



National Reconnaissance Office

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Release #02-19
Jan. 24, 2019

NRO honors the 2017 Pioneer of National Reconnaissance

Ms. Betty Sapp, Director of the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), selected Mr. Timothy J. Barnes as the 2017 Pioneer of National Reconnaissance. Regarded as the highest honor in the field, Pioneers are recognized as individuals who have made significant and lasting contributions to national reconnaissance – contributions that changed the direction and scope of the discipline and its practice.

“The Pioneer Program is really recognizing the unsung heroes – the ones that have been behind mission-driven, eye-opening achievements and innovative ideas in national reconnaissance,” said Ms. Sapp.

Ms. Sapp inducted Mr. Barnes posthumously as the 93rd Pioneer for National Reconnaissance into NRO’s Pioneer Hall during a ceremony in Chantilly, Virginia, on Thursday, Jan. 24, 2019. Mr. Barnes’ family accepted the honor on his behalf.

In the late 1990s, Mr. Barnes pioneered geolocation bias-correction methods, a development that had a profound and lasting positive effect on the NRO’s national and tactical missions. These groundbreaking, technical advancements improved precision geolocation performance by an order of magnitude and remain foundational to NRO geolocation systems today.

“Tim was a pioneer, an innovator, trailblazer and hero in the work of national reconnaissance,” said the Honorable Daniel Coats, Director of National Intelligence and the ceremony’s guest speaker.

Mr. Coats and Ms. Sapp co-presented the Barnes family with a small replica of the Pioneer medallion and citation that will be permanently displayed in NRO’s Pioneer Hall alongside the commemorative medallions for each previous Pioneer. A list of all NRO Pioneers is featured on the [Center for the Study of National Reconnaissance website](#).

Mr. Barnes was born in Washington, D.C., and he attended the University of Virginia where he earned a Bachelor of Science in aerospace engineering and a Master of Science in systems engineering. He later earned a Master of Science in aerospace engineering from Johns Hopkins University. Mr. Barnes was associated with the NRO from 1983 to 2017. Mr. Barnes passed away Feb. 16, 2017.

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The NRO is a joint Department of Defense–Intelligence Community organization responsible for developing, launching, and operating America’s intelligence satellites to meet the national security needs of our nation.

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