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News Release

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CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION CITES 19 FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM IN U.S., CANADA

PITTSBURGH, PA, APRIL 26, 2001—In its second award announcement of 2001, the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission today named 19 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. Two of the awardees died in the performance of their heroic acts.

The heroes announced today bring to 42 the number of persons who have been recognized in 2001 and to 8,488 the total number of persons honored by the Commission since the Pittsburgh-based Fund's inception in 1904. Commission President Robert W. Off stated that each of the awardees or their survivors will receive also a grant of \$3,500. Throughout the 97 years since the Fund was established by industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, \$24.8 million has been given in one-time grants, scholarship aid, death benefits, and continuing assistance.

The awardees are:

Curtis Tyler Baughman	Dothan, Ala.
Albert Allen Ward III	Baton Rouge, La.
J. Granger Harriss IV	Baton Rouge, La.
Richard Eckler	Pensacola, Fla.
Joel B. LeDon	Gilroy, Calif.
Mark Steven Plock	Shannon, Ill.
Duane A. Plock	Lanark, Ill.
Duane James	Fairhaven, Mass.
Gary L. McCane, Jr.	Louisville, Ky.
Cory Romero	Greeley, Colo.
Emmanuel E. Wynn, deceased	Daytona Beach, Fla.
Sandeep Singh	Brockville, Ont.
Brian Wiggins	Oxnard, Calif.
Joshua James Squibb, deceased	Centralia, Wash.
Jean McDonald Burgmeier	Dubuque, Iowa
Billy Ray Dorsey	Grass Lake, Mich.
Edward Marks	Brownsville, Texas
Rafael González	Chelsea, Mass.
Robert E. McKay	Chelsea, Mass.

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 1-800-447-8900 (toll free).

CURTIS TYLER BAUGHMAN
Dothan, Alabama

Curtis Tyler Baughman saved James Davis and Charlotte Taylor from burning, Dothan, Alabama, April 18, 2000. Davis and Ms. Taylor were inside a mobile home after fire erupted in its living room and filled the structure with dense smoke that precluded visibility. Curtis, 16, high school student, who lived nearby, saw smoke and responded to the scene, as did his stepfather and another man. Concluding that Davis and Ms. Taylor were still inside, they went to a window of the bedroom in the far end of the mobile home and called to the couple. Hearing them in the bedroom, the men boosted Curtis up to the open window, and Curtis climbed through it. He crawled through the smoke-filled room to the bed on which he found Davis, who was conscious. He pulled Davis to the floor, then to the window, Davis crawling behind him. The two men outside the mobile home pulled Davis through the window to safety. After putting his head out the window for air, Curtis turned and again crawled through the smoke, to search for Ms. Taylor. Finding her unconscious on the floor, Curtis dragged her to the window and positioned her. The two men pulled her through the window, then aided Curtis in exiting through the window. The fire spread quickly and destroyed the mobile home. Curtis, Davis, and Ms. Taylor were taken to the hospital, where Curtis was treated for smoke inhalation. He recovered in two days. 74414-8470

ALBERT ALLEN WARD III
J. GRANGER HARRISS IV
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

RICHARD ECKLER
Pensacola, Florida

Albert Allen Ward III, J. Granger Harriss IV, and Richard Eckler rescued Robert Allen, Jr., from burning, Kenner, Louisiana, December 31, 1998. Allen, 33, was the driver of a car that was hit from behind by a truck while traveling on an interstate highway bridge that spanned a spillway off Lake Pontchartrain. Flames immediately erupted on the rear of the car, which came to rest with its passenger side against the bridge's concrete rail. Ward, 26, and Harriss, 22, college students, were approaching the scene when they saw the car fire, as did Eckler, 34, telephone technician, who also had been traveling on the bridge. After they stopped and learned that the car was occupied, Ward attempted to gain access through the window of its driver's door, but he was not successful, and Eckler used fire extinguishers against the flames, also to no effect. To gain access to the passenger side of the car, Ward, Harriss, Eckler, and others picked up the front of the vehicle and, despite advancing flames, moved it away from the bridge rail. Entering the narrow space between the rail and the burning car, Ward attempted to open the passenger door, but the handle burned his hand. After Eckler then kicked out the window to that door, Ward extended his head and shoulders into the car and, requiring repeated attempts, grasped Allen by the hand and started to pull him from the vehicle. Eckler grasped Allen and helped to pull, as did Harriss. The three men pulled Allen, who was aflame, from the car and carried him away, then extinguished the flames on him. The car was shortly engulfed by flames, and three other persons in the car died at the scene. Allen was taken to the hospital for treatment of extensive burns. Ward sustained minor burns to his hand and forearm and was sickened from inhaling smoke, but he recovered, as did Eckler, who also had inhaled smoke.

73983-8471 / 73982-8472 / 74274-8473

JOEL B. LEDON
Gilroy, California

Joel B. LeDon helped to save Matthew T. and Virginia L. Leggett and attempted to rescue Theresa Johnson from burning, San Antonio, Texas, April 21, 1998. Matthew, 14, and his sister Virginia, 17, were back-seat passengers in a car driven by Theresa, 17, that was involved in a head-on collision. Flames broke out in the car's engine area. A motorist, LeDon, 32, carpenter, stopped at the scene, as did another man. After an unsuccessful attempt to extinguish the flames, they opened the back doors of the car. Entering through the right rear door, LeDon and the other man grasped Matthew, who was unconscious, then pulled him from the car and took him to a point of safety. They returned to the vehicle, which LeDon fully entered through the left rear door. He grasped Virginia underneath the arms while from the opposite door the other man grasped her by the legs. They removed Virginia through the right rear door and took her to safety. LeDon returned to the car and re-entered it for Theresa, despite flames by then spreading to the interior of the car, at the front. LeDon made repeated attempts to free Theresa from the wreckage before advancing flames forced him out. With flames spreading to the other vehicle, which abutted Theresa's, LeDon and the other man then aided that driver to safety. Matthew and Virginia required hospitalization for treatment of their injuries, and they recovered. Theresa died at the scene. LeDon singed his hair and was sickened from inhaling smoke. He missed several days' work but fully recovered.

72859-8474

MARK STEVEN PLOCK
Shannon, Illinois

DUANE A. PLOCK
Lanark, Illinois

Mark Steven Plock and Duane A. Plock rescued Ted A. Fink from burning, Lanark, Illinois, November 20, 1999. Using a tractor, Fink, 45, had just moved a leaking 1,000-gallon tank partially filled with propane into a field of his farm when the escaping gas ignited explosively. A massive cloud of fire was sent into the air, and Fink was set aflame, as were field stubble in the immediate vicinity and gas that continued to escape from the tank. Working at adjoining farms, Mark Steven Plock, 39, farmer and construction worker, and his brother Duane A. Plock, 42, farmer and construction worker, each witnessed the accident and immediately responded to the scene. Arriving first, Mark entered the field and, crawling underneath burning vapors and patting out burning stubble in his path, found Fink lying near the burning tank. Mark lay atop Fink to smother the flames on him, only to have the flames re-ignite. Meanwhile, Duane arrived, and he too entered the burning field, running under the burning vapors. He assisted Mark in extinguishing the flames on Fink by throwing dirt on him. The men then removed Fink's smoldering clothes and stamped out flames immediately around them. Fink sustained second- and third-degree burns to most of his body and required 14 months' hospitalization. Mark and Duane were taken to the hospital for treatment, as they had sustained smoke inhalation and lesser burns, to their hands. They recovered.

74455-8475 / 74456-8476

DUANE JAMES
Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Duane James saved Melissa A. Valles from assault, New Bedford, Massachusetts, May 19, 2000. Ms. Valles, 39, was exiting her car in the parking lot of a drugstore when a man armed with two knives approached, threw himself into the car across her, and, threatening her life, attempted to rob her. Ms. Valles struggled against the man. Driving nearby, James, 35, saw the assault. He stopped at the scene and, although he was disabled by chronic leg pain, ran to Ms. Valles's car, where he struggled with the assailant. The assailant dropped one of his knives at the scene, then fled on foot. James chased him and caught him at a point about 800 feet away, then held him for police, who arrived shortly.

74506-8477

GARY L. MCCANE, JR.
Louisville, Kentucky

Gary L. McCane, Jr., helped attempt to save Hubert R. Ferguson from suffocation, Louisville, Kentucky, February 25, 2000. Ferguson, 44, and another man were waterproofing a below-ground cistern at a residence when Ferguson lost consciousness inside the chamber. The other man called out for help. Working for another company at a nearby residence, McCane, 23, installer, and his coworkers were alerted to the situation, and they went to the scene. McCane was descending a ladder into the cistern when vapors there ignited explosively, burning him severely and killing the two men inside. McCane required extensive hospitalization for his burns, which were disabling. 74290-8482

CORY ROMERO
Greeley, Colorado

Cory Romero saved Brittany Emmons from being struck by a truck, Greeley, Colorado, May 1, 2000. Brittany, 2, ran alongside a one-ton moving van that her mother had started to drive into the parking lot of the apartment complex where they lived. Other residents, including Cory, 12, student, were outside and saw Brittany running close to the van. Fearing that Brittany would be struck by the vehicle, Cory ran across the parking lot to her, then grasped her and pulled her away. In so doing, Cory lost his footing and fell to the pavement. He landed with his left leg in front of the van's two left rear tires. Cory pulled his leg back, but the van ran over his foot. Cory required hospital treatment for a contusion to the foot, and he used crutches for about two weeks. He recovered. 74474-8478

EMMANUEL E. WYNN, deceased
Daytona Beach, Florida

Emmanuel E. Wynn died attempting to help save Nathan T. Ryer from drowning, Daytona Beach, Florida, September 16, 2000. Ryer, 19, was the driver of a car that, in a highway accident, left the roadway, entered an adjacent retention pond, and started to submerge at a point about midway between the banks. Wynn, 26, telemarketer, was a passenger on a bus that then stopped at the scene. Wynn and two other men from the bus entered the water and swam out to the car. After the car's convertible top was put down, Ryer exited the car and swam with the two other men to the bank. Wynn was last seen at the passenger side of the car, which then completely submerged, taking him with it. He was found shortly, partially under the car, by a man who had dived to look for him, and he was pulled to the surface and removed from the pond by that man and others. Wynn had been submerged for five minutes, and resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful. He had drowned. 74736-8479

SANDEEP SINGH
Brockville, Ontario

Sandeep Singh rescued Gurjeet S. Virk from assault, Brockville, Ontario, December 11, 1999. At night, Virk, 31, struggled in his taxi with a male passenger who had stabbed him in the stomach during a robbery attempt. Driving another taxi nearby, Singh, 23, heard Virk's radio call for help, and he responded to the scene. After Virk told Singh that the assailant had stabbed him, Singh went to the passenger side of the taxi and engaged the assailant, putting his arms around him. In his struggle against Singh, the assailant bit Singh on the left hand. Singh took the assailant to the ground and, with the help of Virk, secured him there until police arrived shortly and arrested him. Virk required hospitalization for treatment of his knife wounds. Singh too was treated at the hospital, for his bite wound, from which he recovered. 74232-8480

BRIAN WIGGINS
Oxnard, California

Brian Wiggins saved Narinder, Harpreet, and Sukphal Virk from drowning, Oxnard, California, January 12, 2000. At night, Ms. Virk, 39, and her daughter Harpreet, 6, and son Sukphal, 9, floated in a waterway of Channel Islands Harbor, off the Pacific Ocean. Asleep in his home along the waterway at the scene, Wiggins, 40, corporate sales representative, was awakened by a faint cry. After responding to a floating dock in the waterway to investigate, Wiggins saw a figure in the water about 30 feet out. Although it was dark and the water temperature was in the 50s, Wiggins dived into the waterway and swam out to the person, who was Ms. Virk. He grasped her and swam back to a dock with her, then removed her to the surface of the dock. Realizing then that two children were in the water, at points somewhat farther out, Wiggins re-entered the waterway and swam to Harpreet, who was floating face down and was unconscious. Wiggins took Harpreet to the dock in similar fashion and pulled her atop it, then resuscitated her. Wiggins entered the water a third time and swam to Sukphal. He returned with Sukphal to the dock and lifted him atop it. Rescue personnel arrived shortly. Ms. Virk and the children were taken to the hospital, where Harpreet was detained for treatment. They recovered. Wiggins sustained scratches and a bruise, from which he recovered.

74200-8481

JOSHUA JAMES SQUIBB, deceased
Centralia, Washington

Joshua James Squibb died attempting to save Krystle M. McCord and Amelia E. Johnson from drowning, Long Beach, Washington, June 3, 2000. Krystle, 12, and Amelia, 13, were playing in the waves of the Pacific Ocean near shore when a very strong current, thought to be a rip, swept them farther out and prevented them from returning. On the beach, Squibb, 25, carpenter, became aware of their situation. He ran to the water, then waded and swam about 300 feet to the girls. Reaching Krystle, he told her to float on her back, and he provided other encouragement. He then swam to Amelia, who was a short distance away, and assured her as she held onto him. Squibb and Amelia then became separated, and Squibb was swept farther out. Krystle floated out of the current and made her way back to safety. A fish and wildlife officer and a rescue swimmer entered the water and took Amelia to the beach. She and Krystle were given oxygen there, and they required no other treatment. Squibb was seen in the distance for a time but then disappeared. His body washed ashore three days later about four miles from the scene. He had drowned.

74609-8483

JEAN McDONALD BURGMEIER
Dubuque, Iowa

Jean McDonald Burgmeier helped to save Jeffery M. Kraft from falling, Dubuque, Iowa, May 6, 2000. Jeffery, 7, and a friend were playing on a wooded hillside atop a bluff bordering the Mississippi River when Jeffery tumbled down a steep slope. He stopped his fall by grasping rocks and earth just short of the edge of the bluff, then climbed back up the slope to a point from which he could make no further progress. Frightened, he clung to the hillside. Ms. Burgmeier, 39, elementary school principal, was riding her bicycle in a neighborhood atop the bluff when she learned of Jeffery's fall from his friend. She immediately responded to the scene, then, establishing voice contact, began to descend to Jeffery. Maneuvering to a point just above him, she wedged herself into a rock formation, then reached down and grasped Jeffery by the hand. She secured him for several minutes until rescue personnel arrived. Forming a human chain, firefighters reached the two, then passed Jeffery to the top of the slope and helped Ms. Burgmeier up. Jeffery was treated at a hospital for cuts and bruises, from which he recovered.

74478-8484

BILLY RAY DORSEY
Grass Lake, Michigan

Billy Ray Dorsey attempted to save Dean J. Langenderfer from electrocution, Chelsea, Michigan, March 22, 2000. Langenderfer, 52, was spreading stones from his dump truck in the driveway of a business when the raised bed of the truck came into contact with high-voltage lines overhead. The truck was electrified and caught fire. Langenderfer exited the truck but then made contact with it and received an electrical shock. Standing nearby, Dorsey, 44, truck repair shop operator, witnessed the accident. He immediately ran toward the truck, then threw himself against Langenderfer, knocking him away from it. Efforts to revive Langenderfer were unsuccessful, as he had been electrocuted. Dorsey was taken to the hospital, where he was detained four days for treatment of electrical injury and a fractured vertebra.

74411-8485

EDWARD MARKS
Brownsville, Texas

Edward Marks saved Jennifer and Claribel Vasquez from drowning, South Padre Island, Texas, June 11, 2000. Sisters Jennifer, 7, and Claribel, 11, were playing in the Gulf of Mexico beside a jetty when they were pulled farther from shore by a strong current. They struggled and yelled for help, catching the attention of people on the jetty, including Marks, 38, firefighter, who was fishing there. Marks immediately jumped into the water and swam about 90 feet to the girls, who by then were about 375 feet from shore. After a struggle, during which he was submerged, Marks grasped Jennifer around the wrist and instructed Claribel to hold onto her. He then swam back to the jetty, towing the girls. At the base of the jetty, Marks helped the girls to climb within reach of others on the jetty. Marks then attempted to pull himself onto the jetty but could not because of rough waves breaking over him. Those on the jetty lowered a rope to him and pulled him from the water. The girls and Marks were tired, and they recovered.

74562-8486

RAFAEL GONZÁLEZ
ROBERT E. MCKAY
Chelsea, Massachusetts

Rafael González and Robert E. McKay rescued David G. Kennedy from burning, Chelsea, Massachusetts, June 11, 2000. Kennedy, 62, lay unconscious on the living room floor of his apartment after fire broke out in that room and filled the apartment with dense smoke. González, 69, retired hospital administrator, and McKay, 64, retired housepainter and roofer, both residents of the building, responded to the door of Kennedy's apartment while evacuating the building. They opened the door to dense smoke, then entered the unit and crawled through a hallway into the living room, where they found Kennedy just a few feet from the flames. They grasped Kennedy under his arms, but when McKay rose to his knees, he took in smoke and had to leave the apartment. Maintaining his hold, González dragged Kennedy toward the apartment door. After González had gone about 10 feet, or halfway, McKay rejoined him, and together they dragged Kennedy the rest of the way out of the apartment. Kennedy was hospitalized for six days for treatment of smoke inhalation, minor burns on his legs, and other injury. He recovered. González coughed for about an hour but was otherwise uninjured. McKay suffered pain in his chest and lungs and other effects for about three days but did not immediately seek treatment. He too recovered.

74560-8487 / 74561-8488

CARNEGIE MEDAL



ANDREW CARNEGIE

