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News Release

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CARNEGIE MEDALS AWARDED TO 26 FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM

PITTSBURGH, PA, JULY 2, 2003—In its third award announcement of 2003, the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission today named 26 individuals 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 throughout the United States and Canada.

Fifteen of the awardees died in the performance of their heroic acts, including 12 miners who responded to the aid of a fellow miner trapped following a methane explosion on Sept. 23, 2001, in a coal mine near Brookwood, Ala. A second explosion killed all 13. It was the heroism displayed in the aftermath of a similarly massive coal mine explosion near Pittsburgh in 1904 that prompted industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie to establish the Commission to recognize heroic acts by civilians.

The heroes announced today bring to 66 the number of persons honored in 2003 to date and to 8,732 the total number of persons who have been recognized since 1904. Commission President Mark Laskow stated that each of the awardees or their survivors will receive also a grant of \$3,500. Monetary awards exceeding \$26.5 million have been given in one-time grants, scholarship aid, death benefits, and continuing assistance over the life of the fund.

The awardees announced today are:

COAL MINE DISASTER BROOKWOOD, ALABAMA, SEPTEMBER 23, 2001			
John Wesley Knox, deceased	Pleasant Grove, Ala.	Dennis R. Mobley, deceased	Brent, Ala.
Charles J. Nail, deceased	Birmingham, Ala.	Nelson Banks, Jr., deceased	Bessemer, Ala.
Clarence H. Boyd, deceased	McCalla, Ala.	Joe Riggs, deceased	Cottondale, Ala.
Charles E. Smith, deceased	Tuscaloosa, Ala.	Terry Milas Stewart, deceased	Cordova, Ala.
David L. Blevins, deceased	Tuscaloosa, Ala.	Raymond F. Ashworth, dec'd.	Cottondale, Ala.
Wendell R. Johnson, deceased	Coaling, Ala.	Joseph P. Sorah, deceased	Duncanville, Ala.

Jonathan H. Bolender	Silver Creek, Wash.	Aaron T. McCraw	Portland, Ore.
Steven Coleman, deceased	E. Wenatchee, Wash.	Craig Allen Cross	Frostburg, Md.
Kevin D. Scheirer	E. Stroudsburg, Pa.	Michael B. Davis	Startex, S.C.
James J. E. McNeil, deceased	Blanca, Colo.	Richard H. Spencer, Jr.	Sumter, S.C.
Frank G. Martinez	La Jara, Colo.	Anthony Gouverneur	Evansville, Ind.
James A. Mitchell, deceased	Henderson, N.C.	A. R. Johnson	Pittsburgh, Pa.
Abraham John Hart	Berkeley, Calif.	Jeffrey R. LeBlanc	York, Maine

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).

**COAL MINE DISASTER
BROOKWOOD, ALABAMA, SEPTEMBER 23, 2001**

JOHN WESLEY KNOX, deceased
Pleasant Grove, Alabama

DENNIS R. MOBLEY, deceased
Brent, Alabama

CHARLES J. NAIL, deceased
Birmingham, Alabama

NELSON BANKS, JR., deceased
Bessemer, Alabama

CLARENCE H. BOYD, deceased
McCalla, Alabama

JOE RIGGS, deceased
Cottondale, Alabama

CHARLES E. SMITH, deceased
Tuscaloosa, Alabama

TERRY MILAS STEWART, deceased
Cordova, Alabama

DAVID L. BLEVINS, deceased
Tuscaloosa, Alabama

RAYMOND F. ASHWORTH, deceased
Cottondale, Alabama

WENDELL R. JOHNSON, deceased
Coaling, Alabama

JOSEPH P. SORAH, deceased
Duncanville, Alabama

John Wesley Knox, Dennis R. Mobley, Charles J. Nail, Nelson Banks, Jr., Clarence H. Boyd, Joe Riggs, Charles E. Smith, Terry Milas Stewart, David L. Blevins, Raymond F. Ashworth, Wendell R. Johnson, and Joseph P. Sorah died attempting to save Gaston E. Adams, Jr., from an impending explosion, Brookwood, Alabama, September 23, 2001. Adams, 56, and two other miners were building supports to address deteriorating roof conditions in a section of a large coal mine that was 2,100 feet below the surface of the ground. As they worked, the roof in that vicinity fell, freeing a quantity of methane. Within minutes the methane exploded, severely injuring Adams and damaging ventilation controls in that part of the mine. Also injured, the other miners left to secure help, their visibility obscured by dense dust. At work in another part of the mine, about a mile away, Knox, 44, underground motorman, felt the concussion and started toward the scene, as did two inside electricians, Mobley, 56, and Nail, 59, who had been working in the section adjoining the affected one. Knox, Mobley, and Nail met up with the injured miners, learning from them that Adams was incapacitated. After the men then alerted the mine's control room to the situation and de-energized the affected section's high-voltage supply, Knox, Mobley, and Nail entered that section and made their way by locomotive, then foot, to Adams, the injured miners continuing toward the mine exit. Meanwhile, Banks, 52, inside electrician; Boyd, 38, shearer operator; Riggs, 51, precision mason, and inside general laborers Smith and Stewart, both 44, all of whom had been working at distant points in the mine, learned of the ignition and started toward the affected section. En route they too met up with the injured miners, then, after learning more of the situation, continued to the scene. They proceeded on foot into the affected section to the vicinity reached by the first party of rescuers. Other miners learning of the ignition also responded from distant parts of the mine, including Blevins, 52, outby foreman, and belt repairmen Ashworth, 53; Johnson, 52, and Sorah, 46. They too encountered the injured miners and, after sharing information, Blevins, Ashworth, Johnson, and Sorah continued toward the affected section, arriving at its mouth shortly after the second party of rescuers. A massive explosion of methane soon tore through the affected section of the mine and then through the neighboring ones. Rescue teams were assembled and within hours reached the scene, where Ashworth was found alive but badly burned. He was removed to the hospital, where he died of his injuries the next day. Unstable conditions delayed further recovery efforts for six weeks, at which time the bodies of Adams and the remaining 11 rescuers were removed from the mine.

75904-8707 / 75905-8708 / 75906-8709 / 75901-8710 / 75903-8711 / 75907-8712
75909-8713 / 75910-8714 / 75902-8715 / 75900-8716 / 75646-8717 / 75908-8718

JONATHAN H. BOLENDER
Silver Creek, Washington

Jonathan H. Bolender rescued Anthony P. Jensen from assault, Vancouver, Washington, March 11, 2002. Late at night, Jensen, 23, was inside the restaurant he was managing when a man armed with a knife entered, grasped him by the neck, and threatened to kill him. Bolender, 50, truck driver, was one of two customers in the restaurant and witnessed the assault. He ran to the assailant, grasped him, and took him to the floor. Freed, Jensen ran to call for help. As Bolender knelt on the assailant to restrain him, the assailant stabbed Bolender repeatedly about the lower back and a thigh and forearm. Bolender disarmed the assailant, then, weakening, held him until police arrived shortly and arrested him. Jensen sustained minor injury, from which he recovered, and Bolender required hospital treatment for 10 stab wounds.

76094-8719

STEVEN COLEMAN, deceased
East Wenatchee, Washington

Steven Coleman died attempting to help save Anthony J. Wallace from drowning, Ocean Shores, Washington, July 19, 2002. Anthony, 10, was playing in the Pacific Ocean just off the beach when he was caught in a current and taken into deeper water farther out. Coleman, 47, truck driver, was on the beach in the vicinity. Alerted to the situation, he ran into the water and swam toward Anthony, as did a man from Anthony's party who reached Anthony and grasped him. After nearing Anthony, Coleman spoke to him to try to calm him, then became separated from him. Anthony was rescued by the other man, with help from another of their party. Coleman was carried to a point about 900 feet from shore, where he was recovered by responding emergency personnel, including a Coast Guard boat. Resuscitation was attempted, but he had drowned.

76258-8728

KEVIN D. SCHEIRER
East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania

Kevin D. Scheirer saved Alex and Giovanni Porres and Rodolfo Colón from drowning, Bushkill, Pennsylvania, July 21, 2002. Alex, 12, was wading in the Delaware River when he entered a section of deeper water. Then at a point about 50 feet from the bank, he had difficulty swimming and cried out for help. Although he was a nonswimmer, his father, Porres, 36, responded to his aid, but he too encountered difficulty in the deep water. A member of their party, Colón, 27, who was Alex's uncle, then responded and attempted to aid Porres, but a struggle ensued between them. Scheirer, 20, canoe service driver, was floating off the bank upstream. Alerted by the commotion, he swam to the scene, where he grasped Alex. He swam Alex toward the bank, handed him over to a family member, then turned and swam out to Porres. Scheirer grasped Porres, swam to the bank with him, and helped him from the river. Although he was tired by then, Scheirer re-entered the river and swam to Colón, who was submerging at a point farther from the bank than Alex and his father had been. Scheirer submerged, surfaced with Colón, and swam to the bank with him, then took him from the river. Porres and Colón were given oxygen at the scene, and Colón was taken to a hospital for treatment of having nearly drowned. They recovered.

76329-8732

JAMES J. E. MCNEIL, deceased
Blanca, Colorado

FRANK G. MARTINEZ
La Jara, Colorado

James J. E. McNeil died attempting to save, and Frank G. Martinez saved, Kelly R. McNeil from drowning, Mosca, Colorado, May 10, 2002. McNeil, 35, was fishing from a boat on San Luis Lake with his son, James, 15, high school student, and another teenage boy. As they attempted to move the boat, the high winds and choppy water caused it to tip, and McNeil was thrown into the lake. The boat began to drift away. James removed his jacket, then dived into the water. He surfaced and started to swim to McNeil, who was struggling to stay afloat in the 55-degree water, but he submerged en route. Martinez, 34, college student, who was fishing at another part of the lake, responded to the bank at the scene after being alerted to the accident. Removing his boots, he entered the water, then waded and swam to McNeil, who was about 600 feet out. Martinez held McNeil to his side as he began to return to the bank, then, although McNeil outweighed him, Martinez repositioned McNeil to his own back to keep him from being submerged. Martinez continued with McNeil to the bank. McNeil and the other teenage boy, who had drifted toward the bank in the boat, were taken to the hospital, where McNeil was treated for hypothermia. He recovered. Cold after the rescue, Martinez recovered by that evening. Rescue personnel searched for James over the following two days. His body was found along the bank of the lake 12 days after the accident; he had drowned. 76126-8722 / 76127-8723

JAMES A. MITCHELL, deceased
Henderson, North Carolina

James A. Mitchell died attempting to save Candace C. Foster from drowning, Townsville, North Carolina, July 4, 2002. Candace, 13, waded into a cove of Kerr Lake at Henderson Point, and when she attempted to return to shore she began to struggle in deeper water. Mitchell, 21, in another party on shore, entered the lake and made his way to Candace, reaching her at a point about 75 feet out. A struggle ensued, then both submerged in the 10-foot-deep water and did not resurface. Their bodies were recovered within the hour by responding rescue personnel. They had drowned. 76247-8724

ABRAHAM JOHN HART
Berkeley, California

AARON T. MCCRAW
Portland, Oregon

Abraham John Hart and Aaron T. McCraw rescued Alfredo M. Tapia from burning, Emeryville, California, May 19, 2002. Tapia, 56, was trapped inside his burning car following an accident on an interstate highway after dark. Hart, 22, college student, was driving on the same highway and came upon the scene just after the crash. He responded to Tapia's car, which was filled with smoke and from which flames issued at the rear. McCraw, 19, student, who was a passenger of the other vehicle involved in the accident, also responded. Unable to open the car's damaged doors, Hart repeatedly struck its windshield with his elbow as McCraw pounded on it with his fist. The windshield shattered but remained largely in place. Hart removed the glass, reached into the car, the interior of which was aflame, and pulled Tapia over the steering wheel and onto the hood. He and McCraw then lifted Tapia from the hood and carried him to the highway shoulder. The car was engulfed by flames within minutes. Tapia was hospitalized for burns, including to his head and face. Hart required hospital treatment for acute abrasions, some deep, to his hands and for swelling to his elbow, and McCraw was treated at the hospital for cuts to his right hand and other ill effects sustained in the accident. All three men recovered. 76171-8725 / 76477-8726

CRAIG ALLEN CROSS
Frostburg, Maryland

Craig Allen Cross rescued Isaac W. Bradburn from burning, Frostburg, Maryland, October 21, 2002. Bradburn, 70, was in the second-floor apartment of a two-story building when an explosion of leaking natural gas occurred in the unit's living room at night. Two walls of the building were blown off, the roof collapsed partially, and flames that had broken out began to spread quickly throughout the building. At his home nearby, Cross, 32, teacher, heard and felt the explosion. Barefoot and in nightclothes, he ran to the scene after hearing Bradburn shouting for help. Cross entered the house through a gap created by one of the displaced walls, then climbed over debris upstairs to the kitchen of Bradburn's apartment. He found Bradburn, dazed and badly burned, in the kitchen, the walls of which were aflame. Cross grasped Bradburn and dragged him to the stairs, then lifted him and took him down the stairs to where he handed him outside to another person. Cross then exited the structure before flames engulfed it. Bradburn was hospitalized three weeks for treatment of his burns, from which he recovered. Cross recovered from lacerations to his head and neck caused by his encountering debris. 76461-8727

MICHAEL B. DAVIS
Startex, South Carolina

Michael B. Davis rescued Juanita G. Henderson from burning, Duncan, South Carolina, May 24, 2002. Ms. Henderson, 74, collapsed to the floor of the dining room in her one-story house after an electrical fire broke out in a bedroom and filled the house with smoke. Driving in the vicinity, Davis, 36, off-duty firefighter, was alerted to the fire by radio. He responded to the scene, where he learned that Ms. Henderson was still inside the burning house. After calling out to her and receiving a response, Davis entered the house through its kitchen door. He crawled across the kitchen and into the dining room, and, following Ms. Henderson's voice, found her on the floor about 20 feet from the kitchen door. Davis grasped Ms. Henderson by the arms and dragged her to the kitchen door, where a neighbor helped take her into the yard. Davis returned to the house in an attempt to rescue another neighbor, who had been overcome in the bedroom while fighting the fire. Deteriorating conditions forced him out, and that neighbor died at the scene. Ms. Henderson was hospitalized two days for treatment of smoke inhalation and burns, and she recovered. Davis sustained minor burns, to the back of his neck and his arm, and smoke inhalation, for which he required oxygen. He recovered. 76121-8720

RICHARD H. SPENCER, JR.
Sumter, South Carolina

Richard H. Spencer, Jr., saved Clay T. Jones from burning, Sumter, South Carolina, July 15, 2002. Jones, 42, was the sole occupant of an automobile that left the roadway, struck and broke off a utility pole, and overturned onto its roof. Gasoline spilled from the car and fire erupted at the rear of the vehicle as Jones, unconscious, was suspended upside down in the driver's seat, his feet caught. A motorist, Spencer, 45, retired firefighter, witnessed the accident and stopped at the scene. Although he suffered heart disease, he approached the burning car and emptied a fire extinguisher on the flames, but to little effect. With difficulty, Spencer then pulled open the driver's door. He crawled part way into the car, the interior of which was burning, and freed Jones's feet. Backing out, he pulled Jones from the car and helped drag him to safety. Jones required hospital treatment for his injuries. 76299-8729

ANTHONY GOUVERNEUR
Evansville, Indiana

Anthony Gouverneur rescued Karin L. Johnson from burning, Vital Junction, California, March 28, 2002. Ms. Johnson, 34, was the front-seat passenger of an automobile that was struck head on by another automobile on a remote stretch of highway in early evening. Fire erupted on both cars. Gouverneur, 27, truck driver, stopped at the scene, as did other motorists. Seeing Ms. Johnson moving inside her car, Gouverneur attempted without success to open the front passenger door, then he used a fire extinguisher to break its window. He unlocked the door and pulled it open. Despite flames issuing from the car's engine area and dashboard, Gouverneur leaned inside, grasped Ms. Johnson, and pulled her out. He dragged her to safety, then returned to the car for the driver, but flames repulsed him. The drivers of both cars died in the accident. Ms. Johnson was hospitalized for treatment of injuries received during the collision and for burns. Gouverneur was treated at the scene for a burn to one arm, and he recovered.

75980-8730

A. R. JOHNSON
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

A. R. Johnson rescued Wen Ting Huang from assault, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, June 5, 2002. Ms. Huang, 30, was attacked in her home, then outside on the sidewalk, by a man wielding an eight-inch meat cleaver. Johnson, 26, apprentice electrician, was driving to his home in the neighborhood when he saw the assault. He stopped his vehicle, exited, and ran about 40 feet to the assailant, shouting. The assailant turned toward Johnson, then dropped the weapon. Johnson pushed the assailant against the wall of a house along the sidewalk and engaged him in a hold until two police officers arrived shortly. The assailant was then combative as the officers arrested him. Ms. Huang required hospitalization for treatment of numerous wounds.

76107-8731

JEFFREY R. LEBLANC
York, Maine

Jeffrey R. LeBlanc saved Michael D. Caprarella and Leeanna M. Cormier from burning, York, Maine, August 30, 2002. Caprarella, 18, remained in the driver's seat, and Ms. Cormier, 18, in the front passenger seat, of a car that had caught fire in its engine area after a highway accident. At his nearby house, LeBlanc, 42, carpenter, heard the crash, then, running to the scene, heard Ms. Cormier scream. Precluded from access to the driver's door by the proximity of the flames, LeBlanc went to the rear door on the driver's side and opened it. Partially entering the car, he pulled Caprarella into the back-seat area, then out of the car. LeBlanc re-entered the car, fully, and grasped Ms. Cormier by the arms. He pulled her into the back-seat area, then from the car, and moved her farther away. The car was shortly engulfed by flames and was destroyed. Caprarella and Ms. Cormier required hospital treatment for their injuries, but neither was burned.

76394-8721

CARNEGIE MEDAL



ANDREW CARNEGIE

