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**RNASA Foundation Honors David Thompson, William Shatner, and Stellar Winners**

**HOUSTON, Texas (May 6, 2019**). The Rotary National Award for Space Achievement (RNASA)Foundation presented the 2019 National Space Trophy (NST) to **David Thompson**, Retired President and CEO of Orbital ATK at the RNASA 33rd annual black-tie Space Awards Gala on **April 26, 2019** at the Houston Hyatt Regency.

**RNASA Foundation Chairman Rodolfo González** welcomed the guests to gala, saying that “the foundations mission is to encourage, recognize, honor, and celebrate US space achievement. The members of the foundation truly appreciate the enormity of the work that is represented by tonight’s audience.”

The **Clear Brook High School JROTC Color Guard** presented the colors, followed by **the Clear Creek High School Chamber Singers Solo Quartet** who sang the National Anthem. [**Reverend**](http://www.clpc.org/content.cfm?id=149&member_id=19) **Tracye Ruffin**, retired Hospice Chaplain, Disciples of Christ-Christian Church, gave the invocation.

After dinner, the program kicked off with a year-in-review film by **Space City Films**. **Morgan Brennan**, CNBC Reporter and co-host of Squawk Alley served as the emcee. Morgan said, “from a news standpoint there could not be any more exciting time as far as I’m concerned to be covering this industry.”

**Bob Jacobs**, NASA’s Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Office of Communications, welcomed honored guest **William Shatner**, best known for his role as Captain James Kirk of *Star Trek’s* USS Enterprise, saying that “I know his work has touched everyone in this room…And it inspired most people here to do what they’re doing today.” Mr. Shatner shared his thoughts about mankind’s hunger for adventure this way, “what is inside our heads that compels us to set forth on the precipice of existence? For what? Is it ego? Is it pride? Is it a death wish? Is it the sense of adventure that propels the human spirit into unfamiliar modes, into life threatening environments because the challenge is there? Is it humanity’s need to experience the unknown to grasp it, embrace it, absorb the experience as only a human can? Yeah, the challenge of life over death, that’s it.”

Stellar Awards were presented to 24 individuals and 7 teams. The Stellar Award winners were announced by NASA Astronaut **Mark Vande Hei,** and NASA Astronaut **Shannon Walker,** who then presented them with engraved marble trophies sponsored by **Northrop Grumman**. The Stellar Awards were presented in Early Career, Mid-Career, Late Career, and Team categories.

NASA Astronaut **Anne McClain,** sent a congratulatory message down from the International Space Station to Thompson, telling him “Your pioneering contributions to the development of spacecraft and launch vehicles like the Antares rockets and Cygnus resupply vehicle have made a tremendous impact on our ability to do our mission here in orbit.”

**Frank Culbertson**, retired NASA Astronaut, presented the prestigious 2019 National Space Trophy to **David Thompson**. In his introductory comments, Culbertson said “Dave is mister commercial space flight. Dave is the American dream of people succeeding in space on a commercial basis and industry.” While accepting the NST, Thompson commented on the growth of his company, saying “in the end our somewhat improbable experiment in space entrepreneurship, despite being a very close-run affair at various times, actually worked out pretty well. …Beyond the individual stories or Orbital…., I believe there is a more important long-term lesson to be found in the collective experiences of first-generation space businesses. In the last forty years…companies have demonstrated that commercial space activities can become large, sustainable, value creating enterprises. They can develop and provide products and services that meet the practical needs of diverse customers on Earth.”

Lt. Gen **Thomas P. Stafford,** USAF (Ret.), Gemini and Apollo astronaut, and the 1993 National Space Trophy winner, presented an **OMEGA** speedmaster watch to Thompson. Stafford congratulated Thompson saying, “what an outstanding job you’ve done starting with an idea and building a great company and also benefitting so many things.”

**SAIC** donated the portrait of Thompson 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., Aerojet Rocketdyne, The Aerospace Corp, ARES Corporation, ASRC Federal, Barrios Technology, Bastion Technologies, Inc., The Boeing Company, Booz Allen Hamilton, CACI International, Collins Aerospace, Deloitte, Dynetics, ERC, Inc, Jacobs, KBRwyle, Leidos, Lockheed Martin, MEI Technologies, Inc., MORI Associates, Inc., MRI Technologies, Northrop Grumman, Oceaneering International, Inc., Raytheon, SAIC, Sierra Nevada Corporation, SpaceX

United Launch Alliance, 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 26, 2019, 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.*

Thompson Culbertson.jpg Caption:

**David Thompson is presented with the 2019 RNASA National Space Trophy by Mr. Frank Culbertson. (RNASA photo, 2019)**

Thompson Stafford.jpg Caption:

**David Thompson receives the Omega Watch from Thomas Stafford during the 33rd annual RNASA Banquet. (RNASA photo, 2019)**

Shatner.jpg Caption:

**William Shatner, recipient of the 2018 RNASA Space Communicator Award, delivers remarks during the 2019 gala. (RNASA photo, 2019)**