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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NASA, INDUSTRY AND ACADEMIA TEAM RESPONSIBLE FOR OSIRIS-REx WINS 2024
DR. ROBERT H. GODDARD MEMORIAL TROPHY**

*NASA, Lockheed Martin, University of Arizona and KinetX Recognized for Work on First U.S.
Mission to Bring Back Asteroid Sample*



Caption: A render of the OSIRIS-REx spacecraft approaching the asteroid Bennu during its sample collection maneuver. Credit: NASA/University of Arizona.

WASHINGTON – December 2023 – The National Space Club and Foundation (NSCF) announced the OSIRIS-REx team from NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Lockheed Martin, University of Arizona and KinetX as winner of the 2024 Dr. Robert H. Goddard Memorial Trophy for their tremendous work on the first U.S. mission to bring back an asteroid sample.

The trophy is NSCF's highest honor and presented annually to the individual or group who has made a substantial contribution to U.S. leadership in astronautics or rocketry.

Making History

Following its launch on September 8, 2016 aboard United Launch Alliance's Atlas V 411 from Cape Canaveral, NASA's OSIRIS-REx mission made history when it became the first U.S. spacecraft to touch an asteroid and capture a sample on Oct. 20, 2020, and again when it successfully delivered that sample to Earth on Sept. 24, 2023.

The sample – the largest asteroid sample ever delivered to Earth – is from the ancient, carbon-rich asteroid Bennu and will give research groups worldwide a glimpse into the earliest days of our solar system, offering insights into planet formation and the origin of organics that led to life on Earth. Data collected by the spacecraft combined with future analysis of the Bennu sample will also aid our understanding of asteroids that can impact Earth.

The OSIRIS-REx mission conducted unprecedented centimeter-scale mapping of Bennu, surpassing precision levels achieved for any other planetary body and setting three Guinness World Records for: smallest object orbited by a spacecraft, closest orbit of an asteroid and highest-resolution satellite map of any planetary body.

Designed and built by Lockheed Martin in Denver, the OSIRIS-REx spacecraft also pioneered technology that can be used on future exploration missions, including a specially developed autonomous navigation technology that allowed it to perform its Touch and Go (TAG) sample collection maneuver.

“The samples collected by the OSIRIS-REx mission are going to require school science books to be rewritten,” said Joe Vealencis, president, NSCF. “The data the spacecraft collected as it orbited Bennu and the science that is yet to be discovered from the samples it returned to Earth will benefit all humankind in our collective understanding of the universe. Our sincerest congratulations to all those who played a role in this historic success.”

The Mission Continues

Following its successful sample return, the OSIRIS-REx spacecraft was renamed OSIRIS-APEX and will now enter an extended mission to visit and study near-Earth asteroid Apophis in 2029.

OSIRIS-REx's success was made possible by the unique contributions of over 1,000 individuals from government and mission partners like the science leadership at the University of Arizona, the project team at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, the curation team at NASA's Johnson Space Center, spacecraft design, operations and recovery by Lockheed Martin, guidance and navigation at KinetX, the launch provider at United Launch Alliance, steady policy and funding from Congress and many other supporting organizations that made this mission the first-of-its-kind for the nation.

OSIRIS-REx is the third mission in NASA's New Frontiers Program managed by NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center.

The winning team will receive the award at the 67th Annual Robert H. Goddard Memorial Dinner at the Washington Hilton Hotel on March 22, 2024.

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