



**CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION**  
*Recognizing civilian heroism in the United States and Canada*

412-281-1302 (telephone)  
1-800-447-8900 (toll free)  
412-281-5751 (fax)  
[www.carnegiehero.org](http://www.carnegiehero.org)  
[carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org](mailto:carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org)

436 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1101  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1841

## News Release

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Contact: Douglas R. Chambers  
Toll free: 1-800-447-8900

### **CARNEGIE MEDALS AWARDED TO 19 FOR EXTRAORDINARY CIVILIAN HEROISM**

PITTSBURGH, PA, December 22, 2008—In its fourth and final award announcement of 2008, the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission today named 19 individuals as recipients of the CARNEGIE MEDAL. The medal is awarded throughout the United States and Canada to those who risk their lives to an extraordinary degree while saving or attempting to save the lives of others. Three of the awardees lost their lives in the performance of their rescue acts.

The heroes announced today bring to 92 the number of awards made in 2008 and to 9,243 the total number of awards since the Pittsburgh-based Fund's inception in 1904. Commission President Mark Laskow stated that each of the awardees or their next of kin will also receive a financial grant. Throughout the 104 years since the Fund was established by industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, \$31.1 million has been given in one-time grants, scholarship aid, death benefits, and continuing assistance.

The awardees are:

Joshua James Lapp	Hesperia, Calif.
Jason Christopher Byrnes	North Syracuse, N.Y.
Peter James Benedict	Cicero, N.Y.
Jeffrey S. Peters, Jr.	Meadville, Pa.
James C. Carpenter	Gloversville, N.Y.
Leanne Davis, Jr.	Fayetteville, N.C.
Clint J. Deniker	Grove City, Pa.
Walter Rosenthal, <i>deceased</i>	Toms Place, Calif.
Shann Deon Day, Sr., <i>deceased</i>	Fontana, Calif.
Carlton Green	Milton-Freewater, Ore.
Kermit R. Kubitz	San Francisco, Calif.
Claude Ancel Walker IV	Rocklin, Calif.
Richard Anthony Tower	Yreka, Calif.
Fred Hunt, Jr., <i>deceased</i>	Berwick, Maine
Qemal Agaj	Tampa, Fla.
Mark Andrew Sellers	Lancaster, Pa.
Hoip D. Swaby	Brockton, Mass.
Merlin Harn	Menasha, Wis.
Michael J. Zimmerman	Morton, Ill.

Resumes of the acts follow. To nominate someone for the CARNEGIE MEDAL, write the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, 436 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1101, Pittsburgh, PA 15219, or call 1-800-447-8900 (toll free). Fuller information on the CARNEGIE MEDAL and the history of the CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION can be found at [www.carnegiehero.org](http://www.carnegiehero.org)

**JOSHUA JAMES LAPP**  
Hesperia, California

Joshua James Lapp helped to save Gloria Collins from burning, Sacramento, California, July 14, 2007. Collins, 57, was in the bedroom of her apartment on the first floor of a two-story building after fire broke out in the adjoining living room at night and filled the unit with dense smoke. A neighbor, Joshua, 16, student, was alerted to the fire. He and his mother responded to a point outside a window of Collins's bedroom, where they heard her screaming for help. Joshua and his mother repeatedly leaned through the window for Collins, but they could not find her. Joshua then climbed through the window and made his way in the blinding smoke to where he found Collins at the other end of the room. He grasped her and retraced his steps to the window, followed by another neighbor who had attempted the rescue but was nearly overcome by smoke. He lifted Collins up to the window and handed her out to his mother, and then he climbed through the window himself. Joshua and his mother aided the other neighbor from the structure, that wing of which was engulfed by flame and destroyed. Collins, Joshua, and the other neighbor were taken to the hospital for treatment of smoke inhalation, and Joshua sustained lacerations to a forearm. He recovered. 80571-9225

**JASON CHRISTOPHER BYRNES**  
North Syracuse, New York

**PETER JAMES BENEDICT**  
Cicero, New York

Jason Christopher Byrnes and Peter James Benedict saved Michael D. LaSala, Josiah S. Thompson, and Sheralyn J. Wellman from drowning and attempted to save Anna E. Wright, Ellisburg, New York, July 15, 2007. On a swimming outing, friends Michael, 16; Josiah, 15; Sheralyn, 13; and Anna, 17, were unable to return to shore against the strong current and six-foot waves in Lake Ontario at the mouth of Sandy Creek. On shore in the vicinity, Byrnes, 33, account executive, and his brother-in-law, Benedict, 33, manager, were alerted to the situation and set out from the creek in search of the teens in a 14-foot aluminum boat that was equipped with an outboard motor. Fighting the pounding waves, the men located Michael at a point about 750 feet from shore and pulled him aboard. Although water was entering the boat, they searched for the others, spotting Josiah and Sheralyn in the troughs between the waves about 125 feet away. Taking the boat toward them, the men threw Sheralyn a life jacket and pulled Josiah aboard. Benedict entered the water to support Sheralyn after he and Byrnes concluded that the boat had reached its capacity under the conditions. For several minutes Benedict remained with Sheralyn, the waves submerging them repeatedly, as Byrnes took Michael and Josiah to shore. He then returned to Sheralyn and Benedict, Benedict aiding Sheralyn into the boat before boarding himself. The men took Sheralyn to safety and again headed out into the lake, to search for Anna. Unsuccessful, they returned to shore. Anna's body was found two days later. Byrnes sustained bruises to his arms and legs, and he recovered. 80609-9226 / 80608-9227

**JEFFREY S. PETERS, JR.**  
Meadville, Pennsylvania

Jeffrey S. Peters, Jr., rescued Debra A. Knuth from burning, Meadville, Pennsylvania, September 11, 2007. Knuth, 50, was pinned by fallen debris in her bedroom after a propane explosion in her mobile home that set the structure aflame. On hearing the explosion from his nearby home, a neighbor, Peters, 18, immediately responded to the scene. He entered the collapsing structure through its back door and in intense heat made his way to Knuth's bedroom. Finding Knuth pinned in her bed, he lifted debris off her and pulled her from the bed. He then picked her up and carried her to the door, where he handed her to another neighbor who had responded. Peters exited the mobile home shortly before flames grew to engulf it. The mobile home was destroyed. Knuth required extensive hospitalization for treatment of severe burns. 80560-9231

**JAMES C. CARPENTER**  
Gloversville, New York

**LEANUE DAVIS, JR.**  
Fayetteville, North Carolina

James C. Carpenter saved Chelsea M. Palma from burning, and Leanue Davis, Jr., rescued Jocelyn L. Palma, Gloversville, New York, November 8, 2007. Chelsea, 5, and her sister Jocelyn, 3, were on the second floor of their grandmother's two-story house after fire broke out in the kitchen, on the first floor. At his home next door, Carpenter, 28, warehouse worker, was alerted to the fire. He ran to the house, entered through the front door, and approached the stairway, which was adjacent to the burning kitchen. In dense smoke, Carpenter went to the top of the stairs and found the girls. Chelsea grasped him, but Jocelyn retreated to a bedroom. Carrying Chelsea, Carpenter turned and went down the stairs. By then, flames were spreading to the stairway and issued along its ceiling. Carpenter exited the structure with Chelsea as Davis, 46, a disabled construction worker who lived in the house, arrived home and entered. Davis went upstairs and, calling out for Jocelyn, found her exiting the bedroom. He picked her up and returned to the top of the stairs but found his course blocked by deteriorating conditions. Davis took the girl into a bedroom, opened a window, and lowered her by the arms to two men standing on the ground. He then jumped from the window to safety. Jocelyn was treated at the hospital for first-degree burns to her arms and cuts to her face, and she singed her hair. She recovered. Davis sustained minor burns to his forehead, forearms, and left leg. 80831-9228 / 80832-9229

**CLINT J. DENIKER**  
Grove City, Pennsylvania

Clint J. Deniker saved Thomas B. Stevenson, Sr., from burning, Grove City, Pennsylvania, April 4, 2008. Stevenson, 52, was the driver of a car that overturned in an accident on a rural road, came to rest on its roof, and caught fire in its engine area. Deniker, 35, conservation officer, saw the burning vehicle on leaving his nearby house. He drove to the scene, finding Stevenson unconscious and upside down, restrained by his safety belt with a portion of one leg extended through an opening in the wreckage on the driver's side of the car. Deniker pulled on the wreckage to widen the opening and then knelt beside the car and extended his upper body through the opening. He shook Stevenson, who did not respond. Deniker cut Stevenson's safety belt with a knife and freed his other leg, which was trapped. He grasped Stevenson by the ankles and pulled him, with difficulty, free of the vehicle. As he dragged Stevenson away from the car, flames entered its interior and spread nearly to engulf it. Stevenson was hospitalized two weeks for treatment of his injuries, but he was not burned. 81224-9230

**WALTER ROSENTHAL, *deceased***  
Toms Place, California

Walter Rosenthal died helping attempt to save James J. Juarez and John S. McAndrews from suffocation, Mammoth Lakes, California, April 6, 2006. Juarez, 34, and McAndrews, 37, were among a crew of ski patrollers recovering a fence buried by snow at a resort on Mammoth Mountain. About 20 feet of snow covered the ground except at a fumarole, or natural vent, through which gases, particularly carbon dioxide, were released. A cap of snow covered a cave that had formed in the snow above the fumarole, and from the surface the existence of the cave was not evident. Without warning, Juarez and McAndrews broke through the snow covering and fell to the floor of the cave, and within moments they lost consciousness in its toxic atmosphere. Equipped with an oxygen mask, one of their coworkers at the site, Rosenthal, 58, entered the hole resulting from the men's fall and slid to the bottom of the cave. He walked to Juarez and McAndrews but then lost consciousness and collapsed. Another coworker entered the cave in a rescue attempt but was also overcome. Over the course of several minutes, other personnel responding to the scene dug a trench through the snow toward the bottom of the cave and recovered the four victims. The last man to have lost consciousness was revived, but attempts to revive Juarez, McAndrews, and Rosenthal were not successful. 79258-9232

**SHANN DEON DAY, SR., *deceased***  
Fontana, California

Shann Deon Day, Sr., died attempting to save Melvin M. Rabb from drowning, Long Beach, California, October 23, 2007. Rabb, 27, jumped the 20 feet from a pier into the Pacific Ocean at a point about 600 feet from shore. He attempted to swim to shore but appeared to become fatigued in the 25-foot-deep water. Day, 36, handyman, who was fishing on the pier, responded to the approximate point from which Rabb jumped. Fully attired, he jumped into the water and swam about 50 feet to Rabb. Day grasped Rabb and held to him briefly before both men submerged. Responding rescue divers recovered Day's body about two hours later; he had drowned. Rabb's body was recovered four days later. 80812-9233

**CARLTON GREEN**  
Milton-Freewater, Oregon

Carlton Green saved Adam K. Catania from burning, Walla Walla, Washington, July 16, 2007. Adam, 1, lay unconscious in the hall on the second floor of his family's two-story apartment after fire broke out in a bedroom on that floor. Driving nearby, Green, 40, billing employee, stopped at the scene after seeing smoke issue from a second-floor window. He entered the apartment and learned from Adam's brother that Adam was on the second floor. Green attempted twice to climb the stairs to the second floor, but he was repulsed by dense smoke and intense heat both times. Using a wet towel that he obtained from the kitchen for use as a mask, Green crawled up the stairs and started through the hall. Finding Adam on the floor, he picked him up and carried him downstairs and outside to safety. Adam and Green were both taken to the hospital for treatment of smoke inhalation, and they recovered. 80854-9234

**KERMIT R. KUBITZ**  
San Francisco, California

Kermit R. Kubitz rescued Loren B. Schaller from assault, San Francisco, California, May 19, 2007. Loren, 15, was at the counter in a bakery when a man armed with a knife approached her from behind and, without provocation, attacked her. He stabbed her repeatedly, taking her to the floor. Another customer, Kubitz, 60, attorney, was inside the bakery and witnessed the attack. He immediately ran to the assailant and grabbed him, but the assailant turned on Kubitz and attacked him. The men struggled over a course that took them to the floor in the bakery doorway. Stabbed twice, Kubitz removed the knife from his side and threw it to the sidewalk. The assailant then fled the scene but was apprehended shortly. Kubitz and Loren were hospitalized for treatment of their stab wounds, Loren's requiring surgery. Kubitz missed a month's work but fully recovered. 81111-9240

**CLAUDE ANCEL WALKER IV**  
Rocklin, California

Claude Ancel Walker IV saved John A. Crabtree from burning, Roseville, California, December 3, 2007. Crabtree, 51, was driving a tank truck on an interstate highway when the vehicle left the highway, overturned, and came to rest extending down an embankment. Crabtree remained in the driver's seat as flames broke out in the truck's engine compartment and issued from its exposed underside. Traveling on the same highway, Walker, 33, carpenter, arrived at the scene to find that the truck was occupied. He approached its front end and, after clearing the remaining glass from its windshield, extended his upper body through the windshield opening and into the cab. Grasping Crabtree about the arms, Walker pulled on him to free him from behind the steering wheel. He then stepped from the cab, pulling Crabtree through the windshield opening, and helped to drag him to safety. Flames soon engulfed the truck. Crabtree required hospital treatment for his injuries. 80853-9239

**RICHARD ANTHONY TOWER**  
Yreka, California

Richard Anthony Tower saved Dorothy M. Knudsen from drowning, Horse Creek, California, September 19, 2007. Knudsen, 82, was the driver of a car that, in an accident, left the roadway, entered the Klamath River, and began to submerge nose first at a point about 50 feet from the bank. Current in the river was swift, and its water cold. Knudsen was able to lower the window of the driver's door partially and extend the upper portion of her body from the car. Tower, 40, truck driver, witnessed the accident while approaching in his vehicle. He stopped at the scene and, hearing Knudsen calling for help, entered the water for her. Despite being fully attired, including his boots, Tower swam to the car, grasped Knudsen, and attempted both to pull her from the vehicle and open its driver's door. As the car submerged completely, taking Knudsen with it, Tower freed her and pulled her back to the water surface. He swam toward the bank with her, en route grasping one end of a rope that was thrown to him by a man on the bank. That man pulled them the rest of the way in. Knudsen was hospitalized overnight for treatment of her injuries and hypothermia. Tower sustained sore muscles and lacerations to his legs. He missed a day's work but fully recovered. 80715-9235

**FRED HUNT, JR., *deceased***  
Berwick, Maine

**QEMAL AGAJ**  
Tampa, Florida

Fred Hunt, Jr., died helping to save Maureen A. Jennings from drowning, and Qemal Agaj helped to save her, Cocoa Beach, Florida, October 22, 2007. Jennings, 68, was swimming in the Atlantic Ocean when she was caught in a current while attempting to return to shore. Hunt, 51, senior buyer, and others on the beach, including Agaj, 65, retired factory worker, were alerted to her situation. They entered the water and waded and swam out to Jennings. They then pushed her a distance toward shore before succumbing to the current themselves. Jennings struggled through wadable water to reach shore safely, receiving aid en route. Responding members of a rescue team recovered Agaj from the water, and then, joined by a lifeguard, returned Hunt to the beach. Hunt could not be revived, as he had drowned. Agaj recovered from exhaustion and ingesting water. 80765-9236 / 80978-9237

**MARK ANDREW SELLERS**  
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Mark Andrew Sellers saved Jordan R. Sweigart from burning, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, November 17, 2007. Jordan, 17, was trapped in the driver's seat of his car, which in a nighttime accident had left the roadway and struck a utility pole. The pole broke in the accident, and its top, bearing electric lines and transformers, fell onto the car, jamming shut its driver's door. The lines arced. Sellers, 45, sales representative, approached the scene in his vehicle and trained its headlights on the wrecked car. He approached the driver's side of the car and told Jordan to await arrival of emergency personnel. Sellers then saw that a fire had started in the car's engine compartment and concluded that there was not enough time for help to arrive. To test if the car were energized, he struck a glancing blow against its driver's door. He then grasped the handle and pulled hard, but the handle broke off and his momentum threw him back. Sellers returned to the car and kicked at the window of the driver's door, but the glass did not break. Despite the growing flames, he then opened the rear door, entered the car, and with Jordan reclined the back of the driver's seat. He grasped Jordan under his arms, pulled him from the vehicle, and dragged him to safety. Flames soon enveloped the car. Jordan required hospitalization for treatment of his injuries, and he recovered. 80837-9238

**HOIP D. SWABY**  
Brockton, Massachusetts

Hoip D. Swaby helped to save John P. Kanash and Kenneth H. Schofield from drowning, Fall River, Massachusetts, October 19, 2007. Tunnel workers Kanash, 49; Schofield, 45; and Swaby, 41, were working at the bottom of a large, 105-foot-deep, vertical shaft when a nearby sewer line that was buried closer to the surface collapsed. It had been raining heavily, and effluent from the collapsed line breached the wall of the shaft, cascaded into it, and rapidly began to fill it. Electric lights inside the shaft went out, leaving the men in almost total darkness as they shouted for help. From ground level, a crane operator lowered a transport cage into the shaft. Swaby maneuvered to it and boarded, but the cage was raised before Kanash and Schofield could get to it. At the surface, Swaby asked for a flashlight, telling coworkers he was returning to the bottom of the shaft for the two other men. Despite massive amounts of water continuing to cascade into the shaft, Swaby rode the cage toward the bottom, where it sank about three feet in the accumulating water before rising somewhat. Seeing light from Swaby's flashlight, Kanash and Schofield made their way to the cage and boarded it. The cage was immediately lifted to the surface, its occupants uninjured. About 85,000 gallons of water entered the shaft, filling it to the level of the collapsed line. 80797-9241

**MERLIN HARN**  
Menasha, Wisconsin

Merlin Harn saved a boy from being struck by a train, Menasha, Wisconsin, September 1, 2007. An unattended 3-year-old boy was observed walking on a railroad track by Harn, 40, facilities technician, and his wife as they drove by. They stopped at a crossing near the scene and called authorities. As they waited for police to arrive, the crossing's lights, bell, and gates were activated, and the whistle of an approaching train sounded. Harn immediately exited his vehicle and, without looking back to the train, ran to the boy, having to cover the 90-foot distance on the ballast of the track bed. Meanwhile, when the 13,000-ton train, which was traveling at about 35 m.p.h., rounded a bend, its locomotive crew saw Harn running and then saw the boy. The engineer immediately engaged the train's emergency brakes. In a continuous motion, Harn grasped the boy under the arms and lunged away from the track with him seconds before the front of the train passed them. Although the train had decelerated, it continued for about a quarter-mile past the scene before stopping. 80735-9242

**MICHAEL J. ZIMMERMAN**  
Morton, Illinois

Michael J. Zimmerman rescued Paul A. McCollar from burning, Williamsfield, Illinois, August 16, 2007. McCollar, 43, was trapped inside the cab of a tractor-trailer after an accident on an interstate highway. The cab had turned onto its side in the accident, and flames broke out on it and inside. Traveling on the same highway, Zimmerman, 53, mason contractor, came upon the burning wreckage and stopped at the scene. Seeing movement inside the cab, he kicked a hole in the windshield. After another man who had arrived removed that section of windshield, Zimmerman entered the cab through the opening. McCollar, who was conscious, was suspended by his safety belt. Zimmerman freed him and then grasped and pulled him from the cab. McCollar stood, and Zimmerman and the other man walked him across the highway to safety. Flames shortly engulfed the cab. McCollar was hospitalized for treatment of numerous injuries, including a burn to his left hand. He recovered. 80628-9243

CARNEGIE MEDAL



ANDREW CARNEGIE

