



**CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION**  
*Recognizing civilian heroism in the United States and Canada*

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## News Release

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### **19 CITED FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM BY CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION**

PITTSBURGH, PA, April 2, 2009—In its first award announcement of 2009, the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission today named 19 individuals as recipients of the CARNEGIE MEDAL. The medal is awarded throughout the United States and Canada to those who risk their lives to an extraordinary degree while saving or attempting to save the lives of others.

Five of the awardees lost their lives in the performance of their rescue acts, including three teenagers. Robert Ferrell, 14, of Jobstown, N.J., died attempting to save his mother from a fire in their home, and Ross McKay Barfuss, 16, of Aloha, Ore., and Courtney E. Butler, also 16, of Stephenville, Texas, drowned while attempting to save others.

The heroes announced today bring to 9,262 the total number of awards 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 financial grant. Throughout the 105 years since the Fund was established by industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, \$31.2 million has been given in one-time grants, scholarship aid, death benefits, and continuing assistance. The awardees are:

John A. Lloyd	Fernandina Beach, Fla.
Ross McKay Barfuss, <i>deceased</i>	Aloha, Ore.
James D. Crocker	Valley City, Ohio
Shalinder Kaur Basran	Surrey, B.C.
Richard Conine	Queensbury, N.Y.
Joshua E. Mattison	Fort Ann, N.Y.
Clerc Higgins Cooper	New Orleans, La.
Robert Ferrell, <i>deceased</i>	Jobstown, N.J.
Gregory Bryant	Port Hadlock, Wash.
Beth MacDonald, <i>deceased</i>	Franklin, N.H.
Jeffrey M. McNeil	Midwest City, Okla.
Christopher Hess	Philadelphia, Pa.
Courtney E. Butler, <i>deceased</i>	Stephenville, Texas
Christopher A. Howard	Warren, Ore.
Shawn William Edele, <i>deceased</i>	Fruitport, Mich.
Kenneth A. Oedewaldt	Mapleton, Ill.
A. J. Skiptunas III	Wrightsville, Pa.
Ledford Wayne Arthur	Paint Bank, Va.
Francis William O'Hara	Riverside, R.I.

Resumes of the acts follow. To nominate someone for the CARNEGIE MEDAL, write the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, 436 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1101, 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](http://www.carnegiehero.org)

**JOHN A. LLOYD**  
Fernandina Beach, Florida

John A. Lloyd helped to save William G. Wynne from drowning, Fernandina Beach, Florida, May 25, 2007. William, 7, and his father were swimming in the Atlantic Ocean when a strong current prevented them from returning to shore. Lloyd, 64, retired teacher, was walking on the beach in the vicinity when he heard William's father shout for help. Lloyd immediately waded and swam out to them, reaching them at a point about 150 feet from shore. The father shoved William toward Lloyd, who managed to grasp him by the fingertips in the rough water. Lloyd drew William into a firmer grasp, and William held to Lloyd's neck as Lloyd struggled to return to shore. Rough water conditions and the strong current thwarted his efforts. Seeing two lifeguards responding on the shore, Lloyd kept William afloat until they arrived. One of the lifeguards took William to safety as the other rescued Lloyd, who could no longer move his legs. Dragged from the surf, Lloyd was taken to the hospital, where he was treated for having nearly drowned. He recovered. William's father drowned. 81092-9244

**ROSS MCKAY BARFUSS, deceased**  
Aloha, Oregon

Ross McKay Barfuss died attempting to save River Jenison from drowning, Gleneden Beach, Oregon, March 8, 2008. River, 11, was playing on a Pacific Ocean beach when he was swept into the water. The surf was extremely turbulent, with nine-foot waves breaking and strong currents, including rips and a swift longshore current. River struggled in the 45-degree water to regain his footing. Ross, 16, student, was in the vicinity with another party when he became aware of River's plight. He immediately ran to a point closer to River and entered the water for him but was felled by a wave. Regaining his footing, he made another attempt, with a friend, but again he was taken down by the rough surf. Ross was carried out from shore as he struggled to reach River and was soon lost from sight. Arriving rescue personnel recovered River by helicopter. He was taken to the hospital, but he could not be revived. Ross's body was recovered a month later. 81076-9245

**JAMES D. CROCKER**  
Valley City, Ohio

James D. Crocker rescued Douglas K. Spielberg from burning, Valley City, Ohio, September 3, 2007. Spielberg, 49, was trapped inside his sport utility vehicle after it left the roadway in an accident, overturned onto its driver's side, and caught fire in its engine area. Crocker, 52, dairy farmer, who lived at the scene, was alerted to the accident. Unable to gain access to the vehicle through its side doors, he opened its rear hatch. Although the vehicle was filled with smoke and flames were beginning to enter it at the front, Crocker, who was shirtless, stepped inside, made his way to Spielberg, and released Spielberg's safety belt. Flames by then were at Spielberg's feet and legs. Crocker grasped Spielberg underneath the arms, dragged him to the rear of the vehicle, and pulled him out. Others moved Spielberg away from the vehicle, which was shortly engulfed by flames. Spielberg was taken to the hospital, where he was treated for burns. Crocker sustained minor burns to his back, chest, and legs, and he recovered. 81261-9246

**SHALINDER KAUR BASRAN**  
Surrey, British Columbia

Shalinder Kaur Basran attempted to rescue Navreet K. Waraich from assault, Surrey, British Columbia, October 29, 2006. During an argument in their apartment, which was on the ground floor of a two-level house, Waraich, 23, was stabbed repeatedly by her husband. Basran, 58, who owned the house, was in her second-floor quarters when she heard screaming. She and her daughter responded to the apartment's outside door and gained entry to the unit when the assailant opened the door. They saw Waraich lying on the floor, bloodied and pleading for help. Basran's daughter exited the apartment and called police. When the assailant picked up a knife and approached Waraich, Basran grasped him by the shoulder and pulled him away. He discarded the weapon. Basran took him from the apartment and remained with him for several minutes, until police arrived and arrested him. Waraich died of her wounds. 81322-9247

**RICHARD CONINE**  
Queensbury, New York

**JOSHUA E. MATTISON**  
Fort Ann, New York

Richard Conine and Joshua E. Mattison saved Charles L. Mingo from drowning, Queensbury, New York, April 2, 2008. Ice fishing on Harris Bay of Lake George, Mingo, 62, was returning to the bank when he broke through weakened ice into water about 15 feet deep and could not climb back out. Conine, 49, who managed a marina on the bay in the vicinity, had been watching him fish and saw that he had broken through the ice, at a point about 1,150 feet from the marina. Conine called 911 and, taking a 20-foot length of dock line, which he tied to a life ring, responded to the end of one of the docks. He was joined by Mattison, 24, a yard worker at the marina. Although ice on the bay was deteriorating, opening sections of water, Conine and Mattison stepped onto the ice and made their way about 800 feet toward Mingo, crawling the last several feet. Conine threw the ring toward Mingo, but it fell short. Having to cross a pressure ridge in the ice that was between them, Conine again threw the ring. Mingo secured a hold of it, but, lacking traction, Conine could not pull him out. Mattison joined him, and, bracing their feet into the slushy surface of the ice, they pulled Mingo out of the open water, Mattison breaking through the ice with his foot at one point. They dragged him away from the hole and toward the bank, where firefighters were responding. Conine and Mattison returned to the bank as firefighters removed Mingo from the ice by means of a hovercraft. He was taken to the hospital, where he was detained for treatment of hypothermia. He recovered. 81188-9248 / 81189-9249

**CLERC HIGGINS COOPER**  
New Orleans, Louisiana

Clerc Higgins Cooper helped to save two men from drowning, New Orleans, Louisiana, January 13, 2008. Two men and a woman were aboard a small motorboat that became disabled and then swamped in Lake Pontchartrain at a point about 500 feet from shore. Clerc, 14, student, and two friends, who had just left a nearby harbor in a 19-foot sailboat, saw the disabled craft and responded toward it. When a woman who had been on the boat jumped from it and swam toward the approaching sailboat, Clerc removed her lifejacket and threw it to her. The disabled boat capsized about then, sending the two men into the 58-degree water, where they struggled in its two-foot chop. As Clerc's friends worked to pull the woman aboard the sailboat, Clerc took a flotation device and, without removing any items of attire, entered the water. She swam about 20 feet to the two men and gave the flotation device to one of them. Clerc then swam to the capsized boat and located another flotation device, which she gave to the second man. As her friends returned the woman to shore, Clerc waited atop the exposed hull of the overturned boat. A man and his son arrived shortly in a small, inflated dinghy, took the two men aboard, and returned them to shore as the overturned boat with Clerc atop it was carried by the wind and waves toward a seawall along the shore. Her friends returned in a motorboat for her and took her to safety. Clerc was cold and bruised, but she recovered. 81148-9250

**ROBERT FERRELL, *deceased***  
Jobstown, New Jersey

Robert Ferrell died attempting to save Michelle A. Ferrell from burning, Jobstown, New Jersey, February 27, 2008. Ferrell, 53, was in a second-floor bedroom of her 2.5-story house after fire broke out at the rear of the first floor at night. Her son, Robert, 14, student, escaped the house, from his first-floor bedroom, as did her daughter and another son. Realizing that his mother had not exited the house, Robert told his sister that he was going back inside for her. Dense smoke issued from the front door as Robert entered the structure and proceeded upstairs. Police officers who arrived shortly attempted to gain entry but were forced out by deteriorating conditions. Firefighters removed Ferrell and Robert from the second floor. Both had died of smoke inhalation. 81062-9254

**GREGORY BRYANT**  
Port Hadlock, Washington

Gregory Bryant attempted to rescue Sandra J. Bundy from burning, Chimacum, Washington, May 21, 2008. Bundy, 74, was inside her two-story house after fire broke out on the first floor, in the living room. Flames spread almost to engulf the structure. Traveling nearby, Bryant, 20, delivery driver, saw smoke and, reporting the fire, responded to the scene. He ran to the front door of the house, where he saw Bundy lying on the floor just inside. Bryant crouched down and entered the house, despite flames that were consuming it and blistering heat. He grasped Bundy by the forearms and dragged her out of the house and away from it. Others arrived and helped to move her farther from the house, the walls and roof of which were collapsing. Badly burned, Bundy died at the scene. Bryant was hospitalized a week for treatment of burns, up to third-degree, to his hands, wrists, forearms, face, and knee. Requiring skin grafting, he missed several months' work. 81273-9255

**BETH MACDONALD, *deceased***  
Franklin, New Hampshire

Beth MacDonald died attempting to save Molly J. and Jennifer R. MacDonald from burning, Franklin, New Hampshire, March 23, 2008. Sisters Molly, 11, and Jennifer, 9, were spending the night on the second floor of their family's carriage house when an accidental fire erupted on the first floor. From the main house, the girls' father observed smoke in the yard and awakened their mother, MacDonald, 40, teacher's assistant. While the father reported the fire, MacDonald exited the main house and went to the carriage house for the girls. The father followed her there, but deteriorating conditions thwarted his entry. Firefighters located Molly, Jennifer, and MacDonald in the structure, all victims of smoke inhalation. 81106-9251

**JEFFREY M. MCNEIL**  
Midwest City, Oklahoma

Jeffrey M. McNeil attempted to rescue John H. Gumm from burning, Midwest City, Oklahoma, March 22, 2008. Gumm, 78, lay in the hall of his one-story house after fire broke out at night in the living room. On duty, McNeil, 32, police officer, responded to the scene, where he found significant flames issuing from the house and blocking its front door. He went to the rear of the structure, where he learned that Gumm was still inside. Despite the close proximity of the flames and intense heat and dense smoke that restricted breathing and visibility, McNeil entered the house through the rear door and, seeing Gumm about 10 feet ahead, crawled to him. He grasped Gumm by the feet and, walking backward, dragged him to the rear door, where another officer helped to take Gumm from the house and away. Gumm was pronounced dead at the scene. McNeil suffered smoke inhalation, for which he required hospital treatment. He recovered. 81114-9256

**CHRISTOPHER HESS**  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Christopher Hess saved Corey Baxter from drowning, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 19, 2008. Corey, 6, was in a car that left a parking area and dropped from a wall into the Schuylkill River. It sank to the floor of the river in water about 12 feet deep at a point about 15 feet from the bank. Hess, 28, project engineer, responded to the bank from nearby and learned that Corey was in the river. Seeing bubbles at the surface of the water, he removed his shoes and shirt, jumped into the river, and in repeated dives searched the murky water for Corey. Only then learning that Corey was in a submerged vehicle, Hess dived again, located the car, and opened its driver's door. After surfacing for air, he submerged again, entered the car, and found Corey in the front passenger seat. Hess grasped Corey underneath the arms and backed out of the car and surfaced with him. A marine police officer who had arrived by boat attempted to revive Corey and then took him to the bank. Corey was taken to the hospital for treatment. Hess was returned to the bank by police boat, and he too was taken to the hospital, where he was treated for lacerations to both hands. He recovered. 81320-9257

**COURTNEY E. BUTLER, deceased**  
Stephenville, Texas

Courtney E. Butler died attempting to save Carlos Manzano from drowning, Glen Rose, Texas, May 29, 2007. Manzano, 19, entered the Paluxy River, which was flooded from heavy rains, and was caught in turbulent water at a low-water crossing. He yelled for help. Members of his party at the scene included Courtney, 16. She immediately entered the river in a rescue attempt but also became caught in the same turbulent water. Manzano was washed downstream, to where he clung to a tree until he was rescued by a sheriff's deputy. He required hospital treatment, and he recovered. Also swept downstream, Courtney drowned. 81162-9258

**CHRISTOPHER A. HOWARD**  
Warren, Oregon

Christopher A. Howard rescued Matthew T. and Matthew R. Lovo from an out-of-control tractor-trailer, St. Helens, Oregon, August 7, 2007. Traveling at about 30 m.p.h. on a four-lane highway, Matthew T. Lovo, 32, was driving a truck tractor pulling two loaded trailers when he lost consciousness and fell to the floor of the cab between the two seats. The rig crossed the opposing lanes of traffic as his son Matthew, 9, who was accompanying him, took over the steering wheel and turned off the ignition. Matthew took the truck, which was slowing, back across the highway. Howard, 36, millwright, was approaching in his vehicle when the tractor-trailer crossed his path and then passed him. Seeing that a boy was attempting to control the rig, Howard immediately left his car on the highway, ran after the truck, and mounted the driver's side of the tractor. He opened the door, partially entered the cab, and stepped hard on the brake pedal, taking the rig to a stop. Lovo was taken to the hospital for observation, and he recovered. 81190-9259

**SHAWN WILLIAM EDELE, deceased**  
Fruitport, Michigan

Shawn William Edele died after helping to save John P. Van Etten from drowning, Delray Beach, Florida, May 31, 2007. Van Etten, 23, and his coworker, Edele, 31, cable installer, were wading and swimming in the Atlantic Ocean. Pulled farther from shore, Van Etten tried to swim back, but he made no progress in the rough water against the current. He called for help to Edele, who was in knee-deep water nearer shore. Edele swam out to Van Etten, established a hold on him, and supported him to keep his head out of the water. A wave broke over and separated them. Edele was pulled farther out, but Van Etten struggled to swim to shore and reached wadable water and then the beach, where he lay exhausted. Rescue personnel responded shortly and recovered Edele from a point about 250 feet from shore. He was taken to the hospital but could not be revived, as he had drowned. 80443-9252

**KENNETH A. OEDEWALDT**  
Mapleton, Illinois

Kenneth A. Oedewaldt saved David L. Peterson from burning, Mapleton, Illinois, March 7, 2008. Peterson, 36, lay semiconscious on the floor of a one-story church after fire broke out in the building's furnace room. A member of the church who was driving nearby, Oedewaldt, 63, retired chemical plant employee, was flagged down and alerted to the fire. Learning that Peterson was inside the wooden structure, Oedewaldt attempted to gain entry through the back door, but it was locked. He then went to the front of the building, opened the door, and shouted for Peterson, who gave a weak response. Oedewaldt entered the smoke-filled church, went to the addition at the rear of the building, where the furnace room was housed, and found Peterson. In the dense smoke, Oedewaldt fumbled with the lock on the back door but was able to open the door. After stepping outside for air, he returned to Peterson, grasped him, and dragged him outside to safety. As they were leaving the church, an explosion in the furnace room spread flames, which grew to engulf the building, destroying it. Both men sustained minor smoke inhalation, and they recovered. 81397-9260

**A. J. SKIPTUNAS III**  
Wrightsville, Pennsylvania

A. J. Skiptunas III rescued Mary E. Caldwell from an attacking dog, Windsor, Pennsylvania, October 6, 2007. Caldwell, 63, was campaigning in a neighborhood when an adult male dog of pit bull mix charged her, biting her severely on the leg and taking her to the pavement. Screaming, she attracted the attention of a friend, Skiptunas, 49, radiologist, who was nearby. Skiptunas immediately ran toward Caldwell as the dog was circling her. He called to the dog, which then turned to him and lunged. It bit him on the chest and then again, hard, on his right hand, locking its hold. Using his left hand, Skiptunas grasped the dog's collar and twisted it to choke the dog off him. Maintaining his hold, Skiptunas wrestled the dog to the pavement and pinned its head with his knee. Others arrived to secure the dog and tend to Caldwell. Both she and Skiptunas required hospital treatment for their bite wounds, and both required subsequent hospitalization, Skiptunas for two days. He was left with weakness in his right hand. 81413-9261

**LEDFORD WAYNE ARTHUR**  
Paint Bank, Virginia

Ledford Wayne Arthur saved Dennis D. Williams from electrocution, New Castle, Virginia, April 20, 2007. Williams, 48, and Arthur, 53, were repairing a commercial electric oven in the high school where they were employed as maintenance workers. While removing a heating element from the oven, Williams, who was seated on the floor, received an electric shock. His hands locked on the energized element, he convulsed, unable to speak. Standing next to him, Arthur saw him convulse and knew that he was being shocked. Arthur immediately lunged at Williams and pushed him away from the oven, thereby breaking his hold of the element. Doing so, Arthur felt a shock in one arm. Williams was treated at the hospital for electrical burns to both hands, and he recovered. 81186-9262

**FRANCIS WILLIAM O'HARA**  
Riverside, Rhode Island

Francis William O'Hara attempted to save Jose A. Orellana from drowning, Narragansett, Rhode Island, July 16, 2007. Orellana, 43, was swimming in the Atlantic Ocean when a rip current took him farther from shore and prevented him from returning. On the beach in the vicinity, O'Hara, 48, an off-duty firefighter, became aware of the situation. He waded and swam to Orellana, reaching him at a point about 150 feet out. O'Hara hooked Orellana by the arm and began to tow him to shore, but en route, Orellana went limp, submerging his face. O'Hara repositioned him and continued toward shore, where others in wadable water took Orellana to the beach. O'Hara performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation on Orellana until emergency personnel responded. Orellana was taken to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead of drowning. 81129-9253

CARNEGIE MEDAL



ANDREW CARNEGIE

