

Bush: "My contributions are modest"

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President George Bush accepted the prestigious National Space Trophy Sunday night and then seized the occasion to salute the men and women in the space program.

In accepting the space industry's premier award, for his "exceptional leadership in providing the nation with the vision and means to accomplish its goals in space for the 21st century," as the citation read, he countered that "my contributions are modest compared to those you honored tonight," alluding to the winners of Stellar Awards for space achievement.



Circles photo by Mary A. V. Cherry

See BUSH, page 2

President George Bush signs a program for Father Dominic Prinoso of St. Paul's Catholic Church.

Continued from page 1

"I salute you and I would urge you to keep up the terrific work."

Then, perhaps to show his appreciation for their accomplishments in space, the former president proceeded to both surprise and delight the crowd by staying around for 15 to 20 minutes at the end of the program to sign autographs for many in the predominantly aerospace crowd of 500 at Space Center Houston.

A total of 16 others were presented Stellar Awards for their achievements in space by NASA Administrator Daniel S. Goldin, Johnson Space Center Deputy Director Jim Weatherbee and Canadian astronaut Inak Pogoda.

Astronaut John W. Young, the first shuttle commander and now

JSC associate director, presented the trophy to the former commander-in-chief.

The trophy is awarded each year by the non-profit Rotary National Award for Space Achievement Foundation, established in 1983 by Rotary International's Space Center Rotary Club to recognize individuals who have made outstanding achievements in space, creating a greater public awareness of the benefits of space exploration.

Owen Martin and Charles Hartman led the movement to establish the annual event. Both were present for the 12th annual banquet.

Previous winners in the audience were NASA Administrator Goldin, JSC Director George Abbey, first shuttle flight pilot and

now Theodor President Robert Griggen, former JSC Director Anne Cohen and Dr. Max Faget, who led the engineering team that designed the shuttle and many earlier space vehicles.

The actual trophy — a 500-pound lead crystal sculpture — is on permanent display at Space Center Houston with each recipient given a smaller one to keep.

This year's sparkling crystal trophy, was designed by Space Center Rotary President Donnie Johnson, the first woman to head the club.

Bush furthered the pursuit of human exploration of space on the 23rd anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing when he announced the goal to establish a permanent human presence on the moon and to use that experience to begin hu-

man space exploration of Mars.

In 1991, the U.S. and Soviet Union agreed to exchange astronauts and cosmonauts on the Mir space station and the space shuttle, setting the stage for today's ongoing space partnership with Russia.

The Jet Propulsion Laboratory Mars Pathfinder Team was one of the Stellar Award winners for its landing on Mars and exploration of the Martian surface.

Others program participants included Master of Ceremonies Roy Neal, Father Dominic Prinoso of St. Paul's Catholic Church in Nassau Bay who gave the invocation; and NASA Association Administrator Peggy C. Wilhide, who presented the media award to Washington Post writer Bill Harwood.

The Stellar Award winners were David H. Korth, Barrios Technology; John Chris Scott, Lockheed Martin; Roselle A. Gonzalez, JSC; Jeffrey W. Bartle, JSC; Matthew R. Barry, United Space Alliance; Alexander A. McCool, Marshall Space Flight Center.

John F. Muratore, JSC; James R. Hurter, U.S. Air Force; Karen D. Pickering, JSC; Kerry Switzer, Boeing; Frank L. Culbertson, JSC; Gerald Hoskins, Naval Research Laboratory; James T. Hazleton, United Space Alliance.

Team winners besides the JPL Mars Pathfinder Team were the 90-Day Closed Chamber Lunar/Mars Support Test Crew, JSC; and the Parents, Kids, Computer and Science Program Team, Boeing.

THE CITIZEN, Wednesday, March 11, 1998 Page 13



Faces in the crowd enjoying the reception preceding the Rotary Space Banquet included, from left, Sheila Self, Argentine exchange student Mari Gilbert and Jean and Bill Ozander.



BUSH HONORED. Former President George Bush was presented the National Space Trophy by the Rotary National Award for Space Achievement Foundation Friday for contributions to the future of space exploration made during his administration. He is pictured shaking hands with NASA/Johnson Space Center Director George Abbey, a previous winner of the award.



Wendy Rudnicki photos



Above, former President George Bush expresses excitement over receiving the National Space Trophy from the Rotary National Space Achievement Foundation recently. At left, the trophy is handed to Bush by John W. Young, a veteran of six space flights.