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News Release

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

PITTSBURGH, PA, DECEMBER 20, 1999—In its fifth and final award announcement of 1999, 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. Four of the awardees died in the performance of their heroic acts.

The heroes announced today bring to 102 the number of awards made in 1999 and to 8,341 the total number 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 95 years since the Fund was established by industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, \$23.8 million has been given in one-time grants, scholarship aid, death benefits, and continuing assistance.

The awardees are:

Richard Van Sant, Jr.	Martinsville, Ind.
Jerry D. Hanks	Bronston, Ky.
Vincent J. Galati	Fort Worth, Texas
Richard Silvia, deceased	East Taunton, Mass.
David Blair Johnson	Belle River, Ont.
Marc Rivest	Belle River, Ont.
Victor K. Shelton	Rustburg, Va.
James Brederson	Attleboro, Mass.
Robert A. LaRoche	Warwick, R.I.
Richard Hebert, deceased	Markham, Ont.
Curtis A. Smith, deceased	Fort Myers, Fla.
Alana Franklin	Ocala, Fla.
Evan Bradley Morris	Richmond, Va.
Bobby D. Gazaway	Crowley, Texas
Troy Wayne Rogers	Burleson, Texas
Zachary Daniel Smith	Downey, Calif.
Wesley Wilber, now deceased	Bremerton, Wash.
Jacob Russell Ryker	Springfield, Ore.
Brian S. Siebenmorgan, deceased	Pompano Beach, Fla.
Brendan T. Wahl	Big Sur, Calif.

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.

RICHARD VAN SANT, JR.
Martinsville, Indiana

JERRY D. HANKS
Bronston, Kentucky

Richard Van Sant, Jr., and Jerry D. Hanks saved Janet L. Hlas, Lillie L. Pustek, and Marjorie L. Maslanka from drowning, Bloomington, Indiana, June 26, 1998. Sisters Ms. Hlas, 63; Ms. Pustek, 60, and Ms. Maslanka, 64, were occupants of a van that, at night, was accidentally driven from a boat ramp into Lake Monroe. From his boat nearby on the lake, Van Sant, 34, off-duty firefighter, saw the accident, then immediately jumped into the water and swam to the van, which drifted to a point about 120 feet from the bank. Hanks, 47, meat cutter, also saw the accident, from the bank, and swam to the van. Van Sant and Hanks attempted to gain entry to the van through its windows and doors, but they were not successful. The van started to submerge nose first in the 20-foot-deep water. With a rock that the men obtained from the bank, Van Sant broke out the van's rear, passenger-side window, providing egress for the women, who were nonswimmers. Ms. Hlas was the first to exit the vehicle; Van Sant swam her toward the bank, meeting a woman who took her the remaining distance to safety. After emerging next from the van, Ms. Pustek submerged Hanks, but they resurfaced, and Hanks took Ms. Pustek to the bank. Having returned to the van, Van Sant secured a hold of Ms. Maslanka, who exited the vehicle as it submerged, and swam to the bank with her.

72873-8322 / 72872-8323

VINCENT J. GALATI
Fort Worth, Texas

Vincent J. Galati helped to rescue Marjorie O. and Leo Sellers from burning, Fort Worth, Texas, July 21, 1998. Mrs. Sellers, 75, and her husband, 77, were inside their one-story house when escaping natural gas in the kitchen exploded, demolishing the back of the house. Fire broke out and spread quickly throughout the structure. Residents of the neighborhood, including Galati, 46, assembler, responded to the scene. Looking for the couple, Galati found a hole in the rubble at the back of the house and entered, crawling. He saw Mrs. Sellers and her husband amid debris and crawled to them. Galati grasped Mrs. Sellers, then pulled her out of the rubble and took her to the nearby fence that bordered the property. After putting Mrs. Sellers over the fence into the adjoining yard, Galati returned into the rubble for Sellers, but intense heat from the growing flames forced him to withdraw. He climbed the fence into the adjoining yard, where a neighbor sprayed him with a water hose. Sellers exited the rubble and was aided over the fence by Galati and another man. The house was destroyed. Mr. and Mrs. Sellers, both severely burned, were taken to the hospital, where they died two days later. Galati received emergency-room treatment for cuts to his knees and a wound on one foot, and he recovered.

72947-8324

RICHARD SILVIA, deceased
East Taunton, Massachusetts

Richard Silvia died attempting to save Kevin F. Vargas from drowning, Taunton, Massachusetts, January 18, 1999. Kevin, 14, broke through the ice covering First Pond at a point about 30 feet from the closer bank. He shouted for help. Kevin's mother, alerted at their home nearby, responded to the scene. Believed to have been walking near the pond, Silvia, 39, mental health worker, was seen by Kevin's mother inching across the ice toward Kevin, carrying a stick. When Silvia had reached a point about five feet from Kevin, he too broke through the ice and entered the frigid water. Silvia submerged and resurfaced repeatedly, then submerged a final time. Rescue personnel arrived very shortly and removed Kevin from the water. He required hospital treatment for hypothermia, and he recovered. Silvia was recovered from the pond about 45 minutes after he had entered it. He could not be revived, as he had drowned.

73307-8339

DAVID BLAIR JOHNSON
MARC RIVEST
Belle River, Ontario

David Blair Johnson and Marc Rivest rescued Roland P. Robert from burning, Tecumseh, Ontario, August 13, 1998. Flying a helicopter, Robert, 35, was applying insecticide to a field when the helicopter crashed to the ground and caught fire. Trapped in the wreckage of the cockpit, he shouted for help. Johnson, 39, and Rivest, 36, business operators, witnessed the accident from their vehicle on a road adjacent to the field. They drove closer to the scene, then ran to the wreckage. Despite flames six feet high issuing from the area of the helicopter's engine and fuel tanks, Johnson held to Robert's upper body while Rivest freed his feet and legs from the wreckage. Johnson and Rivest then grasped Robert about the shoulders, pulled him from the helicopter, and dragged him away. Within moments, an explosion in the wreckage engulfed much of it with flames. Robert sustained only a minor burn but required extensive hospitalization for significant other injury. 72991-8326 / 72992-8327

VICTOR K. SHELTON
Rustburg, Virginia

Victor K. Shelton rescued Charles T. Miles, Jr., from burning, Lynchburg, Virginia, September 16, 1998. Following a highway accident at night, Miles, 28, lay unconscious inside a burning pickup truck, which was positioned astride a guardrail bordering the highway shoulder. Another motorist, Shelton, 42, salesman, witnessed the accident and stopped at the scene. Shelton approached the passenger side of the truck as flames blocked entry at the driver's side. He stepped up onto the guardrail, looked through the broken-out window of the passenger door, and saw Miles, unconscious, lying in the cab. Despite flames entering the truck from its driver's side, Shelton reached inside, grasped Miles, and pulled him to the window. He then stepped down to the ground and pulled Miles out of the vehicle. Shelton carried Miles a short distance away, then returned to the truck to check for other occupants. Seeing no one else, he ran from the truck shortly before two explosions occurred at the vehicle. Miles required hospitalization for injuries received in the accident, including minor burns. He recovered. 73087-8328

JAMES BREDERSON
Attleboro, Massachusetts

ROBERT A. LAROCHE
Warwick, Rhode Island

James Brederson and Robert A. LaRoche rescued Marcel R. Tabor from burning, Attleboro, Massachusetts, March 4, 1998. Tabor, 36, was inside his apartment on the second floor of a two-story, wood-frame house when the building was blown apart by a massive explosion of natural gas that had leaked into the basement. Blown from the house, Tabor landed atop rubble, pinned by a wooden beam. A neighbor, Brederson, 33, construction worker, and LaRoche, 32, roof shingle maker, witnessed the explosion from nearby and immediately ran to the scene, where they found Tabor, who was unconscious. Brederson pulled on Tabor as LaRoche lifted the beam to free him, then together Brederson and LaRoche lifted Tabor and carried him away from the rubble. Within moments, flames on the debris grew and spread quickly, soon engulfing the site as the gas continued to leak. Two men died in the accident, and seven others, including Tabor, required hospital treatment for their injuries. Tabor sustained second- and third-degree burns and other significant injury. 72542-8329 / 72543-8330

RICHARD HEBERT, deceased
Markham, Ontario

Richard Hebert died attempting to save Susan J. Newman from drowning, Scarborough, Ontario, September 3, 1997. Ms. Newman, 37, and her friend, Hebert, 43, freight car repairman, were two of four crewmembers aboard a 27-foot sailing sloop on Lake Ontario during a sailboat race that lasted beyond dusk. When the boat was about three miles from shore, its boom swung suddenly, throwing Ms. Newman into the water. Hebert, then operating the boat, immediately dived head first into the water after her. He swam to Ms. Newman and supported her as the other members of the crew positioned the craft to effect a rescue. They threw a life ring to Hebert and Ms. Newman, but it fell beyond their grasp. While the crew again positioned the boat for another attempt, Hebert and Ms. Newman submerged. Their bodies were recovered six days later, they having drowned. 72079-8325

CURTIS A. SMITH, deceased
Fort Myers, Florida

Curtis A. Smith died after helping to save Donald L. and Jacob Schroeder from drowning, Lakeport, Florida, December 26, 1998. Schroeder, 41, and his son Jacob, 10, were with Schroeder's father aboard a 16-foot motorboat, fishing on Lake Okeechobee. The weather suddenly deteriorated, and the boat capsized in the high wind and rough water, throwing the occupants overboard. Smith, 45, groundskeeper, who was fishing nearby in his 17-foot boat, arrived within minutes and took Jacob aboard. During subsequent rescue activity, Smith's boat filled with water, and Smith was next seen in the lake, holding a floating ice chest. He was carried away. Schroeder, who had boarded Smith's boat, remained in the partially submerged vessel with Jacob until they were rescued by another fisherman about two hours later. Schroeder's father drowned, as did Smith, whose body was recovered from the lake two days later. 73265-8331

ALANA FRANKLIN
Ocala, Florida

Alana Franklin saved Jahan K. Rimes from assault, Silver Springs, Florida, June 1, 1998. Jahan, 6, was in a bedroom of his family's ground-level apartment after a man armed with a gun broke into the unit and shot Jahan's mother and two other relatives. After the assailant pursued Jahan's mother to the bedroom, Jahan's aunt, Alana, 11, student, fled the apartment to summon assistance. She returned to the scene and, knowing that Jahan was in the bedroom, went to one of that room's windows, in the side of the building. She broke then unlocked the window, opened it, and pushed aside the blind. She saw Jahan on a bed within reach of the window and the assailant in the doorway. Alana partially entered the room through the window, grasped Jahan, and pulled him outside. As they ran away, the assailant went to the window and fired. A four-hour stand off with police ensued, following which the assailant was arrested. Although wounded, Jahan's mother and the other hostages survived. 72977-8332

EVAN BRADLEY MORRIS
Richmond, Virginia

Evan Bradley Morris saved Claudine Fiore from burning, Powhatan, Virginia, September 27, 1998. Ms. Fiore, 24, was the driver of a car that, in a highway accident, struck a pickup truck head on, then left the roadway and caught fire in the engine area. The driver of the pickup, Morris, 23, civil engineer, was injured in the accident and rendered unconscious briefly. After he revived, Morris, with difficulty, left his truck and approached the burning car, in which Ms. Fiore lay unconscious in the front-seat area. He opened the driver's door and extended his upper body into the car. After releasing Ms. Fiore's safety belt, Morris grasped her, and, cradling her, removed her from the vehicle and carried her to a point of safety across the highway. Flames on the car grew and soon engulfed it. Ms. Fiore and Morris were taken to the hospital for treatment of injuries sustained in the crash, and Morris required surgery to his shoulder, which sustained significant injury at some point during the incident. 73155-8336

BOBBY D. GAZAWAY
Crowley, Texas

TROY WAYNE ROGERS
Burleson, Texas

Bobby D. Gazaway and Troy Wayne Rogers rescued Troy A. McKnight from burning, Burleson, Texas, November 17, 1998. Following a highway accident, McKnight, 39, lay unconscious in the cab of a pickup truck that had overturned onto its passenger side and caught fire. A motorist, Gazaway, 37, electrician, was the first on the scene. Responding to the windshield area of the pickup, Gazaway saw McKnight inside and, shouting for help, attempted to gain entry to the cab by striking the windshield. Working nearby, Rogers, 33, carpenter, heard Gazaway shouting. Rogers ran to the scene and, kicking and punching the windshield, gained access to the cab, into which flames had spread and were growing. Rogers partially entered the cab, patted out some flames on McKnight's attire, then grasped him and began to pull him from the truck. Gazaway also seized McKnight, who was aflame, and together the men removed him. They took McKnight away from the truck, the cab of which was shortly engulfed by flame, and extinguished the flames on his clothing. McKnight was hospitalized for treatment of serious burns and other injury. Gazaway recovered from minor burns to his hands, and Rogers required hospital treatment for second-degree burns to his hands and abrasions. 73238-8333 / 73237-8334

ZACHARY DANIEL SMITH
Downey, California

Zachary Daniel Smith saved Manuel D. Corral, Jr., from burning, Santa Fe Springs, California, May 17, 1998. Manuel, 16, was the driver of a car that, in a highway accident at night, overturned onto its driver's side and caught fire. Although he was conscious, he was trapped by his safety belt, which he could not release. Smith, 19, college student, was driving on the same highway and saw the overturned and burning car. Smith stopped at the scene and as he approached the car saw Manuel struggling inside. He went to the rear of the car and, despite smoke in the interior and flames beginning there, entered through the rear window, which was missing. Although Manuel greatly outweighed him, Smith lifted Manuel to gain access to the safety belt, which he then released. Smith grasped Manuel and pulled him into the back-seat area. They then exited the car through the rear window and ran to a point of safety moments before flames engulfed the car, destroying it. Manuel sustained abrasions, from which he recovered, and Smith recovered from an abrasion to a leg. 72767-8335

WESLEY WILBER, now deceased
Bremerton, Washington

Wesley Wilber saved Donna L. Horn from burning, Bremerton, Washington, October 22, 1998. When the automobile driven by Ms. Horn, 57, lost its brakes, it proceeded out of control through a busy intersection, then entered the lot of a service station where it struck a gasoline pump. The pump was knocked to the pavement, and flames broke out on it and on the front of the car, which was stopped against the pump island. Ms. Horn attempted unsuccessfully to open the car's doors. Stopped in traffic at the intersection, Wilber, 44, disabled mechanic, witnessed the accident. He immediately pulled his car into the lot of the service station then exited it and activated one of the pumps' emergency shut-off switches. Ms. Horn was by then in the back seat of her car, kicking at its right rear door. Despite the growing flames, Wilber ran to that side of the car, opened the door, and removed Ms. Horn from the vehicle. They fled. Seconds later, there was an explosive burst of flames at the car and pump. Ms. Horn was treated at the hospital for injuries sustained in the accident, and she recovered. 73241-8337

JACOB RUSSELL RYKER
Springfield, Oregon

Jacob Russell Ryker helped to save an indeterminate number of persons from assault, Springfield, Oregon, May 21, 1998. More than 100 students were gathered in their high school's cafeteria before the start of classes when a heavily armed 15-year-old boy entered the room and opened fire on them with a semiautomatic rifle. The boy, who also was a student at the school, had earlier shot four other persons, killing three. One of the students in the cafeteria was killed and many were wounded, including Jacob, 17, who, shot through the chest, fell to the floor. As the assailant appeared to be reloading his weapon, Jacob got up and, despite his wound, charged him, taking him to the floor and causing him to lose the rifle. Several other students joined in subduing the assailant. As they struggled against him, the assailant produced a handgun, which Jacob, moving atop him, grasped with his left hand. The gun discharged, further wounding Jacob, in a finger. Arriving police arrested the assailant. Twenty-five of the students were wounded; Jacob required four days' hospitalization for treatment, including surgery, of his injuries.

72718-8338

BRIAN S. SIEBENMORGAN, deceased
Pompano Beach, Florida

Brian S. Siebenmorgan saved Sally Terpsma and died attempting to save Gitana Kmieliauskaite from drowning, Pompano Beach, Florida, December 20, 1998. Ms. Terpsma, 44, and her friend Ms. Kmieliauskaite, 28, were wading in the Atlantic Ocean when Ms. Terpsma was pulled into water beyond her depth. Unable to regain her footing, she called for help. Ms. Kmieliauskaite swam to her but likewise encountered difficulty in the deeper water, and she too called for help. Siebenmorgan, 34, travel agent, who had been wading nearby, approached Ms. Terpsma and urged her to swim to him. She struggled toward him, and when she was within his reach, he pulled her to wadable water, from which she then went to shore. Meanwhile, Ms. Kmieliauskaite had been pulled farther from shore. Siebenmorgan swam to her and began to pull her in, but he struggled, then called for help and submerged. Exhausted, Ms. Kmieliauskaite was carried to wadable water, where others aided her to the beach. She was attended by paramedics at the scene before being taken to the hospital for further treatment. She recovered. Siebenmorgan also was recovered by others and taken to the hospital, but efforts to revive him failed. He died of drowning.

73298-8340

BRENDAN T. WAHL
Big Sur, California

Brendan T. Wahl helped to save Daniel C. Lackey from drowning, Carmel, California, December 24, 1998. Daniel, 11, was climbing on the large rocks at the base of a cliff along the shore of the Pacific Ocean when he was swept into the cold, turbulent water by breaking waves. He was carried away from shore. Driving by the scene, Wahl, 40, general contractor, was alerted to the situation. An experienced surfer, Wahl climbed down to the water's edge with his nine-foot surfboard, then, guided from shore by Daniel's family members, paddled out to Daniel. Daniel was then about 150 feet from shore and was losing consciousness. Wahl positioned Daniel on the surfboard and, cold and tiring, started to paddle back to shore. A lifeguard who had been called to the scene arrived and swam out to them with a rescue tube. With Wahl using the tube, which was attached to the surfboard, the lifeguard mounted the surfboard, Daniel still atop it, and paddled to shore. There, he removed Daniel from the water, Wahl also requiring assistance from the surf. Daniel sustained hypothermia and was hospitalized overnight, and Wahl was hypothermic and nearly exhausted. Both recovered.

73282-8341

CARNEGIE MEDAL



ANDREW CARNEGIE

