



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

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*News Release*

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**CARNEGIE MEDALS AWARDED TO 22  
 FOR EXTRAORDINARY ACTS OF CIVILIAN HEROISM**

PITTSBURGH, PA, April 15, 2010—In its first award announcement of 2010, the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission today named 22 individuals as recipients of the CARNEGIE MEDAL. The medal is given 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.

The heroes announced today bring to 9,349 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 106 years since the Fund was established by industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, more than \$32 million has been given in one-time grants, scholarship aid, death benefits, and continuing assistance.

The awardees are:

- |                                         |                             |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Jon Jesko                               | Michigan City, Ind.         |
| Christopher Adam Skeet                  | Chicago, Ill.               |
| Rory Ahearn                             | Danbury, Conn.              |
| Scott T. Hartigan                       | San Juan Capistrano, Calif. |
| Michael William Stoney                  | Tustin, Calif.              |
| Lawrence Francis Kelly                  | Beaver Meadows, Pa.         |
| John Francis Kelly                      | Drums, Pa.                  |
| Christine Rose Nguyen, <i>deceased</i>  | New Brighton, Minn.         |
| Charlton Lee                            | San Marcos, Calif.          |
| Jamie Hamley                            | Sioux Falls, S.D.           |
| Elijah Jarred Wittum                    | Cleveland, N.C.             |
| Jeremy Dylan McCarroll, <i>deceased</i> | Highlands Ranch, Colo.      |
| Scott Poley                             | Elmira, N.Y.                |
| Samuel D. Gauss                         | Corning, N.Y.               |
| Charles H. Monnier                      | Molalla, Ore.               |
| Michael J. Hickey                       | Patchogue, N.Y.             |
| Stacy L. Behan                          | Tivoli, N.Y.                |
| Thomas J. Connors                       | Islip Terrace, N.Y.         |
| Eric Surbito                            | Ronkonkoma, N.Y.            |
| Duane E. Vanlanham                      | Saginaw, Mich.              |
| Jimmy Avant, <i>deceased</i>            | Chicago, Ill.               |
| Adrian Alexander Jones, <i>deceased</i> | Maywood, 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)

**JON JESKO**  
Michigan City, Indiana

Jon Jesko rescued Joseph M. Grabiak from assault, Michigan City, Indiana, May 6, 2009. Grabiak, 76, was standing outside his vehicle at a service station when a man approached him and, putting a gun to his side, demanded his keys. Grabiak struggled against the man, their course taking them to the front of the station's store, where Grabiak fell to the pavement. During the encounter, Grabiak was shot in the arm by the assailant, whose gun was a BB pistol. The assailant kept Grabiak at gunpoint as he attempted to rob him. Jesko, 49, carpenter superintendent, was in his truck, which had been parked nearby, when he witnessed the assault. Taking his cup of hot coffee, he ran to Grabiak and the assailant and threw the coffee in the assailant's face. Jesko then punched the assailant and wrestled him to the pavement. Another man responded and removed the gun from the immediate scene. Jesko held the assailant down until police arrived shortly and arrested him. Grabiak required hospital treatment for his injuries. 82224-9328

**CHRISTOPHER ADAM SKEET**  
Chicago, Illinois

Christopher Adam Skeet helped to save a boy from drowning, Des Plaines, Illinois, September 15, 2008. A teenaged boy fled his school and was located by school personnel, including Skeet, 30, teacher, along the Des Plaines River. The river was flooded from heavy rains, and its current was swift. The boy mounted a concrete wall adjacent to the river and jumped into it. He submerged, the current then carrying him out from the bank and downstream. Without hesitation, Skeet, fully clothed, jumped into the river and swam to him, but the swift current and the boy's struggling impeded Skeet's initial attempt to tow him back to the wall. They were pulled a distance downstream before Skeet got the boy within reach of the wall. Another man entered the river to help, and people along the wall, including responding police, pulled the boy, the other man, and Skeet from the river. All three were taken to a hospital for examination. Skeet recovered from nausea and muscle ache. 82172-9329

**RORY AHEARN**  
Danbury, Connecticut

Rory Ahearn helped to save Erik M. Lageroos from drowning, Danbury, Connecticut, January 11, 2009. Lageroos, 26, was cross-country skiing on snow- and ice-covered Candlewood Lake when he broke through thin ice at a point about 500 feet from the closest bank. He was able to hoist himself back onto the ice, where he called for help. Ahearn, 57, who lived on the bank in that vicinity, saw Lageroos on the ice and reported the accident. He then went to the edge of the lake and pushed an aluminum rowboat out to Lageroos. With Lageroos holding to a line at the bow of the boat, Ahearn started to return to the bank, pulling the boat. When they were about 100 feet from the bank, Ahearn broke through the ice, striking his head on the boat. He was able to get his legs back onto the ice, but with difficulty, as he maintained his hold of the boat. Firefighters arrived shortly. They secured a line to Ahearn and pulled him to the bank and then secured Lageroos and pulled him through open water to safety. Both men required hospital treatment for hypothermia, and Ahearn for a laceration to his forehead. They recovered. 81921-9330

**SCOTT T. HARTIGAN**  
San Juan Capistrano, California

**MICHAEL WILLIAM STONEY**  
Tustin, California

Scott T. Hartigan and Michael William Stoney helped to save a woman from falling, Dana Point, California, October 27, 2008. A 39-year-old woman intent on committing suicide climbed onto the narrow ledge of an interstate highway overpass and held by her fingers to a chain-link fence along the edge of the overpass. Motorists, including Hartigan, 46, business operator, and his brother stopped on the overpass. While his brother held to the woman's fingers from the other side of the fence and talked to her, Hartigan scaled the 10-foot fence and positioned himself on the four-inch ledge, which was about 35 feet above the highway pavement. He straddled the woman from behind, pinning her to the fence. She struggled against him, but Hartigan retained his hold of her for several minutes. Law enforcement personnel, including Stoney, 35, highway patrol officer, arrived, as did firefighters. Seeing that Hartigan was stressed, Stoney went around the nearer end of the fence and made his way about 80 feet along the ledge to him and the woman. He helped to secure the woman to the fence with a line that was passed through it and then directed Hartigan to return to safety. Hartigan scaled the fence back to the overpass deck as Stoney took his place in pressing the woman to the fence. Stoney handcuffed her to the fence as she continued to struggle. When those on the overpass cut a hole in the fence, Stoney, who had been joined by a sheriff's deputy, passed the woman through it to safety and then followed her there. She required hospitalization.

81735-9331 / 81734-9332

**LAWRENCE FRANCIS KELLY**  
Beaver Meadows, Pennsylvania

**JOHN FRANCIS KELLY**  
Drums, Pennsylvania

Lawrence Francis Kelly and John Francis Kelly saved Joseph J. Galada, Jr., from drowning, Hazleton, Pennsylvania, March 14, 2009. While ice fishing on Lake Irena, Galada, 63, broke through weak ice at a point about 250 feet from the bank and could not climb back out. He called for help to his two friends, Lawrence, 59, retired welder, and his brother John, 65, retired miner, who were nearer the bank. Lawrence and John took Galada's plastic sled with them as they made their way across the ice toward him. The ice cracked as they approached, and they closed the distance to him while crawling on their stomachs. Lawrence and John extended the sled to Galada, who grasped it, but with difficulty because of the numbing cold. Requiring repeated attempts, they pulled Galada from the open water, their efforts creating a channel in the ice over the course of several feet. After pulling Galada to safer ice, Lawrence and John walked him back to the bank. Galada recovered after resting at home for two days.

82234-9333 / 82324-9334

**CHRISTINE ROSE NGUYEN, *deceased***  
New Brighton, Minnesota

Christine Rose Nguyen died after saving Anne R. Schaper from assault, New Brighton, Minnesota, July 17, 2008. Anne, 17, and her mother, Nguyen, 48, homemaker, had just returned home and were standing on opposite sides of their car when Anne's former boyfriend approached the vehicle from Nguyen's side. He was holding a loaded handgun, which was raised above his head. Knowing that he had been stalking Anne, Nguyen moved to a point at the rear of the car to block his path to her, and she put up her arms to stop him. Anne opened the rear door on her side of the car and got into the back seat. The assailant forced Nguyen against the rear of the car and shot her in the abdomen. Anne fled the vehicle through the other rear door and began to run from the scene. The assailant started to follow her, firing the gun repeatedly before fleeing. He was located the next day and arrested. Nguyen was taken to the hospital for treatment of her wound and died there within a few hours.

81424-9335

**CHARLTON LEE**  
San Marcos, California

Charlton Lee rescued Kendra L. Beebe from assault, San Marcos, California, August 10, 2008. A man approached Beebe, 35, while she was in her back yard and stabbed her repeatedly. Her screams for help attracted the attention of her next-door neighbor, Lee, 32, systems administrator. While Lee looked for a weapon and responded to Beebe's property, Beebe fled through her house to the front porch, where she lay on a seat. Lee saw her there, with the assailant standing beside her, menacing her with the knife. Lee told the assailant to put the knife down, and after a few moments he did so. Lee then entered the porch, moved the knife away from the assailant, and began to tend to Beebe's wounds as the assailant remained nearby. The assailant shortly walked away but was apprehended by police. Beebe required hospitalization for treatment of numerous and severe knife wounds. 81893-9336

**JAMIE HAMLEY**  
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Jamie Hamley rescued Cody R. Doohen from burning, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, January 27, 2009. Doohen, 20, was unconscious in the front-seat area of his two-door car after the vehicle collided with another and caught fire. Another motorist, Hamley, 33, delivery handler and college student, was approaching the scene and witnessed the accident. He took a fire extinguisher from his vehicle, ran to Doohen's car, and extinguished flames on the driver's side to access that door. Unable to open it, Hamley went to the passenger side of the vehicle and emptied the extinguisher inside, through the broken-out window of the passenger door. He then extended his upper body into the car through the window and felt for Doohen. After withdrawing for air, Hamley re-entered, grasped Doohen, and pulled him head first through the window. He dragged him to safety moments before flames spread to engulf the car. Doohen was hospitalized for treatment of his injuries, and Hamley suffered minor smoke inhalation, from which he soon recovered. 81936-9337

**ELIJAH JARRED WITTUM**  
Cleveland, North Carolina

Elijah Jarred Wittum saved Marlon Porfirio from drowning, Cooleemee, North Carolina, May 30, 2009. Marlon, 15, was swept downstream by the very swift current of the South Yadkin River, which was swollen and muddied from heavy rain. He shouted for help. In another party at the scene, Elijah, 16, high school student, was in wadable water near the bank. He immediately entered the deeper water and swam downstream after Marlon, reaching him at a point about 30 feet out. Both boys then submerged, but Elijah broke free and surfaced. He went under the water, found Marlon, and returned him to the surface. Holding to Marlon, Elijah swam toward the bank as the current carried them downstream. They reached a tree that extended from the bank over the water, and Elijah grasped it. Men who were fishing nearby took Marlon into the tree and then to the bank, Elijah following. Marlon was taken to the hospital, and Elijah was tired after the rescue and sustained scratches to his arms, but he recovered. 82286-9338

**JEREMY DYLAN MCCARROLL, *deceased***  
Highlands Ranch, Colorado

Jeremy Dylan McCarroll died attempting to save Amber N. Jeffers and Joseph A. Shedron from burning, Littleton, Colorado, August 3, 2008. In early morning, Jeffers, 18, and Shedron, 22, were in a bedroom on the second floor of a two-story house after fire broke out on the first floor and spread. McCarroll, 20, college student, and two other young men were spending the night in the house and awoke to flames in the living room. They fled the house to safety, McCarroll and one of the other men exiting through the front door. On hearing screaming, they re-entered through the front door, McCarroll then going to the second floor as the other man went to search the basement. Flames spread quickly, the other man sustaining extensive burns as he fled the basement. Firefighters found the bodies of Jeffers, Shedron, and McCarroll in the debris of the second-floor bedroom. All had died of smoke inhalation. 81868-9339

**SCOTT POLEY**  
Elmira, New York

**SAMUEL D. GAUSS**  
Corning, New York

Scott Poley and Samuel D. Gauss helped to rescue Amy L. Lindsay from assault, Painted Post, New York, March 14, 2008. With her estranged husband in pursuit, Lindsay, 35, drove onto the campus of the vocational school she was attending. When her vehicle overturned onto the lawn, her husband pulled her from it and started to beat her with the butt of an assault rifle. Poley, 55, internship coordinator, witnessed the crash from a few hundred feet away and responded to the scene with Gauss, 38, the school's principal. Approaching the assailant, they shouted at him to stop the attack, but the assailant pointed the rifle at them and ordered them back. Poley and Gauss retreated somewhat, and the assailant resumed beating Lindsay. They approached again, but again the assailant threatened them. When the assailant then turned to resume the attack on Lindsay, Poley ran to him from behind and tackled him, the assailant retaining control of the rifle. A state police officer who had just arrived joined in the attempt to overpower the assailant, who started to rise from the ground. While the officer struggled with him, striking him with his gun, Poley and Gauss stomped on the assailant's hands and otherwise worked to disarm him. Gauss removed the rifle from the immediate scene, and Poley helped the officer to subdue the assailant as other officers were arriving to arrest him. Lindsay required hospital treatment for her injuries. 81642-9340 / 81673-9341

**CHARLES H. MONNIER**  
Molalla, Oregon

Charles H. Monnier rescued Christopher J. Friesen from attacking dogs, Molalla, Oregon, December 25, 2008. Before dawn, Friesen, 21, was walking on the sidewalk in a residential neighborhood when two adult dogs of American Bulldog mix charged him without provocation. Taking him to the ground, they bit him repeatedly and tore off much of his clothing. His screams for help drew the attention of Monnier, 66, retired lumber foreman, who lived at the scene. Clad only in his nightclothes, Monnier left his house and, taking a shovel with him, ran across the street toward Friesen. Swinging the shovel, Monnier hollered at the dogs, one of which backed off. The larger, 80-pound dog turned on Monnier but then backed down, and both dogs left the scene. Friesen required hospital treatment for numerous bite wounds. The dogs were captured the following day and later euthanized. 81856-9342

**MICHAEL J. HICKEY**  
Patchogue, New York

Michael J. Hickey rescued Karl Hawkins and Jean Hastic from burning, Queens, New York, July 12, 2006. Hawkins, 44, and Hastic, 60, were among nine passengers in a van that left the highway and struck a tree. Fire erupted immediately on the vehicle and spread to its interior. Another motorist, Hickey, 35, truck driver, came upon the scene and stopped. He entered the van through a side door and pulled Hawkins out and to the pavement. Despite flames issuing throughout the van's interior, he stepped inside again and found that Hastic was caught in the wreckage. He freed her, pulled her from the van, and carried her away. Growing flames precluded Hawkins's further rescue attempts, and five of the passengers perished, the driver and two other passengers escaping to safety. Both Hawkins and Hastic required hospitalization for treatment of their burns.

79537-9343

**STACY L. BEHAN**  
Tivoli, New York

Stacy L. Behan rescued Robert T. Chilinski from burning, Tivoli, New York, April 26, 2009. Chilinski, 26, was the driver of a car that, late at night, left the highway and, striking trees and overturning, came to rest upright in a field. Unconscious, he remained in the driver's seat as flames broke out on the vehicle and entered it on the passenger side through the missing windshield. Behan, 40, homemaker, who lived nearby, ran to the scene in her nightclothes after hearing the accident. She approached the driver's door and, finding it partially ajar, opened it further. Wedging the door open with her back, she extended her upper body into the car and unlatched Chilinski's safety belt. Behan wrapped her arms around Chilinski, who outweighed her by 55 pounds, and pulled him out of the vehicle and to the ground. Her husband, who had reported the accident, and a police officer arrived about then and dragged Chilinski farther away to safety. Flames soon engulfed the vehicle. Chilinski required hospitalization for treatment of his injuries, which included burns. Behan recovered from a cut to her back.

82196-9344

**THOMAS J. CONNORS**  
Islip Terrace, New York

**ERIC SURBITO**  
Ronkonkoma, New York

Thomas J. Connors and Eric Surbito helped to save Alice Benedict from burning, Port Jefferson, New York, January 11, 2009. Benedict, 74, was overcome by smoke on the second floor of the two-story convent where she resided after fire broke out in the chapel, which was at one end of the first floor. As the convent was located on the campus of a hospital, the hospital's security guards, including Connors, 52, and Surbito, 28, were alerted. They responded to the convent and learned that Benedict was inside. Connors and Surbito, who was also a full-time firefighter for another municipality, broke through a door at the opposite end of the building. They entered, but dense smoke precluded visibility, and, unable to breathe, they exited for air. Re-entering, Connors heard Benedict call out for help as he advanced toward the second floor. Surbito re-entered the building and joined him. They proceeded to the second story, where they found Benedict on the floor. The men took her to the stairway and down to the first floor, where they met arriving firefighters. Removed from the convent, Benedict was taken to the hospital, where she was detained for treatment of smoke inhalation. She fully recovered. Connors and Surbito also received hospital treatment for inhaling smoke, and they too recovered.

81919-9345 / 81920-9346

**DUANE E. VANLANHAM**  
Saginaw, Michigan

Duane E. Vanlanham helped to rescue Bridgetta N. Hadley from attacking dogs, Saginaw, Michigan, March 5, 2009. Hadley, 41, was about to enter her vehicle when three female dogs of pit bull mix charged and attacked her. They took her to the ground and bit her about the arms and legs. Hadley attempted to fight the dogs off as she screamed for help, alerting a neighbor, Vanlanham, 48, disabled laborer, who lived across the street. Taking a stick with him, Vanlanham immediately ran to Hadley, who had regained her footing, and struck one of the dogs with it. As he worked to free Hadley of the dogs, a car stopped at the scene, and Hadley entered it. Vanlanham attempted to escape to the hood of the car, but the dogs pulled him from it, took him to the ground, and mauled him, inflicting severe injury to his legs and feet. Police arrived and dispersed the dogs. Hadley and Vanlanham required hospital treatment, including surgery, for their wounds, Vanlanham developing complications that necessitated amputation of several fingers and toes. 82075-9347

**JIMMY AVANT, *deceased***  
Chicago, Illinois

**ADRIAN ALEXANDER JONES, *deceased***  
Maywood, Illinois

Jimmy Avant and Adrian Alexander Jones died attempting to save Melvin Choice, Jr., from drowning, Algonquin, Illinois, November 14, 2008. Melvin, 17, was one of a group of high school boys that, late at night, took several paddleboats onto the Fox River at the camp where they were attending a seminar. The boat that Melvin and two of the other boys were in was taking on water at about the center of the 300-foot-wide river. Two of the other students on the bank, Jimmy, 18, and Adrian, 16, boarded one of the paddleboats and made their way toward the disabled boat. Melvin entered the 42-degree water from that boat in an attempt to swim, but he began to struggle in the eight-foot-deep water. Although he was wearing extra attire, Jimmy dived from his paddleboat and swam toward Melvin, as did Adrian. The three boys struggled and then submerged. Divers recovered them from the river several hours later. All had drowned. 81961-9348 / 81962-9349

CARNEGIE MEDAL



ANDREW CARNEGIE

