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**RNASA’s 2015 Stellar Awards Winners Announced**

**HOUSTON, Texas** (**April 27, 2015**).  The Rotary National Award for Space Achievement (**RNASA**) Foundation honored the dedication of the space workers at their annual awards banquet on Friday, April 24, 2015, 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 2015 Stellar Awards Evaluation Panel, **Dr. Glynn S. Lunney**, **Arnold D. Aldrich**, **General Kevin P. Chilton, USAF (Ret.)** and **Colonel Eileen Collins**, **USAF (Ret.)** 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 "unsung heroes."

Out of **147** nominations received, the Panel selected **23** individuals and **ten** 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 Hilton Houston NASA Clear Lake Hotel.  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.

**RNASA Foundation Chairman Rodolfo González** then told them that the RNASA Foundation's purpose is to **"**encourage, recognize, honor, and celebrate U.S. space achievements. We're here to honor you**."**

**González** then introduced **Scott Rainey, president of the Rotary Club of Space Center** who said, “Every Rotarian is an integral part of the process to wipe polio from the face of mother earth. Right now there are only 3 countries that still have Polio; Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria. Rotary’s single largest mission is to complete this task by 2018. Rotary has gathered up about $1.2 Billion dollars, and along with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other sources, we have teamed to raise about $5 Billion dollars to make this happen”.

**Mark S. Geyer, Program Manager for NASA’s** [**Orion Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle**](http://www.nasa.gov/exploration/systems/mpcv/#.Uyr-XPldV8F) **(MCPV)** was the featured speaker at the Stellar Awards Luncheon. Orion is NASA’s next generation of spacecraft and was built to enable human exploration of the solar system. Geyer gave an overview of Orion's first test flight and how the data from the test is helping us build a better capsule for Exploration Mission 1.

Each nominee received a **Fisher Space Pen** donated by the company as well as a copy of the book “The Martian” by Andy Weir.  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 24, 2015 by Astronaut and [United States Marine Corps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Marine_Corps) **Col.** **Randy “Komrade” Bresnik** - [STS-129](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/STS-129) and Astronaut **Tracy Caldwell Dyson** - Mission Specialist [STS-118](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/STS-118) and [Expedition 23/24](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_24), who then 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:

2015 Stellar Award Winners in the Early Career Category

**Jason Grow of Boeing** – Exceptional engineering and leadership to successfully achieve full-scale space launch system core stage feedline liquid oxygen test stand design, build and test in 2014.

**Esteban Barajas of Aerojet Rocketdye** – Exceptional contributions to the space launch system RS-25 engine program.

**Nathan Stastny of USAF Air Force Research Laboratory** – Exceptional advancements in state-of-the-art automated passive relative navigation for space rendezvous and proximity operations resulting in a unique Air Force capability for space superiority during crucial space situational awareness activities.

**Frank Bremer of Lockheed Martin** – Technical excellence and extraordinary achievement contributing to the development and qualification of the Orion Crew Module Propulsion System for NASA’s historic Exploration Flight Test-1.

**Kyle Brewer of NASA Johnson Space Center** – Exceptional contributions to real-time operations, implementing quality and efficiency improvements in ISS mechanisms and maintenance operations.

**Melinda Dutton of Orbital ATK** – Outstanding work ethic and results-driven focus enabling the resolution and implementation of corrective actions for the asbestos-free insulator replacement of the SLS Solid Rocket Booster.

2015 Stellar Award Winners in the Mid-Career Category

**Colin Sipe of Lockheed Martin** – Outstanding development of cutting-edge composite material for the Orion Spacecraft upper aeroshell subsystem, critical for crew protection on future deep-space missions.

**Edmund Taddey of UTC Aerospace Systems** – Exceptional technical skill and leadership in engineering to development of systems and components for human space and unmanned space.

**Bryan Titus of USAF SAF/AQS** – Demonstrated history of excellent performance and leadership in space acquisitions, satellite payload processing, and on-orbit satellite anomaly resolution to ensure continued operation for a variety of satellite systems.

**Renee Spinhirne of Lockheed Martin Space Systems** – Outstanding technical leadership and successful execution of the integrated test campaign for avionics and system testing for MPCV EFT-1.

**Julie Kramer White of NASA Johnson Space Center** – Outstanding technical contributions to human space flight as the Orion Multi-purpose crew vehicle Chief Engineer.

**Robert Bardwell of the Boeing Company** – Outstanding technical excellence in weights and mass properties analysis and control, and innovative propellant management techniques to support shuttle, Ares I upper stage, and space launch system core stage applications.

**Mark Ricciardo of Aerojet Rocketdyne** – Outstanding innovation, technical excellence and support of the RL-10 program in its quest to provide sustainable and affordable propulsion solutions while maintaining its mission success legacy.

**Jeffrey Wiemeri of USAF** – Outstanding leadership of the Rocket Systems Launch Program Team responsible for developing and building three space missions and one target launch mission.

**Ismael Gonzales of Lockheed Martin** – Exceptional achievement in the design, development, and test of the state-of-the-art automated vehicle management system for the Orion spacecraft.

**Kristi De Grys of Aerojet Rocketdyne** – Outstanding contributions in leadership, development, and in the areas of Arcjet and Hall Current Thruster Electric Propulsion for national and international spacecraft.

2015 Stellar Award Winners in the Late Career Category

**David Copeland of the Boeing Company –** Outstanding leadership in advancing science on-board the International Space Station.

**John Jordan of Orbital ATK** – Outstanding contributions as Orbital Chief Engineer for the highly successful Landsat-8 Development.

**Mark Geyer of NASA Johnson Space Center** – Exemplary Leadership in planning and executing Exploration Flight Test 1, the first beyond earth orbit flight in the nation’s new Human Space Exploration Program.

**Brian Keller of Orbital ATK** – Outstanding leadership and technical management as Lead Engineer for Rendezvous/Proximity Operations for Orbital’s Cygnus.

**George Cain of Lockheed Martin** – Exceptional design and development of Liquid Propulsions Systems for NASA’s Deep Space Human Exploration Spacecraft achieving significant improvements in affordability and schedule.

**Eric Christiansen of NASA Johnson Space Center** – Outstanding leadership of the Hypervelocity Impact Technology Group in the protection of crew members and spacecraft from micrometeoroids and orbital debris.

**Mark Caron of UTC Aerospace Systems –** Exceptional technical skills and engineering leadership in developing systems to enable human space travel on-board ISS, Orion, and Boeing CST-100.

Stellar Award Winners – Team

**Orion Exploration Flight Test-1 Industry Team of Lockheed Martin Space Systems –** Successful spaceflight test of NASA’s new Orion Spacecraft designed for human exploration of our solar system.

**Solar Power for Electric Propulsion Team of NASA Glenn Research Center** –Successful development of innovative solar array technology to enable high-power solar electric propulsion for 21st century space exploration.

**Active Thermal Control System (ATCS) Pump Module Anomaly Resolution Team of the Boeing Company** – Exceptional resolution of a zero fault tolerant failure of the external active thermal control system pump module on the International Space Station.

**Orion EFT-1 NASA Management Team of NASA Johnson Space Center** – Successful leadership of the Joint Government-Industry Team to accomplish EFT-1 while advancing management innovations and improving affordability.

**Orion Hardware Development Team of Lockheed Martin Space Systems** – Innovative development and manufacturing of a new spacecraft design for future deep-space exploration missions.

**Advanced Extremely High Frequency Hall Thruster Team of USAF Air Force Research Laboratory** – Exceptional resolution of an unexpected performance issue affecting the electronic propulsion systems onboard advanced extremely high frequency satellites.

**Falcon 9 Launch Operations Team of SpaceX** – Outstanding technical and operational performance leading to a remarkable pace of launch for the Falcon 9 rocket, including four back-to-back launches from July to September 2014.

**Spacecube Team of NASA Goddard Space Flight Center** – Successful development of Spacecube Hybrid Data Processing Technology enabling the next generation of advanced space flight applications.

**Maven Mission Team of Lockheed Martin** – A successful orbital capture and sampling of Mars’ upper atmosphere to provide answers to long-standing questions about the red planet.

**Commercial Crew Transportation Capability Source Evaluation Board of NASA Kennedy Space Center** – Innovative strategies enabling procurement of a safe and reliable U.S. Commercial crew transportation system to transport NASA astronauts to and from the International Space Station.

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 24, 2015, was recorded live, in its entirety, by Space City Films and will air on NASA TV on Tuesday April 28 at noon and 3:00 p.m. CDT and on Wednesday April 29 at 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.  NASA TV is carried by DirecTV, Dish Network, TVRO, several cable providers, and http://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/nasatv/ustream/.

*About the RNASA Foundation: 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 National Space Trophy and other awards were presented this year at the RNASA Gala on April 24, 2015. See*[*http://www.rnasa.org*](http://www.rnasa.org) *for more information*

Caption for photos:

**Stellar Award Winners – Early Career:**

**Stellar Award Winners – Mid Career**

**Stellar Award Winners – Late Career**

**Stellar Award Winners – Team**