s Extreme Environment Mission Operation and a Cave-a-naut with the European Space Agency. Bresnik most recently served as the Commander of the ISS for Expedition 53 and the flight engineer for Expedition 52.

Each nominee received 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.

All the Stellar nominees had their photo taken as they received a special commemorative certificate with a United States flag that was flown aboard the Space Shuttle *Endeavour*, STS-108, December 5 17, 2001.

The Stellar Award winners were announced at the RNASA evening gala on April 27, 2018 by Astronauts **Peggy Whitson** and **Shane Kimbrough** 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:

2018 Stellar Award Winners in the Early Career Category

**John H. Burke of the USAF AFRL** – Outstanding contributions to developing new capabilities that significantly enhance navigation performance, both with and without the Global Positioning System (GPS).

**Ian Fischer of SpaceX** – Exceptional leadership of the Merlin engine flight operations and recovery program, including the first orbital rocket reflight.

**Sam T. Hablitzel of Aerojet Rocketdyne** – Outstanding leadership, proven technical achievements and exemplary performance, helping to pave the way for space exploration.

**Anton P. Kiriwas of NASA Kennedy Space Center** – Outstanding EGS Ground & Flight Software Applications technical integration and exemplary leadership, contributing to the success of the United States’ Deep Space Exploration mission.

**Elishabet Lato of Orbital ATK** – Outstanding leadership of the Orion ACM energetics development and qualification, and community service through AIAA leadership and STEM activities.

**Alessa Makuch of the USAF** – Outstanding technical leadership to resolve multiple launch vehicle anomalies and successfully launching national security space-priority payloads in support of warfighters across the globe.

**Jennifer E. Matty of UTC Aerospace Systems** – Exceptional technical skills and leadership in product safety and reliability engineering to support NASA space exploration.

**Michael V. Nayak of the USAF AFRL** – Exceptional technical accomplishments as a researcher and military officer, including development of a new dynamical method to analyze planetary surfaces across the solar system, and an order of magnitude drop in warning time for hostile space actions using an automated four-telescope system.

**Leslie K. Padilla of The Aerospace Corporation** – Outstanding leadership in the resolution of issues critical to the performance of Extravehicular Activity on the International Space Station.

**Daniel Rodgers of Orbital ATK** – Outstanding radio frequency engineering contributions to the Cygnus CRS Program for enhancements of the on-board communication system.

2018 Stellar Award Winners in the Mid-Career Category

**Robert M. Atkins of the USAF** - Visionary leadership in creating the first-ever launch multi-manifest office and establishing the Space Innovation Academy to educate young students about space.

**Trevor M. DeVault of The Boeing Co.** - Outstanding effort leading the development of a third International Docking Adapter for ISS.

**Jerry Draper of Lockheed Martin** - Outstanding technical achievement in inventing the new Orion heat shield block architecture and upgrading the re-entry design for Lunar and Mars mission returns.

**Mark W. Hilburger of NASA Langley Research Center** – Outstanding technical efforts in the development of a comprehensive plan to improve shell buckling knockdown factors.

**William E. Green of Orbital ATK** - Outstanding leadership, technical excellence and dedication to the Orion Launch Abort Attitude Control Motor Controls team success.

**Justin McFatter of The Boeing Co.** - Outstanding leadership and outstanding support of the NASA Docking Systems Project.

**Laura M. Lucier of NASA Johnson Space Center** – Outstanding contributions to operations and robotics for human spaceflight, contributing to the successes of the Space Shuttle and International Space Station programs.

**Rocky E. Nelson of The Boeing Co.** - Outstanding contributions and dedication to ensure the Exploration Upper Stage (EUS) thermal design surpasses expectations

**Satish C. Reddy of Jacobs** - Outstanding innovations, leadership and contributions to structural analysis and human spaceflight.

**Lawrence M. Robertson of the USAF AFRL** - Exceptional contributions to developing new capabilities that significantly enhance navigation performance of guidance, navigation and control.

2018 Stellar Award Winners in the Late Career Category

**Lee J. Archambault of Sierra Nevada Corporation** - Outstanding leadership of the highly successful Dream Chaser Approach And Landing Test #2 (ALT-2) at Edwards Air Force Base in November 2017.

**Wesley R. Bruner of The Boeing Co.** - Successful founding and leadership of the Boeing Houston Dynamics and Controls team responsible for integrated control system and structural dynamics analysis for the ISS Program.

**Susan L. Crippen of Stinger Ghaffarian Technologies, Inc. (SGT)** - Sustained GN&C instructional excellence for a generation of astronauts and flight controllers providing lasting impact to NASA’s success.

**Daryl Ethington of Jacobs** - Outstanding dedication and technical expertise in setting standards for manned testing for human spaceflight.

**Curtis Johnson of Blue Origin** - Outstanding leadership of primary propulsion development at Blue Origin as it grew from a small team to a major innovator in the global aerospace industry.

**Terry L. McGee of The Boeing Co.** - Exemplary leadership and meritorious expertise in dynamic analysis, mechanical design and manufacturing, with many notable contributions to designs which increase efficiency and first-time quality during manufacturing, testing, and launch operation phases.

**Susan B. Rainwater of NASA Johnson Space Center** - Outstanding leadership in flight operations that contributed to the successes of the Space Shuttle, Hubble Space Telescope, and International Space Station Programs.

**Frank Salazar of CACI** - Significant engineering knowledge and expertise contributing to the design of numerous human spaceflight pyrotechnic hardware systems, including multiple parachute elements of the Orion Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle Program.

**David M. Wilt of the USAF AFRL** - Outstanding contributions to developing new capabilities that significantly enhance spacecraft power research and technologies.

Stellar Award Winners – Team

**Architecture and Plans Branch of the USAF** - Exemplary initiative and analytical rigor to influence major pathfinders and advances in the protection of National Security Space capabilities.

**Autonomous Flight Termination System Team of SpaceX** - Outstanding technical leadership of the Autonomous Flight Safety System development program.

**James Webb Space Telescope Test Team of Jacobs** - Exceptional contributions to space exploration with the successful completion of the James Webb Space Telescope cryo-vacuum test program at the NASA Johnson Space Center.

**Orion Launch Abort System Propulsion Team of Lockheed Martin** - Outstanding accomplishment in successfully completing two high-visibility hot fire tests to validate solid rocket motor designs for NASA’s Orion Launch Abort System.

**Orion Spacecraft Test and Qualification Team of Lockheed Martin** - Outstanding execution of the Orion spacecraft test program in support of NASA’s Exploration Missions EM-1, EM-2 and beyond.

**Roll-Out Solar Array (ROSA) Team of the USAF AFRL** - Outstanding team contributions to developing new solar array capabilities, significantly reducing mass and cost.

**RS-25 Assembly Team of Aerojet Rocketdyne** - Exceptional service to human spaceflight with the early delivery of Exploration Mission 1 flight engines.

**Saffire Project Team of NASA Glenn Research Center** - Innovative contributions using new approaches in the successful design, build and operation of Saffire I/II/III and achieving complete mission success.

**SpaceX Autonomous Flight Termination System Team** – Outstanding technical leadership of the Autonomous Flight Safety System development program.

Visit <http://www.rnasa.org/photos.html> for images from the event. The Rotary National Award for Space Achievement (RNASA) Foundation’s black-tie Gala on April 27, 2018, was recorded live, in its entirety, by Space City Films and will be accessible on the website’s agenda page, [www.rnasa.org/agenda.html](http://www.rnasa.org/agenda.html).

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

Caption for photos:

**2018 Early Career Stellar Awardees, L to R:** Shane Kimbrough (presenting), Leslie K. Padilla, Michael V. Nayak, Jennifer E. Matty, Elishabet Lato, Anton P. Kiriwas, Sam T. Hablitzel, Ian Fischer, John H. Burke, Alessa Makuch, Peggy Whitson (presenting), Daniel Rodgers (not pictured)

**2018 Mid Career Stellar Awardees, L to R:** Peggy Whitson (presenting), Satish C. Reddy, Laura M. Lucier, William E. Green, Justin McFatter, Rocky E. Nelson, Mark W. Hilburger, Jerry Draper, Trevor M. DeVault, Robert M. Atkins, Lawrence M. Robertson, Shane Kimbrough (presenting)

**2018 Late Career Stellar Awardees, L to R:** Shane Kimbrough (presenting), Frank Salazar, Susan B. Rainwater, Terry L. McGee, Curtis Johnson, Daryl Ethington, Susan L. Crippen, Wesley R. Bruner, Lee J. Archambaul, David M. Wilt, Peggy Whitson (presenting)

**2018 Stellar Team Awardees, L to R:** Peggy Whitson (presenting), Gary Ruff (Saffire Project Team), Sean O’Dell (Orion Spacecraft Test and Qualification Team), Greg Byrd (RS-25 Assembly Team), Jeremy Banik (Roll-Out Solar Array Team), Blake Watters (Orion Launch Orbit Abort System Propulsion Team), Kenneth Anderle (James Webb Space Telescope Test Team), Latasha Spear (Architecture and Plans Branch), Jessica Tang (Autonomous Flight Termination System Team), Shane Kimbrough (presenting)