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News Release

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FOR RELEASE:
June 28, 2001

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CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION CITES 22 FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM IN U.S., CANADA

PITTSBURGH, PA, JUNE 28, 2001—In its third award announcement of 2001, the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission today named 22 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. Four of the awardees died in the performance of their heroic acts.

The heroes announced today bring to 64 the number of persons who have been recognized in 2001 and to 8,510 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, \$24.9 million has been given in one-time grants, scholarship aid, death benefits, and continuing assistance. The awardees are:

Hector Rios, Jr.	Rensselaer, N.Y.
Hugh Franklin Head	Garrison, Texas
Michael D. Wilps	Morton, Pa.
Victor Leon White, Sr.	Prospect Park, Pa.
Gene H. Barker	Akron, Ohio
Robert Paul Myers	Seabrook, Texas
Thomas Michael Higgins	Spokane, Wash.
Robert Anthony Phillips, deceased	Thomasville, Ga.
Kenneth J. Wingler	Toms River, N.J.
Kevin H. House, deceased	Plainsboro, N.J.
Robert George Gudyk, Sr.	New Castle, Pa.
Tracy L. Johnson	Depauw, Ind.
Hobert Franklin, Jr., deceased	Grand Junction, Colo.
Patrick Ramnauth	Arverne, N.Y.
Dennis Olson	Healy, Kans.
Buin E. Strader	Lewisburg, Ky.
Edward John Hennessey	Dayton, Ohio
William W. Weyenberg	Manitowoc, Wisc.
Michael Carl Spence	Highland Falls, N.Y.
Julien Perron-Gagné	Montreal, Que.
Donald E. Yost, Jr., deceased	Rutland, Ohio
Wade Stirling Handsaker	Bellingham, Wash.

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).

HECTOR RIOS, JR.
Rensselaer, New York

Hector Rios, Jr., saved Jade M. Cook from burning, Rensselaer, New York, July 12, 2000. At night, Jade, 1, was in a crib in a second-floor bedroom of her family's house after fire broke out on the first floor, in the kitchen. Awakened by Jade's cries to dense smoke in the same bedroom, Jade's mother opened a window, then was pulled through it to the roof of the front porch by a man who had gained access to the roof. She screamed for help. Rios, 35, carpenter's assistant, had been sleeping in his house across the street. He responded to the scene, where he learned that Jade was still inside the burning house. Rios mounted the porch roof, then entered the smoke-filled bedroom through a window. Guided by Jade's cries, he crawled across the room to her crib, found her inside, and removed her. Rios returned to the window with Jade and handed her outside to the others, then climbed through the window himself to safety. Meanwhile, a rescue attempt by two police officers who had entered the first floor was thwarted by the dense smoke. Arriving firefighters put a ladder to the porch roof, and Rios and the others climbed down to safety. Jade was hospitalized overnight for treatment of smoke inhalation, and she recovered. Rios sustained minor smoke inhalation but recovered later that day. 74625-8489

HUGH FRANKLIN HEAD
Garrison, Texas

Hugh Franklin Head rescued Taylor A. and Amber N. Bryce from a runaway truck, Nacogdoches, Texas, September 17, 2000. Siblings Taylor, 4, and Amber, 2, were left unattended momentarily inside a pickup truck that was parked, its engine running, at a service station. When the truck, in reverse gear, began to back toward the adjacent four-lane highway, a service station customer, Head, 50, high school teacher, ran after it. He tried to open the front passenger door but found it locked. Running to the driver's side and continuing alongside the vehicle as it picked up speed, Head opened the driver's door, then dived partially into the truck and pressed the brake pedal, slowing the vehicle. When the left front tire of the pickup ran over Head's right calf, Head was pulled from the truck to the pavement, and the truck came to a rest, the tire on Head's left thigh. Another man who responded moved the truck to free Head. Taylor and Amber were not injured. Requiring hospital treatment, Head sustained abrasions and crush injury to his legs, and complications developed. 74839-8506

MICHAEL D. WILPS
Morton, Pennsylvania

VICTOR LEON WHITE, SR.
Prospect Park, Pennsylvania

Michael D. Wilps and Victor Leon White, Sr., saved Herbert Reinhardt III from burning, Glenolden, Pennsylvania, August 16, 2000. Reinhardt, 30, remained in the driver's seat of a van after the vehicle left the roadway, struck and knocked over a fuel pump at a service station, then crashed through a concrete-block wall of a building housing an office. The van came to rest partially inside the building and caught fire. Driving in the vicinity, Wilps, 41, roofer, stopped at the scene when he saw what he thought was a burning building. He entered the smoke-filled office through its front door, found the burning van inside, and approached its driver's side. Reinhardt was conscious but trapped in his seat as flames filled the van's cargo area. Wilps extended his upper body through the window of the driver's door and grasped Reinhardt. He freed Reinhardt, then pulled him partially through the window. Meanwhile, White, 41, who also had been traveling in the vicinity, stopped at the scene when he saw the van in the building. He too entered the smoke-filled office through its front door and approached the van. White grasped Reinhardt, and together the men fully removed him from the van and carried him outside to safety. Taken to the hospital for treatment, Reinhardt sustained a laceration to his right wrist, from which he recovered, and he and Wilps singed their hair. 74708-8491 / 74707-8492

GENE H. BARKER
Akron, Ohio

Gene H. Barker saved a woman from falling, Akron, Ohio, July 30, 2000. Intending to commit suicide, a 34-year-old woman sat on a narrow concrete barrier along the edge of a highway bridge, at a point about 70 feet above a paved road. Barker, 59, retired mason, saw her as he drove across the bridge. He returned to the scene, then slowly approached the woman on foot and spoke to her over the course of a few minutes. The woman then told Barker she was going to jump, and she began to do so. From about four feet away, Barker lunged at the woman, who had left the barrier, and grasped her under the arms, securing her. The woman struggled with Barker as he leaned over the waist-high barrier and yelled at him to let her go. Other men who were nearby then aided Barker until emergency personnel arrived shortly and removed her from the bridge. The woman was taken to the hospital for treatment, and she recovered. 74664-8493

ROBERT PAUL MYERS
Seabrook, Texas

Robert Paul Myers helped to save Amanda L. Cook from burning, Pasadena, Texas, August 7, 2000. Amanda, 16, was trapped in the front passenger seat of a two-door automobile after a highway accident in which the car overturned and caught fire. Myers, 44, police officer, responded to the scene. Unable to open the passenger door of the badly damaged car, he had several men at the scene lift the rear end of the car to provide him greater access to the passenger door's window opening. The men then holding the rear of the burning car off the pavement, Myers crawled through the window and grasped Amanda. Unable to free her, he withdrew from the car for a knife. One handed to him, Myers re-entered the vehicle through the window, despite flames spreading on the car's underside, and cut Amanda's safety belt, freeing her. He then grasped Amanda and, helped by others, pulled her from the vehicle and carried her away. Flames engulfed the car less than a minute later. Amanda required extensive hospitalization for treatment of severe injuries, and she recovered. The driver of the car died that day of her injuries. Myers sustained a laceration to his right thumb, from which he recovered, and he singed the hair on an arm. 74654-8496

THOMAS MICHAEL HIGGINS
Spokane, Washington

Thomas Michael Higgins saved Kyle J. Potter from being struck by a sled, Spokane, Washington, January 1, 2000. Kyle, 7, was at the bottom of a steep, snow-covered hill as a teen-age boy sitting backward in an inflatable sled sped down the hill toward him. Standing nearby, Higgins, 37, medical assistant, saw Kyle in the sled's path. He immediately ran to the boy and lifted him into his arms just before the sled struck him, in the legs. Kyle was thrown into the air and landed nearby, injured only slightly. Higgins was knocked from his feet and fell headfirst to the ground, the impact severely injuring his spine and rendering him quadriplegic. He was flown to the hospital, where he underwent emergency back surgery. Hospitalized four months, Higgins regained slight movement in his hands, arms, and a leg. 74987-8499

ROBERT ANTHONY PHILLIPS, deceased
Thomasville, Georgia

Robert Anthony Phillips died attempting to rescue Sharon M. Waters from assault, Thomasville, Georgia, December 3, 2000. Ms. Waters, 44, was staying at the home of her son, Phillips, 24, mechanic, when her estranged husband broke into the house at night while its occupants were asleep. He entered Ms. Waters's bedroom, closed and locked the door, then pointed a loaded gun at her. Ms. Waters awoke and screamed for help. Awakened by her screams, Phillips and his wife exited their bedroom. While his wife fled the house and called for help, Phillips went to his mother's bedroom, broke down the door, and, entering the room, struggled against the assailant. The assailant shot Phillips repeatedly, mortally wounding him, then abducted Ms. Waters. Several hours later the assailant released Ms. Waters, then shot and killed himself. 74960-8508

KENNETH J. WINGLER
Toms River, New Jersey

KEVIN H. HOUSE, deceased
Plainsboro, New Jersey

Kenneth J. Wingler helped to save, and Kevin H. House died helping, two girls from drowning, Seaside Park, New Jersey, July 1, 2000. Two young girls began to yell for help while in the Atlantic Ocean off a state park beach. Wingler, 47, lift operator, ran into the water and swam to the girls, who were then about 75 feet out. The girls climbed atop him, struggling with him and submerging him at least once. House, 47, regional sales manager, who also swam out from the beach, arrived and grasped Wingler by one arm as the girls, atop him, held to his other arm. House pulled Wingler and the girls toward shore but then began to flounder. Other men entered the water and aided in taking the girls to the beach, and Wingler left the water safely. He had taken in water and was exhausted, but he recovered. House was retrieved from the water by others, but he could not be revived. 74615-8494 / 74586-8495

ROBERT GEORGE GUDYK, SR.
New Castle, Pennsylvania

Robert George Gudyk, Sr., attempted to save Robert J. Owen from burning, New Castle, Pennsylvania, March 29, 2000. At night, fire broke out at the house rented by Owen, 50, who was not home, and spread throughout the two-story house and to the house on either side. A resident of the neighborhood, Gudyk, 44, disabled laborer, was alerted to the fire and went to the scene. Intending to alert Owen to the fire but unaware that the house was not occupied, Gudyk kicked open the front door to dense, black smoke and flames that were spreading rapidly inside the house. On a second attempt to alert Owen, Gudyk was just inside the front door when a flashover occurred, burning him severely and propelling him from the house. Gudyk was hospitalized 12 days for treatment of first- and second-degree burns to his upper torso. He recovered but retained scarring. 74519-8497

TRACY L. JOHNSON
Depauw, Indiana

Tracy L. Johnson rescued Robin E. Goodpaster and Brittany L. and Crystal L. Turben from burning, Georgetown, Indiana, July 10, 2000. Ms. Goodpaster, 41, and her nieces Brittany, 2, and Crystal, 4, remained inside their car after an accident in which the car left the highway, struck a concrete abutment, and broke into flame. Johnson, 21, construction worker, was traveling behind Ms. Goodpaster and witnessed the accident. He stopped at the scene, ran to the passenger side of the burning car, and opened the front door to flames that were issuing through the floorboard at the driver's side. Johnson reached into the car, grasped Ms. Goodpaster, who lay on the floorboard, and pulled her out. He then reached back in, unbuckled Brittany's car seat, and pulled it and Brittany from the vehicle. Johnson entered the car a third time, for Crystal, whom he pulled from her safety belt. Holding Crystal, Johnson dragged Ms. Goodpaster to safety, another man having carried Brittany away. Within a minute of the rescue, flames engulfed the car. Ms. Goodpaster and Crystal required hospitalization for treatment of their injuries, Ms. Goodpaster's including severe burns, and Brittany sustained minor burns to her arms. Johnson also sustained minor burns, to his fingertips. All recovered. 74626-8498

HOBERT FRANKLIN, JR., deceased
Grand Junction, Colorado

Hobert Franklin, Jr., died helping attempt to save Sarah M. Anderson from assault, Grand Junction, Colorado, September 3, 1999. Ms. Anderson, 25, was arguing with her estranged husband outside the grocery store where she was employed. The husband, who was armed with a .22-caliber revolver, then began to assault her. A customer of the store, Franklin, 50, was in the vicinity. He approached to within a few feet of the assailant, telling him to leave Ms. Anderson alone. The assailant shot Franklin in the chest, then dragged Ms. Anderson into the parking lot, where he shot another man who intervened, Ms. Anderson, and then himself. After he was shot, Franklin collapsed, then was taken inside the store, where resuscitation was attempted. He was taken to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead of his gunshot wound. The other man, Ms. Anderson, and the assailant also died of their gunshot wounds. 74292-8500

PATRICK RAMNAUTH
Arverne, New York

Patrick Ramnauth rescued Dawn M. Malcolm from assault, Brooklyn, New York, July 14, 1999. Ms. Malcolm, 30, was sitting in a subway car when a man approached her and, without provocation, produced a knife and slashed her on one of her hands. A passenger sitting near her, Ramnauth, 50, maintenance supervisor, witnessed the attack and immediately positioned his hard hat between the assailant and Ms. Malcolm as the assailant prepared to strike again. The assailant thrust the knife toward Ms. Malcolm but instead struck the hard hat. The assailant then turned on Ramnauth, and the two men fought, the assailant stabbing Ramnauth repeatedly. Ms. Malcolm fled to the next car, where she alerted Ramnauth's coworkers. Those men responded to the scene, where they restrained the assailant and tended to Ramnauth. Ms. Malcolm required hospital treatment for her cuts, and she recovered. Ramnauth too was taken to the hospital, where he was detained for 19 days for treatment, including surgery, of multiple stab wounds. 73802-8501

DENNIS OLSON
Healy, Kansas

Dennis Olson saved Joshua N. York from suffocation, Healy, Kansas, June 15, 2000. When Joshua, 11, entered an open hopper being emptied of 30,000 pounds of wheat, he became caught by the pull of the dropping grain. He shouted for help. Olson, 37, farm laborer, was nearby and heard him. He climbed 10 feet to the top of the hopper, entered it, and proceeded across the settling wheat to Joshua, who had been pulled to his waist into the grain. Olson grasped Joshua and, being drawn into the grain himself, attempted to secure himself and Joshua by holding to the framework at the top of the hopper. The draw of the wheat was too great, and he lost his grip. Able to extract himself from the wheat, Olson climbed from the hopper, dropped to the ground, and opened fully the door at the base of the hopper through which the wheat was emptying. Joshua emerged partially through the door but then became lodged there. Olson climbed back into the hopper, reached through the wheat for Joshua, and pushed on him to free him. He climbed from the hopper and dropped to the ground again, to find that Joshua had fallen free of the door. Olson revived Joshua, who was then taken to the hospital, where he was detained a week for treatment of lung damage, including surgery for the removal of aspirated wheat grains. He recovered. Olson recovered from a scrape to one hand. 74598-8502

BUIN E. STRADER
Lewisburg, Kentucky

Buin E. Strader saved John D. Hurt from burning, Russellville, Kentucky, July 18, 2000. Hurt, 31, remained in the cab of his fuel truck after an accident in which the truck overturned onto its passenger side, skidded along the highway, and broke into flame. In separate compartments, the truck's tank carried 2,500 gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel. Strader, 47, logger, drove upon the scene and, through the windshield of the truck, saw Hurt struggling. He ran to the truck and called out to Hurt, then, despite flames on the tank, at its rear, climbed atop the cab. As the flames on the tank grew, Strader reached through the opened driver's window and helped Hurt to climb out of the cab. The men went to the pavement, then Strader helped Hurt walk to safety before an explosion at the truck minutes later. The truck was engulfed by flames, which consumed its contents. Hurt was treated at the hospital but was not detained. 74676-8503

EDWARD JOHN HENNESSEY
Dayton, Ohio

Edward John Hennessey saved Raymond E. Stipp from burning, Charlotte, North Carolina, October 4, 2000. Stipp, 74, lay unconscious on the floor of his one-story house after fire broke out in a bedroom and filled the house with smoke. Walking nearby, Hennessey, 24, banking associate, saw flames at the roof of the house and ran to the scene, where he learned that Stipp was still inside. Going through the attached garage, Hennessey entered the house a few steps through a door opening to the kitchen, but he was quickly forced out by the smoke. Removing his shirt to cover his mouth with it, he re-entered the kitchen and crawled across that room in search of Stipp, calling out to him. When he heard a moan, Hennessey crawled toward the sound and encountered Stipp farther inside. Still on his hands and knees, he pulled Stipp by the legs about halfway to the kitchen door before difficulty with breathing forced him out again. Hennessey regained his breath in the garage, then re-entered the kitchen again. He crawled to Stipp, pulled him the remaining distance out of the kitchen and into the garage, then took him outside. Stipp and Hennessey were both taken to the hospital for treatment of smoke inhalation, and they recovered. 74815-8504

WILLIAM W. WEYENBERG
Manitowoc, Wisconsin

William W. Weyenberg saved Gilbert C. Zima from being struck by a runaway pickup truck, Mishicot, Wisconsin, May 28, 2000. Zima, 69, parked his pickup truck in the paved lot of a golf course and exited the vehicle, leaving its engine running. When the pickup then began to move backward in reverse gear, Zima returned to the vehicle, opened the driver's door, and attempted to enter. He fell to the pavement, the pickup then running over him as, still in reverse, it started a course of counterclockwise circles that took it onto the adjacent lawn, then back to the parking lot. Standing nearby, Weyenberg, 63, retired scheduler, witnessed the accident. He ran to the pickup to enter it, but its open driver's door struck him in the leg. The pickup continued to circle, striking Zima a second time and showing no sign of slowing. Weyenberg ran to Zima, grasped him by the shoulders, and dragged him from the pickup's path just before the vehicle passed again. Another man drove his vehicle into the back of the runaway pickup, stopping it. Zima was hospitalized six days for treatment, including surgery, of his injuries. Weyenberg suffered a ruptured leg muscle, which required medical attention, and he recovered. 74635-8505

MICHAEL CARL SPENCE
Highland Falls, New York

Michael Carl Spence helped to save Octavia Malloy from being struck by a drifting automobile, Highland Falls, New York, April 24, 2000. Octavia, 6, was sitting atop a child's bicycle in the eight-foot-wide space between a car and a pickup truck that were parked along a street near the bottom of a steep hill. When the unattended car began to drift backward, downhill, toward the pickup, a man attempted to hold it back. Spence, 21, was in a yard bordering the scene, at a point about 12 feet from Octavia, when he saw the situation. He immediately ran between the two vehicles, grasped Octavia by the shoulder, and threw her out of the path of the car to where she landed safely on the street. The car then struck Spence before he could withdraw, pinning him briefly against the pickup. He, Octavia, and the other man were all taken to the hospital for treatment of their injuries, Spence's including a cut to his right leg, from which he recovered. 74445-8507

JULIEN PERRON-GAGNÉ
Montreal, Quebec

Julien Perron-Gagné helped to save a woman from being struck by a train, Montreal, Quebec, December 9, 1999. In an apparent suicide attempt, a woman jumped from the platform of a subway station to the track, on which she then lay. Perron-Gagné, 18, high school student, was one of several commuters on the platform. He jumped onto the track, approached the woman, and, attempting to lift her to her feet, pulled on her repeatedly. A train was approaching the station on that track, slowing from 45 m.p.h. for its usual stop at a point well beyond the woman and Perron-Gagné. Seeing them on the track, the train operator immediately applied full braking, taking the train to a stop just 30 feet short of them. The woman, with injuries to a hip, was escorted off the track, then was taken to the hospital. 74145-8490

DONALD E. YOST, JR., deceased
Rutland, Ohio

Donald E. Yost, Jr., died attempting to save Jordan K. Smith from burning, Rutland, Ohio, April 13, 2000. Jordan, 4, was in a second-floor bedroom of the two-story house in which she was a guest after fire broke out on the first floor, in the living room, at night. Yost, 21, teacher, was in a bedroom off the living room when he awoke to the fire. He and his girlfriend immediately ran upstairs and entered the room in which Jordan and the girlfriend's two young children were sleeping and was last seen holding Jordan as his girlfriend secured her children. As flames advanced rapidly to engulf the dwelling, Yost's girlfriend fled to safety with her children. Firefighters found the bodies of Yost and Jordan among debris in the vicinity of the staircase of the house, which was destroyed. They had died of effects of the fire. 74401-8509

WADE STIRLING HANDSAKER
Bellingham, Washington

Wade Stirling Handsaker attempted to save Herbert Bepler from being struck by a train, Bellingham, Washington, October 20, 1999. Bepler, 70, was in his motorized wheelchair, which had become lodged at a crossing just next to a track on which a train was approaching at about 30 m.p.h. Moments earlier, Handsaker, 18, college student, had bicycled past Bepler, before he became stranded. Aware of the approaching train, Handsaker turned to check on Bepler and saw his situation. Handsaker immediately returned to the crossing, where he approached the wheelchair and worked to move it away from the track as the train bore down at undiminished speed. A projection of the lead locomotive struck Bepler about the lower left leg, severing it. Bepler was taken to the hospital for treatment, then he underwent rehabilitation. He recovered. 74989-8510

CARNEGIE MEDAL



ANDREW CARNEGIE

