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**RNASA Foundation Honors Robert Lightfoot, William Shatner, and Stellar Winners**

**HOUSTON, Texas (May 7, 2018**). The Rotary National Award for Space Achievement (RNASA)Foundation presented the 2018 National Space Trophy (NST) to **Robert Lightfoot**, NASA’s former Acting Administrator at the RNASA 32nd annual black-tie Space Awards Gala on **April 27, 2018** at the Houston Hyatt Regency.

**RNASA Foundation Chairman Rodolfo González** welcomed the guests to 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 **Thomas Glass**, first year baritone from Houston Grand Opera, who sang the National Anthem a cappella. [**Reverend**](http://www.clpc.org/content.cfm?id=149&member_id=19) **Michael Stone**, St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church, gave the invocation.

After dinner, the program kicked off with a year-in-review film by **Space City Films**. **John Zarrella**, former CNN correspondent served as the emcee. John said “we are here tonight in no small part to acknowledge the accomplishments of men and women behind the scenes. Tonight, we will honor many individuals who have made outstanding contributions to our space program.”

**Cindy Steele**, NASA Public and Stakeholder Engagement Division Chief, presented the 2018 Space Communicator Award to **William Shatner**, best known for his role as Captain James Kirk of *Star Trek’s* USS Enterprise, saying that “as a lifelong advocate of science and exploration, Mr. Shatner has inspired generations of young explorers.” Mr. Shatner accepted the honor via video, saying “the concept of space travel and exploration is one of great mysteries we humans can ponder. Space is the greatest mystery story of all.”

Stellar Awards were presented to 29 individuals and 8 teams. The Stellar Award winners were announced by NASA Astronauts **Shane Kimbrough,** and **Peggy Whitson,** 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.

NASA Astronauts **Scott Tingle, Drew Feustel, and Ricky Arnold,** sent a congratulatory message down from the International Space Station to Lightfoot on receiving the National Space Trophy, telling him “we wouldn’t be on this amazing laboratory in space today if it hadn’t been for your complete dedication to our mission and for your effectiveness in the many roles you held over your career. Our community thrives because of your commitment to safety and mission success. Robert, congratulations on this prestigious and well-deserved honor.”

**Ellen Ochoa**, Director of the Johnson Space Center, presented the prestigious 2018 National Space Trophy to **Robert Lightfoot**. In her introductory comments, Ochoa said “The many leadership roles that Robert Lightfoot has held and excelled at over his entire aerospace career made him the ideal person to lead NASA during the last 15 months.” While accepting the NST, Lightfoot said “…I really feel like I’ve been honored with the pinnacle of recognition in our business. This is the biggest award you could bestow on me, but really it is for this entire team and what we do. What we do every day makes a difference.”

Lt. Gen **Thomas P. Stafford,** USAF (Ret.), Gemini and Apollo astronaut, and the 1993 National Space Trophy winner, presented an **OMEGA** speedmaster watch to Lightfoot, saying “The National Space Trophy is very well deserved. I followed you your whole career, it has been superb”

**Engility** donated the portrait of Lightfoot 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.,

Aerie Aerospace, Aerojet Rocketdyne, The Aerospace Corp , ARES Corporation, ASRC Federal, Barrios Technology, Bastion Technologies, Inc., Blue Origin, The Boeing Company, Booz Allen Hamilton, CACI International, Draper Laboratory, Dynetics, Engility, ERC, Inc., GeoControl System, Inc., Honeywell, Jacobs, KBRwyle, Leidos, Lockheed Martin, MEI Technologies, Inc., MORI Associates, Inc., MRI Technologies , Oceaneering International, Inc., Orbital ATK, Raytheon, SAIC, SGT, Inc., Sierra Nevada Corporation, SpaceX, University of Houston-Clear Lake, UTC Aerospace Systems, and Vericon Technical Services.

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 year.*

Caption for photos:

**JSC Director Ellen Ochoa presents the National Space Trophy to former NASA Acting Administrator Robert Lightfoot (RNASA photo, 2018)**

**Lt. Gen. Thomas Stafford presents the OMEGA speedmaster watch to Robert Lightfoot (RNASA photo, 2018)**