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PRESS RELEASE

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Astronaut Eileen Collins Wins 2006 National Space Trophy

The Board of Advisors of the Rotary National Award for Space Achievement (RNASA) Foundation is pleased to announce that Astronaut Eileen Collins, the first female Space Shuttle Commander, is the recipient of the prestigious 2006 National Space Trophy. She is the first woman to receive this honor.

The award is presented annually to an individual who has excelled in furthering national goals in the field of space. Col. Collins receives this award as NASA's first female Space Shuttle Pilot and Commander. She commanded the Return-to-Flight STS-114 mission in 2005, the first flight since the *Columbia* accident in 2003. Former Space Shuttle Commander Brewster Shaw, Vice President and General Manager of Boeing NASA Systems and RNASA Advisor, said, "As NASA's first female Space Shuttle Pilot and Commander, Eileen Collins has been a pathfinder, leader and role model, and is the embodiment of women in the aerospace industry."

Air Force Colonel (Ret.) Eileen Collins was selected as a pilot astronaut in 1990. Her first flight was the first for a female pilot. STS-63 in February 1995 performed a first rendezvous with the Russian Space Station *Mir*. Her next flight as pilot was STS-84 that docked with *Mir* in May 1997. Her historic third flight was STS-93, the first American space mission ever commanded by a woman. STS-93 deployed the *Chandra X-ray Observatory*. Last July, Collins commanded the STS-114 Return-to-Flight mission that docked with the *International Space Station* and evaluated new procedures for flight safety and Shuttle inspection and repair techniques. Collins has now logged over 872 hours in space. Originally from Elmira, New York, Collins earned her associate's degree in math/science from Corning Community College in 1976, her BA in math and economics from Syracuse University in 1987, an MS in operations research from Stanford in 1986, and a MA in space systems management from Webster University in 1989. Prior to joining NASA, Collins was a T-38 instructor pilot at Vance AFB in Oklahoma, and a C-141 commander and instructor at Travis AFB in California. From 1986 to 1989 she taught math at the USAF Academy in Colorado and was a T-41 instructor. She graduated from Air Force Test Pilot School at Edwards AFB in 1990 before joining NASA.

RNASA Advisor and CNN anchor Miles O'Brien said that Colonel Collins is, "First in everything she has done—courageous—skilled—always prepared—a true pioneer."

Col. Collins will receive her award at a black-tie multi-media event on Friday, March 24, 2006 at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Houston. Attendance at this special 20th anniversary event (previous trophy winners expected) is by invitation or through corporate sponsorship only. Accredited media representatives wishing to attend should contact Floyd Bennett by February 24 to reserve a ticket.

Photos of Col. Collins are available at www.RNasa.org/press.