

# Morgan Spurlock blasts off as this years special guest at Rocket Boys Festival in Beckley WV

*20th Annual Festival Sept 26-28 last to feature appearances by Rocket Boys. Festival opens Sept 26 with Beckley native Morgan Spurlock screening his new movie*

BECKLEY, WEST VIRGINIA, USA, September 13, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- All good things must come to an end, and much like the farewell tours currently underway by music superstars Elton John, Lynryd Skynryd, and KISS, this year's [Rocket Boys/October Sky Festival](#) September 26th-28th in Beckley West Virginia is expected to be the last to feature in-person appearances by [Homer Hickam](#) and his childhood friends the Rocket Boys.

That's according to festival director Scott Hill, who noted that a confluence of anniversaries and events make this the right time for the Rocket Boys themselves to bow out. 2019 marks the 20th anniversary of Homer Hickam's classic "Rocket Boys" becoming a New York Times #1 bestseller. 2019 is also the 20th anniversary of the release of the movie "October Sky" based on Hickam's celebrated coming of age memoir and the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 astronauts moon landing.



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I will always be grateful to the people of Beckley for their willingness to do the hard work necessary to keep alive the Rocket Boys' story of inspiration and hope”

*Homer Hickam, author of NY Times #1 bestseller Rocket Boys*

2019 also marks the passing of a key member of the Rocket Boys legacy. This year's festival is dedicated to the memory of Quentin Wilson, the "prodigious scientific brain" of the Rocket Boys, who died August 30th at his home in Texas.

Quentin was featured prominently in Hickam's bestselling books "Rocket Boys" and "The Coalwood Way" and portrayed by actor Chris Owen in the film "October Sky". Homer said of his Big Creek High School friend "I was devastated to learn Quentin Wilson, the brains behind our success during high school and one of my best friends ever, has passed on to that great launchpad in the sky. He taught me the word "Prodigious" and indeed lived a

prodigious life. My condolences to his wife Janice and his family. My only consolation is that Mom up in heaven will be happy to see him. She loved Quentin so much and now he's with her. "

Added Hill, "Homer and many of the other Rocket Boys have been traveling back every year to support the festival and meet fans of their story, and that travel is getting tougher each year. People come to West Virginia literally from all over the world to meet and spend time with the Rocket Boys. If you've been touched by their story, this will be your final opportunity to meet the Rocket Boys here in person"

#### Festival Special Features:

The Rocket Boys Festival kicks off Thursday evening September 26th with an appearance by filmmaker and Beckley WV native [Morgan Spurlock](#), perhaps best known for his Academy Award-nominated documentary "Super Size Me." He will host a screening of the long-awaited sequel "Super Size Me 2-Holy Chicken!" at the H.C. Smith Theatre at Tamarack in Beckley at 7 pm on Thursday the 26th followed by a Q&A session.

Friday, September 27th, Hickam will spend the morning speaking to hundreds of students who will come to the Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine Amphitheater from all over the region. Those talks are free and open to students and schools and can be scheduled by contacting festival director Scott Hill at [www.rocketboysfestival.com](http://www.rocketboysfestival.com).

Friday afternoon, Homer will host a "Storyteller's Workshop" at Tamarack. Along with Homer, theatrical storyteller Rhayne Thomas, musical storyteller Jon Wikstrom and broadcaster, public speaker and Rocket Boys Festival director Scott Hill and others will add their thoughts on the art of telling a great story.

On Friday evening, Rocket Boys fans can experience the one-time-only event "Homer Hickam-Stories and Songs" at Tamarack. Hickam will share behind the scenes stories and readings from "Rocket Boys", interwoven with key songs from "Rocket Boys the Musical", performed by Las Vegas entertainer and show cast member Rhayne Thomas (Elsie) alongside Broadway veteran and "Rocket Boys The Musical" co-creator Carl Anthony Tramon (Sonny). As a bonus, singer/songwriter Jon Wikstrom will debut a new musical tribute to Homer's latest international bestseller "Carrying Alebert Home", which has been translated into over two dozen languages.

Advance tickets for the "Super Size Me 2-Holy Chicken!" screening, the "Storytellers Workshop"



L-R- Homer, Quentin Wilson, Roy Lee Cooke, O'Dell Carroll with Auk Rocket Mockup



Morgan Spurlock's Super Size Me 2 - Holy Chicken

and "Homer Hickam-Songs and Stories" are limited and can be purchased in advance at [www.rocketboysfestival.com](http://www.rocketboysfestival.com).

September 28th's Rocket Boys/October Sky Festival central location is Beckley's New River Park, which boasts an authentic exhibition working coal mine that will be open for discounted tours. A "Rocket Run" 5K and 10K race, "Aim High" essay contest, food vendors and more will also be a part of this year's festival. Opening ceremonies begin at 9 am and the festival will run till 5pm Saturday.

One of the Rocket Boys/October Sky Festival highlights is the dozens of students from schools all over America who join Hickam to launch rockets at Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine.

About Homer Hickam:

Homer Hickam has authored 19 best-selling books including Rocket Boys, several set in his native West Virginia. After graduating from Big Creek High School, Homer served his country in the Vietnam War and eventually achieved his dream of working for NASA as an engineer and astronaut trainer both in the U.S. and abroad. This year, Hickam served as the board chairman at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville Alabama for the 50th-anniversary festivities of the Apollo 11 moon landing. He also is a member of the United States Space Council and testified before Congress advocating for a return to the moon.

"It has been my honor to attend and support the Rocket Boys Festival for over twenty years, first in Coalwood and now Beckley. I will always be grateful to the people of Beckley for their willingness to do the hard work necessary to keep alive the Rocket Boys' story of inspiration and hope."

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