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News Release

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20 CARNEGIE MEDALS AWARDED FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM IN U.S., CANADA

PITTSBURGH, PA, APRIL 27, 2000—In its second award announcement of 2000, the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission today named 20 individuals from throughout the United States and Canada as recipients of the Carnegie Medal. The bronze medal is given to persons who risk their lives to an extraordinary degree while saving or attempting to save the lives of others.

The heroes announced today bring to 39 the number of persons honored by the Commission in 2000 to date and to 8,380 the total number of awards made since the Pittsburgh-based Fund's inception in 1904. Commission President Robert W. Off stated that each of the awardees will receive also a grant of \$3,500. Throughout the 96 years since the Fund was established by industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, \$24.1 million has been given in one-time grants, scholarship aid, death benefits, and continuing assistance.

The awardees are:

Gregory Plageman, Jr.	Davie, Fla.
William David Pennell	Monongahela, Pa.
Clarence W. Purdy	Columbia Falls, Mont.
Ty L. McBride	Charlotte, N.C.
Robert D. McKnight	Fort Worth, Texas
Mark Steven Joss	Port Colborne, Ont.
Myra Baloun	Surrey, B.C.
Kurt Seebacher	Hartville, Ohio
Jean-Guy Gravelle	Mississauga, Ont.
Tom A. Fatsis	Mississauga, Ont.
James T. Brown	Bowie, Texas
Michelle Foxworth	Hartford, Ala.
Daniel R. Paulson	Milwaukee, Wisc.
George Alfred Sanchez	Fort Worth, Texas
Roger J. Guthrie	Grosse Isle, Mich.
Kerry W. Clark	Medina, Ohio
L. A. Stevens	Burlington, N.C.
Patrick H. Egan	Vernon, N.Y.
Robert Earl Vaughn	South Paris, Maine
Louis J. Buddy	Williamstown, N.J.

Resumes of the acts follow. To nominate someone for the Carnegie Medal, write the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, 425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 1640, Pittsburgh, PA 15219, or call (toll free) 1-800-447-8900.

GREGORY PLAGEMAN, JR.
Davie, Florida

Gregory Plageman, Jr., saved Pearl Steinberg from burning, Pembroke Pines, Florida, June 24, 1999. Ms. Steinberg, 85, remained in the driver's seat of her car after the car knocked over a gasoline pump at a service station. Flames broke out immediately at the downed pump and quickly grew to engulf the back and sides of the car, and flames entered the rear of the vehicle through a broken-out window. After an unsuccessful attempt to put the fire out with an extinguisher, an employee of the station, Plageman, 26, automobile mechanic, forced opened the car's driver's door, partially entered the car, and released Ms. Steinberg's safety belt. He then grasped Ms. Steinberg and pulled her out of the car, then led her to safety. Within minutes, the flames, which had grown to reach an 18-foot-high canopy over the pumps, consumed the vehicle. Plageman sustained a minor cut on his leg, from which he recovered. 73775-8361

WILLIAM DAVID PENNELL
Monongahela, Pennsylvania

William David Pennell rescued Justin C. Ostrander, Christopher M. Napolitan, and James T. Housley from burning, Monongahela, Pennsylvania, March 30, 1999. Ostrander, 23; Napolitan, 20, and Housley, 21, were the occupants of a car that, at night, struck a utility pole head on and caught fire in the engine area. They remained in the car, incapacitated. Asleep in his home nearby, Pennell, 37, heavy equipment operator, was alerted to the accident and responded to the scene wearing only sweat pants. After struggling to open the car's damaged driver's door, Pennell leaned inside, grasped Ostrander, and pulled him out of the car, then dragged him away from it. Despite flames intensifying on the front of the car and entering the interior at the dashboard and floorboard, Pennell returned to the driver's door, again leaned inside, and grasped Napolitan about the upper body. As Napolitan's knees were stuck under the dashboard, Pennell pulled several times and, with difficulty, freed him as burning material dripped from the ceiling onto Pennell's bare arms and back. Pennell pulled Napolitan from the car then returned to it. Crouching low, he extended his upper body into the car a third time. He grasped Housley by the shirt collar and pulled him through the driver's door and to safety. The car was shortly engulfed by flame. Ostrander, Napolitan, and Housley were hospitalized for treatment of injuries they sustained in the accident, Ostrander's and Napolitan's including burns. Pennell sustained burns to his arm and back and cuts to his feet. He missed a day's work and recovered in about three weeks. 73546-8362

CLARENCE W. PURDY
Columbia Falls, Montana

Clarence W. Purdy helped to save Jerry K. Pate from burning, Polson, Montana, November 3, 1998. Pate, 38, was unconscious in his pickup truck after the vehicle left the highway, rolled over, and came to rest upright in a ditch. Traveling on the same highway, Purdy, 70, retired foreman, and his wife came upon the scene and saw the truck, which was burning. Although requiring a prosthesis since having his lower right leg amputated two years earlier, Purdy climbed down into the ditch and approached the pickup. As flames issued from underneath the truck's hood and were entering its interior along the base of the windshield, Purdy broke out the remaining glass of the passenger-door window. He then extended his head and upper body through the window and grasped Pate, who was then semiconscious. Purdy pulled Pate headfirst through the window. Pate fell to the ground. With flames growing on the truck and heat intensifying, Purdy and his wife dragged Pate away from the truck, then removed him from the ditch and took him to their own vehicle, where they tended him. Pate's truck was shortly engulfed by flames. Pate required hospital treatment for a shoulder injury. 73422-8363

TY L. MCBRIDE
Charlotte, North Carolina

Ty L. McBride rescued John W. Phillips, Jr., from burning, Charlotte, North Carolina, January 23, 1999. Phillips, 46, was seriously injured and trapped in the driver's seat of his car after the vehicle left the highway, struck a stand of trees, and caught fire in its engine area. McBride, 25, account executive, was traveling on the same highway when he was flagged down by another motorist and alerted to the accident. Stopping at the scene, McBride responded to the badly damaged car with a fire extinguisher, which he used against the flames. Seeing Phillips struggling amidst flames that were spreading along the driver's side of the car, McBride stepped over wreckage along the passenger side and entered the back-seat area of the car, the interior of which was exposed. He patted at flames on Phillips's attire then attempted without success to release his safety belt. After exiting the car for a knife but then realizing that he had a pocketknife on him, McBride re-entered the car and cut Phillips's safety belt. He then grasped Phillips and pulled him toward the passenger side of the car. With flame conditions worsening, McBride repositioned himself, in the front-seat area of the wreckage, and pulled Phillips from the car. Another man who had arrived helped to move Phillips away. Phillips was taken to the hospital, where he died a few hours later of his injuries and extensive burns. McBride also required hospital treatment, for first- and second-degree burns to his face and hands. He recovered. 73343-8364

ROBERT D. MCKNIGHT
Fort Worth, Texas

Robert D. McKnight rescued Kaylee McNinch from burning, Fort Worth, Texas, January 5, 1999. Kaylee, 1, was in a crib in a bedroom of her family's one-story house when fire erupted in the bathroom, across the hall. A neighbor, McKnight, 33, was alerted to the fire by Kaylee's mother, who informed him also of Kaylee's location. By then, the fire had spread to the hall. McKnight broke out a window to Kaylee's bedroom and climbed through it. He could see nothing in the bedroom because of the smoke but moved, stumbling, toward the sound of Kaylee's crying. About 10 feet from the window, McKnight found Kaylee's crib, which was next to the door leading to the hall. Heat in that part of the room was blistering. McKnight lifted Kaylee from the crib, then retraced his steps to the window with her. He climbed through the window and jumped safely to the ground. Kaylee required hospital treatment for smoke inhalation, as did McKnight. He fully recovered. 73352-8365

MARK STEVEN JOSS
Port Colborne, Ontario

Mark Steven Joss rescued Brandon Kepez from burning, Welland, Ontario, May 22, 1999. Brandon, 2, was in the second-floor hall of his family's two-story duplex home after fire broke out there and filled the hall with dense smoke. A neighbor, Joss, 36, butcher, saw smoke issuing from the structure and responded to the scene, where he learned of Brandon's whereabouts. Joss ascended the stairs to the second floor, then stepped over foot-high flames on the carpeting in an attempt to find Brandon. After being nearly overcome by smoke, Joss returned to the first floor. He exited the house, then returned with a garden hose, which he handed to another neighbor who had responded. As that man fought the flames with the hose, Joss again went to the second floor and, feeling his way through the hall, found Brandon on the floor, unconscious. He picked Brandon up, returned to the stairs, and carried him downstairs to safety. Brandon was revived at the scene, then was taken to the hospital, where he was detained for treatment of first- and second-degree burns. Joss also required hospital treatment, for smoke inhalation, and he recovered. 73678-8366

MYRA BALOUN
Surrey, British Columbia

Myra Baloun rescued Tayla E. Westgard from an attacking cougar, Hope, British Columbia, April 17, 1999. Tayla, 7, was with two other girls at a camp in a wooded area when a 30-pound cougar attacked her. The other girls fled, screaming. Also attending the camp, Ms. Baloun, 43, homemaker, was nearby and heard the screams. She ran toward Tayla, en route seeing the attack. Ms. Baloun shouted at the cougar, then picked up a branch and approached it. She struck the cougar several times with the branch, until it released Tayla. Ms. Baloun grasped Tayla and pulled her to her feet, then fled the scene with her. Tracked down, the cougar was found in a tree about 200 feet away, then was destroyed. Tayla was hospitalized for treatment of a severe eye injury and numerous lacerations that required extensive suturing. 73643-8367

KURT SEEBACHER
Hartville, Ohio

Kurt Seebacher rescued Betty M. Stoll from burning, Hartville, Ohio, January 11, 1999. At night, Ms. Stoll, 82, was asleep in a first-floor bedroom of her two-story frame house when she was awakened to a fire that was spreading through the adjacent living room. She retreated to a small sewing room near the front door, where she telephoned her son-in-law, Seebacher, 56, restaurateur, who lived next door. Seebacher arrived to find that flames had spread throughout most of the first floor and were burning on the outside walls and the roof of the house. After determining Ms. Stoll's location, Seebacher entered the house through its front door, then crawled into the sewing room. Rather than retrace his path toward the advancing flames, Seebacher led Ms. Stoll into the adjoining garage. He attempted to open the automatic garage door, but electricity to the house was out by then. In the darkness, Seebacher found the door's manual release and opened the door. He and Ms. Stoll then fled the house, shortly before flames destroyed most of it. Ms. Stoll sustained minor burns to her face and was hospitalized three days for treatment of smoke inhalation. Seebacher also required hospital treatment, for smoke inhalation and a second-degree burn to his right knee. They recovered. 73367-8368

JEAN-GUY GRAVELLE
TOM A. FATSIS
Mississauga, Ontario

Jean-Guy Gravelle and Tom A. Fatsis saved Joao DaSilva from being struck by a train, Mississauga, Ontario, December 22, 1998. DaSilva, 32, remained in the driver's seat of his car, which, in darkness, was stranded on the center of three railroad tracks not far from a highway crossing. Traveling on the highway, Gravelle, 37, business operator, and his brother-in-law, Fatsis, 33, technician, saw the car and, after parking, began to approach it on foot, Gravelle alerting authorities by portable telephone. While they were en route to the car, the crossing's gates and warning mechanisms were activated, indicating the approach of a freight train, which was traveling at about 40 m.p.h. As the train was not in sight because of a curve in the tracks, Gravelle and Fatsis did not know on which track the train was traveling. They ran to the car. Gravelle opened the driver's door and pulled DaSilva from the vehicle, but, resisting, DaSilva attempted to get back in. Gravelle and Fatsis secured a hold on DaSilva and moved him away from the track just before the train, in emergency braking, struck the car and pushed it along the track about a quarter-mile before stopping. 73346-8369 / 73345-8370

JAMES T. BROWN
Bowie, Texas

James T. Brown saved Donnan M. Caraway from burning, Chico, Texas, December 15, 1998. Donnan, 14, was inside her family's mobile home after fire erupted in the living room and filled the home with dense smoke. Donnan retreated to the rear bedroom. A motorist, Brown, 43, purchasing agent, drove upon the scene and stopped. Donnan's mother had escaped the mobile home and, unable to re-enter, was fighting the fire with a garden hose. She told Brown that Donnan remained inside. Directing to be wet down with the hose, Brown entered the mobile home through its rear door and crawled into the bedroom where Donnan's mother suspected her to be. Dense smoke precluded any visibility. Unsuccessful in locating Donnan, Brown crawled back toward the door for further direction. On his second attempt, he located Donnan on a bed in that room. He pulled her off the bed, then held her as he crawled back to the door. He deposited Donnan through the door, then, with help, exited the mobile home himself. Donnan was hospitalized two days for treatment of smoke inhalation, and she recovered. Brown also required hospital treatment, for having inhaled smoke, and he too recovered. 73305-8371

MICHELLE FOXWORTH
Hartford, Alabama

Michelle Foxworth rescued James F. Spann from burning, Hartford, Alabama, May 1, 1999. Spann, 35, was trapped in the driver's seat of the car he had been operating after the car left the roadway and crashed into a mobile home, coming to rest partially inside the home. Fire broke out and spread to both the interior of the car and the mobile home. Ms. Foxworth, 24, secretary, who lived next door, heard the crash and responded to the scene. She attempted to open the car's passenger door but found it jammed. She then obtained a hammer and broke out the car's rear window. Mounting the trunk of the car, Ms. Foxworth partially entered the vehicle through the rear window. The car's front seats and dashboard were in flames, and Spann had flames on his right arm and lower body. After patting out some of the flames on him, Ms. Foxworth grasped Spann and, although he greatly outweighed her, pulled him into the back seat, then through the window and onto the trunk of the car. She took Spann to the ground and helped to extinguish the flames on him, then helped move him away from the burning car. The car and the mobile home were destroyed in the accident and fire. Spann required extensive hospitalization for treatment of serious burns and a back injury. Ms. Foxworth sustained cuts, bruises, and minor burns, to her hands. She recovered. 73647-8372

DANIEL R. PAULSON
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Daniel R. Paulson helped to save a woman from drowning, Port Washington, Wisconsin, February 2, 1999. In a suicide attempt, a 71-year-old woman jumped, fully clothed, from atop a seawall into a slip of a harbor off Lake Michigan. Alerted to the situation by others, Paulson, 30, tile setter, who was fishing nearby, went to the scene. The woman was floating face down and inert in about 10 feet of water, at a point about 25 feet from the wall. Despite the air temperature near freezing, Paulson, removing only his jacket and leaving his boots on, jumped feet first into the frigid water of the slip and swam to the woman. Securing a hold on her to keep her head out of the water, he towed her back to the seawall, the top of which was about six feet above the water. From atop the seawall, another man reached down and pulled the woman up as Paulson lifted her. Paulson then swam 30 feet to a ladder on the seawall and climbed out of the slip. The woman survived and was hospitalized. Paulson was cold, and he suffered sore muscles; he recovered. 73551-8373

GEORGE ALFRED SANCHEZ
Fort Worth, Texas

George Alfred Sanchez rescued Marcus Barraza from burning, Mesquite, Texas, March 15, 1999. Barraza, 55, was unconscious in the driver's seat of his car after an accident on an interstate highway in which the car was struck from behind. Flames broke out at the rear of the car and grew, entering its interior, in the back-seat area. Sanchez, 32, bakery employee, was driving on the same highway and stopped at the scene when he saw the burning car. He approached the driver's side and, after attempting without success to open the front door, kicked in the door's window. Sanchez reached into the car and released Barraza's safety belt. He then ran to the passenger side of the car, opened the front door, and entered, but dense smoke and blistering heat caused him to withdraw. Sanchez entered again, grabbed Barraza by the collar, and pulled him across the seat and out of the car. He lowered Barraza to the pavement, then dragged him about 30 feet to safety, the car shortly becoming engulfed by flame. Barraza sustained burns to his upper torso and face and required hospitalization. Sanchez also required hospital treatment, for first- and second-degree burns to his left arm, the left side of his face, and his forehead. He recovered.

73565-8374

ROGER J. GUTHRIE
Grosse Isle, Michigan

KERRY W. CLARK
Medina, Ohio

Roger J. Guthrie and Kerry W. Clark rescued David G. Hall and saved Eric S. Frey from burning, Medina, Ohio, February 7, 1999. Hall, 33, and Frey, 38, both special agents of a federal bureau, were unconscious in the wreckage of a six-seat airplane that crashed in a wooded area and caught fire. The plane contained firearms and a large quantity of ammunition that began to explode as heat from the growing flames intensified. Guthrie, 42, also a special agent, was himself a passenger in the plane, but he escaped through its broken windshield. Despite injuries sustained in the crash, including a broken ankle, Guthrie went to the side of the fuselage and extended his upper body into the plane through a window next to the pilot's seat. He released Hall's safety belt, then pulled him from the plane and dragged him a short distance away. Guthrie returned to the plane, extended his upper body through a small opening in the fuselage at the rear of the plane, and grasped Frey. He pulled Frey from the plane and dragged him away. From his home a quarter-mile away, Clark, 49, truck driver, had heard the plane crash. He ran to the scene. The plane engulfed by flames by then with ammunition continuing to explode, Clark and Guthrie together dragged Hall, then Frey, farther away, to a point in the woods offering some protection. Hall and Frey required hospitalization for their injuries, Hall's including a burn to his left hand. Guthrie was hospitalized four days for treatment of his injuries.

73537-8375 / 73474-8376

L. A. STEVENS
Burlington, North Carolina

L. A. Stevens rescued Millard F. Massey from burning, Burlington, North Carolina, September 29, 1998. Massey, 74, was in a first-floor bedroom of his two-story home after fire erupted in that room. He attempted to extinguish the flames. A neighbor, Stevens, 48, plumber, saw fire at Massey's house and went to the scene, where, through a window in the bedroom, he saw Massey fighting the flames. Stevens entered the house, which was filled with smoke, and ran to the burning bedroom. He approached Massey, catching him as he collapsed, and backed out of the house, dragging him. Flames spread to other rooms, and the house was destroyed. Massey was taken to the hospital for treatment of smoke inhalation and a burn on his arm, from which he recovered.

73314-8377

PATRICK H. EGAN
Vernon, New York

Patrick H. Egan saved Bernard K. Waugh from burning, Vernon, New York, June 16, 1999. Waugh, 58, was trapped inside the car he had been driving after an accident in which the car left the roadway, struck a utility pole, and, coming to rest upside down, caught fire. Live power lines were downed in the vicinity of the car. A passing motorist, Egan, 39, contractor, drove upon the scene after the accident and immediately responded to Waugh's car. He unsuccessfully attempted to open the car's passenger-side doors, then, with a metal bar he obtained from his vehicle, broke out the window to the front door on that side of the car. Despite flames four feet high on the underside of the car and entering its interior, Egan reached through the window and grasped Waugh by the shoulders. He pulled him headfirst from the car then ran to safety with him. Growing flames engulfed the car and spread to the downed lines, which began to arc. Waugh was taken to the hospital for cuts on his head and hands, from which he recovered.

73720-8378

ROBERT EARL VAUGHN
South Paris, Maine

Robert Earl Vaughn rescued Mary J. Edmunds and Merrill C. Allen from assault, South Paris, Maine, October 12, 1999. Ms. Edmunds, 60, and Ms. Allen, 58, clerks in a convenience store, were approached by a 17-year-old boy, who, armed with a gun, demanded money. Ms. Edmunds presented the cash tray to the assailant, and he collected money from it as he threatened Ms. Allen with the gun. Vaughn, 39, ironworker, whose wife owned the store, was standing in a kitchen area not far from the assailant but out of view. He approached the assailant and reached to disarm him. The assailant turned and shot Vaughn in the chest at close range. Vaughn then struggled with the assailant over a course that took them out the store's front door. They fell to the ground, the assailant dropping the gun. The assailant and an accomplice fled but were apprehended shortly by police. Hospitalized 25 days, Vaughn required two surgeries to repair multiple internal organs damaged by the gunshot. He suffered other ill effect and was out of work for about four months.

73972-8379

LOUIS J. BUDDY
Williamstown, New Jersey

Louis J. Buddy saved Helen K. Lesko from suffocation, Williamstown, New Jersey, April 2, 1999. Ms. Lesko, 80, was in a bedroom of her mobile home after fire broke out in the crawl space beneath the structure and filled it with dense smoke. Preparing to leave his nearby home for work, Buddy, 30, mail carrier, discovered the fire. He ran to the scene, where thick, black smoke was issuing from underneath Ms. Lesko's mobile home and from around its doors and windows. Buddy kicked in the front door, awakening Ms. Lesko, then entered the mobile home repeatedly in attempts to penetrate the smoke. He shouted to Ms. Lesko, and when she answered him from the rear of the home, Buddy went to the back door and entered. He proceeded across the kitchen and had started through the hall when he stumbled over Ms. Lesko, who lay semiconscious on the floor. Buddy picked her up and carried her through the back door to safety. Both Ms. Lesko and Buddy required treatment for smoke inhalation, and they recovered.

73586-8380

CARNEGIE MEDAL



ANDREW CARNEGIE

