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Rotary Gala Honors Heroes of Space

Houston, Texas (April 5, 2024). The Rotary National Award for Space Achievement (**RNASA**) Foundation will recognize members of the space industry at their annual space awards gala on Friday, April 26, 2024, at the Houston Hyatt Regency.

The RNASA Foundation was formed by the Space Center Rotary Club in 1985, to publicly recognize the unsung heroes of America’s space program alongside the more well-known achievers. This year, the RNASAFoundation will present the 2024 National Space Trophy, to **Dr. Christopher Scolese**, Director of the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO). Former Johnson Space Center Director, **Mike Coats**, will present the prestigious award to Dr. Scolese.

Freelance writer **Mark Carreau** will present the Space Communicator Award to ABC News Producer, **Gina Sunseri**.

**Gerald Griffin**, former NASA Apollo Flight Director and former Director of the Johnson Space Center, will receive the Corona Award which has only been presented four times in RNASA’s 37-year history. The award will be presented by **Vanessa Wyche**, Johnson Space Center Director.

**Kristin Fisher, CNN Space and Defense Correspondent,** will serve as Emcee and NASA Astronaut **Eileen Collins**, will present an **OMEGA** watch to Scolese at the closing of the program.

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.

In addition to the National Space Trophy, 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 161 stellar nominations this year, 40 government and 117 corporate, and 4 government/corporate joint team.” The nominations came from Aegis Aerospace, Aerojet Rocketdyne/L3Harris, Air Force Research Laboratory, ARES Corporation, ASRC Federal, ASTRION, Axiom Space, Barrios Technology, Blue Origin, The Boeing Company, Booz Allen Hamilton, CACI, Collins Aerospace, Jacobs, KBR, Leidos, Lockheed Martin, MRI Technologies, NASA Ames Research Center, NASA Johnson Space Center, NASA Kennedy Space Center, NASA Langley Research Center, Northrop Grumman, Paragon Space Development Corporation, S&K Global Solutions LLC, SAIC, United Launch Alliance, and the United States Space Force.

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 Northrop Grumman. The trophies will be presented by NASA Astronauts **“Woody” Hoburg** and **Jasmin Moghbeli.**

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 2024 Stellar judges are **Michael Coats,  Eileen Collins, Sandra Magnus, and Michael Hawes.**

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 mounted 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 beastronaut **Thomas Marshburn**.

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 **Danny Myers. Reverend David Bridges, Executive Director of the Clear Creek Family Promise** will provide 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**.