



NEWS RELEASE

Carnegie Hero Fund COMMISSION

A CENTURY of HEROES 1904-2004

FOR RELEASE:
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CARNEGIE MEDALS AWARDED TO 21 FOR EXTRAORDINARY CIVILIAN HEROISM

PITTSBURGH, PA, December 20, 2007—In its fifth and final award announcement of 2007, the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission today named 21 individuals as recipients of the CARNEGIE MEDAL. The medal is awarded to those throughout the United States and Canada who risk their lives to an extraordinary degree while saving or attempting to save the lives of others.

The heroes announced today bring to 98 the number of awards made in 2007 and to 9,151 since the Pittsburgh-based Fund's inception in 1904. Commission President Mark Laskow stated that each of the awardees or their next of kin will also receive a grant of \$5,000. Throughout the 103 years since the Fund was established by industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, \$30.1 million has been given in one-time grants, scholarship aid, death benefits, and continuing assistance.

Among the awardees are two brothers who died attempting to save a kayaker from drowning in the Fox River at Yorkville, Ill., on May 27, 2006. Mark Sperling, 27, of Yorkville and his brother Bruce R., 31, of Lombard, Ill., entered the river after the kayaker went over a low dam and became trapped in the boil of water at the base of the dam. The kayaker also drowned. The awardees are:

DeWayne D. Rodgers	Cumming, Ga.
Robert G. Falconer II	Akron, Ohio
Paul D. Meeks	Port Orange, Fla.
Theodore L. Christoff	Jackson, Mich.
Seth Clayton Hooks	Cadiz, Ky.
Ronald D. Rowlett, <i>deceased</i>	Vacaville, Calif.
Glenn K. Manning, <i>deceased</i>	Wichita, Kans.
Ronald M. Crafton	Kalamazoo, Mich.
Brian James Ivory	Oakdale, N.Y.
Jason Michael Schappert	Ocala, Fla.
Steve Linder	Macon, Ga.
Stephen P. Hanson	Black Creek, Wis.
Michael F. Hahn	Wausau, Wis.
Mark Sperling, <i>deceased</i>	Yorkville, Ill.
Bruce R. Sperling, <i>deceased</i>	Lombard, Ill.
James P. Hood	Alpine, Wyo.
Walter E. S. Hohl	Astoria, Ore.
Benjamin S. Henrich	River Falls, Wis.
Bryan Thomas Jared	Lexington, Ky.
Michael Joseph Towle, Jr.	Long Beach, Calif.
Charles T. Carbonell, Sr.	Tampa, Fla.

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). Fuller information on the CARNEGIE MEDAL and the history of the CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION can be found at www.carnegiehero.org

DEWAYNE D. RODGERS
Cumming, Georgia

DeWayne D. Rodgers saved Pedro Zuniga and his four children from burning, Cumming, Georgia, August 26, 2006. Zuniga, 32, and his two sons and two daughters were asleep in their one-story frame house after fire broke out at night in the attached carport and spread to the house. Rodgers, 48, marble and granite craftsman, lived next door and discovered the fire. He ran to the scene and gained entry to the house through a sliding glass door in the living room. Finding Zuniga and two of the children there, Rodgers ran to the opposite end of the house to look for others. On his return to the living room, Rodgers, who was barefoot and shirtless, had to pass through the area in which flames from the carport were impinging. As Zuniga's sons fled the house through a door and a window in the living room, Rodgers went to the adjoining bedroom, where he found Zuniga's older daughter. He opened a window in that room and crawled through it, after which Zuniga handed him his daughters. Zuniga then escaped through the window, and he and Rodgers ran from the house with the girls. Firefighters arrived shortly and extinguished the blaze, but the house was destroyed. Neither Zuniga nor any of his children was burned, but Rodgers sustained burns to his torso, an arm, and a toe, requiring hospital treatment. He recovered. 79714-9131

ROBERT G. FALCONER II
Akron, Ohio

Robert G. Falconer II rescued Fred K. Johnson from burning, Akron, Ohio, October 29, 2006. Johnson, 61, was overcome in the kitchen of his ranch-style house after fire broke out in the adjacent living room and, fueled by stored oxygen, intensified and spread quickly. At his residence across the street, Falconer, 44, police detective, was alerted to the fire. Seeing flames through the living room window of Johnson's house, Falconer responded to the open door of its integral garage. As he reported the fire, he went through the garage to the door that accessed the kitchen and opened it. Smoke was thick and heat intense in that room. Falconer saw Johnson lying on the floor at a point about 10 feet from the door. He crawled into the kitchen, grasped Johnson by a foot, and then crawled back to the garage, pulling Johnson with him. At the garage, Falconer stood and carried Johnson outside to safety. Johnson was hospitalized for treatment of severe burns, from which he died four months later. The fire destroyed the house. 79848-9132

PAUL D. MEEKS
Port Orange, Florida

Paul D. Meeks rescued Daniel Richman from burning, Port Orange, Florida, November 1, 2006. Richman, 37, was the student pilot of a twin-engine airplane that crashed during a training flight. The craft landed upright in a field in a residential area and caught fire, with flames quickly spreading in the fuselage. Richman was rendered unconscious in the accident and remained strapped to his seat. In his nearby residence, Meeks, 63, retired service technician, heard the crash. After reporting it, he ran to the scene, where through an open door in the plane he saw Richman moving. Despite the advancing flames, Meeks reached into the craft and attempted to release Richman's safety belt. He withdrew to obtain a knife, then re-entered, flames having spread to Richman's clothing. After cutting the belt, Meeks grasped Richman, pulled him from the plane, and dragged him to safety. Badly injured and burned, Richman was taken to the hospital, where he died a few hours later. Meeks sustained minor burns to his hands and was treated at the scene. He recovered. 79847-9133

THEODORE L. CHRISTOFF
Jackson, Michigan

Theodore L. Christoff saved Phyllis E. Landes from burning, Jackson, Michigan, November 3, 2006. Landes, 74, was in the living room of her one-story house after fire broke out on the back porch and spread to the rear interior of the structure. Alerted to the fire, Christoff, 36, business operator, immediately responded to the scene from his nearby house. He and two other men who responded removed Landes's husband and son from the house through a window in the living room, but dense smoke thwarted their attempts to enter the structure through the same window for Landes. Christoff broke into the house through its locked storm door and front door, then he had to clear items that were blocking the door on the inside. Despite the dense smoke, which precluded visibility except for just above the floor, Christoff entered the living room and crawled about 10 feet to where he saw Landes sitting on the floor. With flames filling the adjacent kitchen, he turned Landes around, grasped her beneath the arms, and, dragging her, retraced his path to the front door. There, one of the other men helped take her to safety. Landes needed hospital treatment for smoke inhalation and minor burns. Christoff was treated at the scene for smoke inhalation, and he sustained a deep cut on his foot that required suturing. He recovered.

79855-9134

SETH CLAYTON HOOKS
Cadiz, Kentucky

Seth Clayton Hooks rescued Hunter B. Wiseman from burning, Cadiz, Kentucky, December 12, 2006. Following a highway accident involving the car in which he was a passenger, Hunter, 4, remained strapped to his seat by a safety belt. The car had overturned and caught fire in the accident, and spreading flames reached Hunter's seat. Traveling on the same highway, Hooks, 21, restaurant employee, arrived at the scene and approached the burning car. Seeing Hunter inside, he entered the vehicle through the window of its driver's door and attempted to free him. Hooks withdrew for a knife, but none was available. Re-entering the vehicle, he pulled Hunter free and exited the car with him. Hooks rolled Hunter on the ground to extinguish the flames on him, then he carried him away from the vehicle to a point of safety. Hunter was hospitalized for treatment of extensive burns and later died of his injuries. Hooks required hospital treatment for second-degree burns to both hands, and he recovered.

79911-9135

RONALD D. ROWLETT, *deceased*
Vacaville, California

GLENN K. MANNING, *deceased*
Wichita, Kansas

Ronald D. Rowlett and Glenn K. Manning died attempting to save Vicky I. Manning from drowning, Kilauea, Hawaii, February 5, 2006. Ms. Manning, 57, was in wadable water of the Pacific Ocean atop a fringing coral reef that extended about 600 feet from shore. The swift current of a deep channel that was nearby carried her farther seaward, and, unable to swim against it back to shore, she called for help. Rowlett, 59, correctional facility officer, and his wife were nearby, also in wadable water atop the reef, and witnessed her struggle. Rowlett waded and swam toward Ms. Manning as his wife returned to shore to alert help. He reached a point close to Ms. Manning, who fought to remain afloat, but was then swept beyond her into the rough surf at the edge of the reef. From the beach, Ms. Manning's husband, 57, supervisor, also waded and swam toward her, but he too was swept by the current into the rough surf. Arriving rescue personnel used a personal watercraft to return Ms. Manning to shore, and she was taken to the hospital for observation. She was not injured. Rowlett and Manning's husband were also returned to shore by means of the watercraft. Resuscitation was attempted, but both men had drowned.

79085-9136 / 80160-9137

RONALD M. CRAFTON
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Ronald M. Crafton helped to rescue Shirley A. and Joseph G. Mitchell from assault, Kalamazoo, Michigan, November 19, 2006. Mrs. Mitchell and her husband, both 67, were walking on a sidewalk when a man approached them from behind and without provocation knocked Mrs. Mitchell to the pavement. Armed with a four-foot metal pipe that was reinforced with a steel bar, the assailant struck her and her husband repeatedly, landing forceful blows. Mr. Mitchell fell to the pavement and called for help. About 25 feet away, Crafton, 57, psychologist, and his wife were walking on the same sidewalk and saw the attack. Crafton approached the assailant, ordering him to stop, but when he was within arm's length of him, the assailant swung the pipe, grazing the side of Crafton's head. Crafton tackled the assailant by the knees, taking him to the pavement, where he struggled to overpower him. Still armed, the assailant attempted to bite Crafton. As the men struggled, Crafton's wife approached and wrested the pipe from the assailant's grasp. Another man approached and sat on the assailant's legs to help restrain him. Police arrived shortly and subdued him, then took him into custody. Mrs. Mitchell required lengthy hospitalization for treatment of significant injuries, and her husband was treated for multiple cuts and bruises, from which he recovered. 80002-9138

BRIAN JAMES IVORY
Oakdale, New York

Brian James Ivory rescued Winston J. DeCoteau from burning, Hauppauge, New York, December 17, 2006. DeCoteau, 24, was semiconscious in the driver's seat of his car after an accident at night in which the vehicle left the road, struck a utility pole, and burst into flame. Driving home from work, Ivory, 25, bartender, witnessed the accident. After reporting it, he ran to the car, where flames were issuing from its rear end and advancing toward the front. Ivory opened the driver's door, reached over DeCoteau, and with difficulty released his safety belt. By then flames had spread to the interior of the car and to DeCoteau's clothing. Ivory grasped DeCoteau under the arms, pulled him from the vehicle, and dragged him away. He then extinguished the flames on DeCoteau's clothing. Flames shortly engulfed the car. DeCoteau was hospitalized for treatment of his injuries, which included burns to his face, head, and neck. Ivory was treated at the hospital for smoke inhalation and minor burns to his face, and he recovered. 79953-9139

JASON MICHAEL SCHAPPERT
Ocala, Florida

Jason Michael Schappert saved Robert S. Hughes from drowning, Lakeville, Massachusetts, February 11, 2007. While riding an all-terrain vehicle on frozen-over Long Pond, Hughes, 51, entered a section of open water at a point about a quarter-mile from the closer bank. His vehicle sank in the 12-foot-deep water, and Hughes tried without success to climb back onto the ice, which was thin there. While on the ice in the general vicinity with friends, Schappert, 18, college student, witnessed the accident. Taking a camera case with him, he walked toward the open water, and then, near it, he lay on the ice to distribute his weight and moved toward Hughes. He threw the strap of the case to Hughes and, requiring repeated attempts, pulled him atop the ice, which by then was bowing into the water. Schappert moved Hughes back to thicker ice, where, joined by his friends, he provided him articles of dry clothes and then aided him back to the bank. Hughes suffered a sore shoulder and was short of breath. He was given hospital treatment, and he recovered. 80098-9140

STEVE LINDER
Macon, Georgia

Steve Linder rescued Leslie B. Deal from burning, Macon, Georgia, December 14, 2006. Leslie, 16, was the driver of an automobile that collided with another at an intersection. Flames erupted in the engine compartment of the car and spread to the interior, where Leslie, semiconscious, remained in the driver's seat. A motorist who witnessed the collision, Linder, 52, salesperson, stopped at the scene and, after ensuring that the occupants of the other vehicle were safe, approached the burning car. He tried to open its driver's door, but the door was jammed. As the glass was missing from the window of that door, Linder reached into the car and grasped Leslie but saw that her safety belt was attached. Despite flames underneath the dashboard on the passenger side, Linder released the belt and then began to pull Leslie through the window. When he had her halfway through the window, he found that she was caught by the steering wheel. Again reaching into the car, Linder freed Leslie and pulled her from the vehicle, and then he dragged her to safety. Within moments, flames engulfed the interior of the car. Leslie required hospital treatment for lacerations and other injuries, and she sustained minor burns to an arm.

79934-9141

STEPHEN P. HANSON
Black Creek, Wisconsin

MICHAEL F. HAHN
Wausau, Wisconsin

Stephen P. Hanson and Michael F. Hahn saved Roger J. Steinbring, Jr., from burning, Shawano, Wisconsin, December 8, 2006. Steinbring, 32, was the driver of a pickup truck that, at night, left the highway, struck the rocky hillside adjoining it, and then, breaking into flame in its engine area, overturned onto its passenger side. He lay unconscious inside the cab, which had separated from the vehicle's frame but lay close to it. Approaching on the same highway, Hanson, 46, laser operator, witnessed the accident. He stopped at the scene, proceeded to the truck, and, to gain access to the cab, punched a hole in the windshield and started to remove it. Another motorist, Hahn, 38, delivery truck driver, stopped at the scene on seeing the burning wreckage. He joined Hanson, and together the men dislodged the windshield. Hahn then leaned through the windshield opening, grasped Steinbring, and pulled him partway out of the cab. As Steinbring's legs were caught by the dashboard, Hanson leaned through the windshield opening and freed them. The men then pulled Steinbring the remaining distance from the cab and dragged him away before flames grew to engulf its interior. Steinbring was hospitalized for treatment of his injuries, and Hanson and Hahn were examined at the hospital, with Hahn receiving treatment for cuts to both hands and mild smoke inhalation. They recovered.

80106-9142 / 80105-9143

MARK SPERLING, *deceased*
Yorkville, Illinois

BRUCE R. SPERLING, *deceased*
Lombard, Illinois

Mark and Bruce R. Sperling died helping attempt to save Craig R. Fliege from drowning, Yorkville, Illinois, May 27, 2006. Fliege, 38, was kayaking on the Fox River when he went over a low dam. Thrown from the kayak, he was caught in the boil at the base of the dam, at a point about 120 feet from the closer bank. About to go canoeing, Mark, 27, construction business operator, and his brother, Bruce, 31, youth pastor, were then on the bank in the vicinity. Each wearing a life jacket, they entered the river for Fliege at a point downstream from the dam. As the water was not deep there, Mark and Bruce walked out toward Fliege, but they too became caught in the boil and could not escape it. Rescue personnel arrived shortly and removed all three men from the river. They were taken to nearby hospitals, where they were pronounced dead of drowning.

79410-9144 / 79409-9145

JAMES P. HOOD
Alpine, Wyoming

James P. Hood rescued Erik C. Bjarnason, Donald W. Jardine, and Alexander C. Snigurowicz from exposure, Mount Logan, Yukon Territory, May 27-28, 2005. Bjarnason, 40; Jardine, 51; and Snigurowicz, 45, experienced climbers, were stranded for two days in a storm on a ridge of Mount Logan at an altitude of about 18,000 feet. Suffering frostbite and altitude sickness and with little provision, the men radioed for help as they sought refuge in a cave that they dug in the snow, their tent having blown away. Two other climbers from their party reached them after the storm abated and, setting up their tent, tended to them. Meanwhile, Hood, 47, a helicopter pilot who was employed by the company that provided search and rescue services for a U.S. national park about 400 miles away, was informed of the situation. Agreeing to the mission, Hood and a two-man crew flew a specialized high-altitude helicopter to the scene over the course of several hours, having to refuel three times as they took a non-direct route because of inclement weather. From a staging area at an altitude of about 5,510 feet that was about 15 miles from the scene, Hood ascended alone to the climbers' location, his craft carrying minimal fuel due to weight restrictions. The diminishing light of late evening compromised his vision and depth perception in terrain with which he was unfamiliar, as he had not flown there previously. Further, Hood was not acclimated to the thin atmosphere of the high elevation, which caused him to use supplemental oxygen and which imposed on the helicopter's performance. Unable to land at the climbers' site, Hood hovered above it as Bjarnason was helped by the others into a rescue basket suspended by a line from the helicopter. Bjarnason was then evacuated to the staging area, where Hood refueled the helicopter. He returned to the ridge and removed Jardine to the staging area in similar fashion. By then the midnight skies darkening, Hood again took on minimal fuel and flew a third time to the scene, for Snigurowicz. After he returned Snigurowicz to the staging area, the three climbers were transported to a hospital, where they were detained for treatment of hypothermia and frostbite, two of them requiring digit amputation. 80138-9146

WALTER E. S. HOHL
Astoria, Oregon

Walter E. S. Hohl helped to rescue Bob L. Scott from burning, Cascade Locks, Oregon, October 22, 2006. Scott, 76, was the passenger of a motor home that, in an accident, left the highway, overturned onto its passenger side, and caught fire in the rear undercarriage area. Hohl, 38, ship inspector, drove upon the scene after the accident and responded to the front of the vehicle, where he and another man aided in the removal of Scott's wife through a window. An explosion occurred at the motor home about then, sending flames high above it and into its interior. Seeing Scott trapped inside, Hohl and the other man broke out the windshield, then Hohl leaned inside and attempted repeatedly to free Scott from his safety belt. Intense heat forced him back. When Scott started to emerge through the windshield, Hohl helped him the rest of the way out of the vehicle and took him to safety. Flames grew to destroy the motor home. Severely burned, Scott died at the scene. Hohl suffered minor burns, from which he recovered. 79799-9147

BENJAMIN S. HENRICH
River Falls, Wisconsin

Benjamin S. Henrich attempted to save Lisa N. Villigan from an impending explosion, Prescott, Wisconsin, February 17, 2007. Villigan, 39, remained in the driver's seat of her pickup truck after it left the roadway at night and crashed into a one-story house, severing the house's natural gas line. Henrich, 28, police officer, responded to the scene after the accident was reported. He approached the passenger side of the vehicle, the front of which was about six feet into the structure, and attempted to alert Villigan to the gas, the odor of which was strong. She did not reply. Seeing that a window on the driver's side was broken, Henrich went there and again attempted to alert Villigan. Within moments, an explosion of natural gas occurred, setting fire to the house and truck and throwing Henrich at least 15 feet from the structure. Flames grew to engulf the house and truck, destroying both. Villigan died in the fire. Henrich was taken to the hospital for treatment of minor burns to his face and cuts and bruises to his hands and face. 80113-9148

BRYAN THOMAS JARED
Lexington, Kentucky

Bryan Thomas Jared helped to save James M. Polehinke from burning, Lexington, Kentucky, August 27, 2006. Polehinke, 44, was the co-pilot of a commercial regional jet that crashed during takeoff and caught fire. Severely injured, he remained restrained by a harness to his seat in the cockpit. On duty nearby, Jared, 29, police officer, responded to the scene, where he found that flames had engulfed the wreckage except for the area of the cockpit. Seeing Polehinke through a gap in the wreckage at the nose of the jet, Jared crawled into the cockpit and attempted to free him. A safety officer from the airport also arrived, and he too crawled into the wreckage. Working together, they freed Polehinke, but with difficulty, flames just feet away. They then pulled him from the cockpit and loaded him into a responder's vehicle that had arrived. Polehinke required extensive hospitalization, and Jared was treated at the hospital for a minor burn to an arm. The 49 other passengers and crewmembers of the jet died in the accident. 79627-9149

MICHAEL JOSEPH TOWLE, JR.
Long Beach, California

Michael Joseph Towle, Jr., helped to save a man from drowning, Santa Cruz, California, November 14, 2006. A 23-year-old man was climbing on rocks that formed that part of the shore of the Pacific Ocean when he slipped and fell into turbulent water. Breaking waves battered him against the rocks, and the 52-degree water sapped his strength. Nearby, Towle, 22, college student, was alerted to the situation. He removed his outer attire and began to climb down to the water, but he slipped midway and fell, hitting the rocks hard before landing in the rough surf. Bruised and somewhat dazed, Towle swam to the man, secured a hold on him, then took him to a large, exposed rock about 60 feet from shore to get out of the breaking waves. Towle and the man clung to the rock to await help but were soon washed from it. Others on shore threw out a life ring attached to a rope. Towle swam to the ring and gave it to the man, then swam alongside him as those on shore pulled him in. Arriving rescue personnel lifted the man to safety. He was taken to the hospital for treatment of lacerations and contusions, and he recovered. Towle was treated at the scene for lacerations and contusions and then later went to the hospital, where it was found he had fractured his left wrist during the rescue. Treatment of the fracture required surgery. 79942-9150

CHARLES T. CARBONELL, SR.
Tampa, Florida

Charles T. Carbonell, Sr., saved Steven D. Metzler from assault, Tampa, Florida, February 12, 2007. Metzler, 57, a police officer, was attempting to detain a man after stopping him in traffic. The man resisted, and, struggling against Metzler, seized his handgun. Carbonell, 50, furniture restorer, passed by in his vehicle, then witnessed the men fighting for control of the weapon. He returned to the scene and parked, then ran to the assailant and peeled his fingers from the gun, enabling Metzler to reholster it. The assailant continued to struggle violently as Carbonell and Metzler attempted to subdue him. Taking him to the ground, they placed him in handcuffs, but with difficulty, before backup officers arrived. Metzler suffered minor cuts and Carbonell was struck repeatedly during the fracas, but neither man required medical treatment. They recovered. 80117-9151

CARNEGIE MEDAL



ANDREW CARNEGIE

