



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Astronaut Mike Collins to Give Keynote Address at the Innovators Gala**  
Apollo 11 astronaut to remember Neil Armstrong and  
welcome 2017-2018 Astronaut Scholar Class

**Orlando, FL** – Apollo 11 command module pilot, astronaut Mike Collins, will be the keynote speaker at the Innovators Gala to be held September 16, 2017 at the JW Marriott in Washington, D.C. Collins will headline the event introducing the 45 members of the 2017-2018 Astronaut Scholar class and the first recipient of the Neil Armstrong™ Award of Excellence.

Attendees at the Innovators Gala will have the unique opportunity of hearing from Collins, who served as pilot for the Gemini X mission in 1966 and command module pilot for Apollo 11 in 1969.

The event is highlighted by the presentation of the 45 members of the 2017-2018 Astronaut Scholar class who represent the best and brightest of college students pursuing science, technology, engineering and math. In addition, the inaugural Neil Armstrong Award of Excellence will be presented to Astronaut Scholar, Patrick Biltgen.

"I am pleased to have this opportunity to honor the legacy of my dear friend Neil Armstrong," Collins said. "I am only sorry that Neil is not here to honor Patrick directly, as the two of them, I am sure, would enjoy knowing each other."

The Astronaut Scholarship Foundation (ASF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established by the Mercury Astronauts in 1984. The Foundation's mission is to aid the United States in retaining its world leadership in technology and innovation by supporting the very best and brightest scholars in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics while commemorating the legacy of America's pioneering astronauts.

ASF awards 45, \$10,000 scholarships to outstanding college juniors and seniors nationwide with support from astronauts from the Mercury, Gemini, Apollo, Skylab, Space Shuttle and Space Station programs who participate in this educational endeavor.

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