



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

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*News Release*

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**CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION NAMES 10,000<sup>TH</sup> HERO**

PITTSBURGH, MARCH 26, 2018— Last winter, a 56-year-old school cafeteria clerk stopped her car after seeing a wounded police officer struggling to take a man into custody. The 5’2” woman rushed to the men, removed the suspect’s hand from the officer’s holstered gun and held it behind his back. As the man continued to punch the officer, Vickie Tillman, of Baton Rouge, La., impeded his attack, until other police officers arrived. It took two other police officers to subdue the assailant and take him into custody.

As a representative of the persistence, glory, friendship, and strength common to the acts of heroism performed by every Carnegie Medal awardee, Tillman has been named the Commission’s 10,000th Carnegie Hero. She joins a class of Carnegie Heroes that includes Jimmy Rhodes, a 38-year-old radiographic technologist who suffered burns while attempting to save the pilot of a fiery helicopter crash; a 44-year-old business owner who helped save a woman from falling from a bridge; and a 51-year-old cable lineman who died attempting to save his co-worker from drowning.

Tillman and Rhodes, who was named the Commission’s 10,001<sup>ST</sup> hero, will be presented the Carnegie Medal at a gala to be held in June in Pittsburgh.

The Carnegie Medal is given 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. The heroes announced today are the first awards made in 2018 and bring to 10,009 the total number since the Pittsburgh-based Fund’s inception in 1904. Commission Chair Mark Laskow said each of the awardees or their survivors will also receive a financial grant. Throughout the 114 years since the Fund was established by industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, \$39.9 million has been given in one-time grants, scholarship aid, death benefits, and continuing assistance. The awardees are:

<b>Austin Raishbrook</b>	Blue Jay, Calif.	<b>Jimmy Rhodes</b>	Lumberton, N.C.
<b>John Gerard O’Rourke</b>	Milford, Conn.	<b>Joshua K. Watt</b>	Bowling Green, Ky.
<b>Louis Marano</b>	Philadelphia, Pa.	<b>Jason Alan Doig</b>	Sequim, Wash.
<b>Thomas W. Brown</b>	Philadelphia, Pa.	<b>William M. Mack III</b>	Aston, Pa.
<b>Zachary J. Corey</b>	Beulah, Mich.	<b>Thomas Julius Sais, Jr.</b>	Palm Bay, Fla.
<b>Karen Marie Mallon</b>	Beulah, Mich.	<b>Matthew John Kalafat</b>	Scotch Plains, N.J.
<b>Andrew L. Melhado</b>	Milton, Mass.	<b>Ross A. Johnson</b>	Colorado Springs, Colo.
<b>Michael Albert Rodriguez</b>	Howell, Mich.	<b>Robert Lee Thornton, Jr.</b>	Warren, Mich.
<b>Vickie Tillman</b>	Baton Rouge, La.	<b>John Andrew Ussery, deceased</b>	Sanford, Fla.

Resumes of the acts follow. To nominate someone for the Carnegie Medal, complete a nomination form online, write the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission at 436 Seventh Ave., Suite 1101, Pittsburgh, PA 15219, or call 1-800-447-8900 (toll-free). More information on the Carnegie Medal and the history of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission can be found at [carnegiehero.org](http://carnegiehero.org). Find us on Facebook: [facebook.com/carnegiehero](https://facebook.com/carnegiehero) and Twitter: [twitter.com/carnegie\\_hero](https://twitter.com/carnegie_hero).

**AUSTIN RAISHBROOK**  
Blue Jay, California

Austin Raishbrook saved a man from burning, Los Angeles, California, January 1, 2017. Following a highway accident in early morning darkness, the male driver of a sport utility vehicle remained in the driver's seat as the vehicle came to a stop and was struck by multiple vehicles. It rotated and was pushed against a concrete barrier. Its rear end aflame, the vehicle came to rest with part of its driver's side against the barrier. Raishbrook, 40, photojournalist, who had earlier stopped at the scene, witnessed the accident. Raishbrook ran across the highway traffic lanes and approached the vehicle. He broke out the front passenger side window with his fire extinguisher and saw the man inside, unconscious. Raishbrook ran to the driver's door and tried to break out that window but the glass would not break. After several tries, he forced the door open and despite growing flames, extended most of his body inside, reaching across the man. He tried several times unsuccessfully to release the man's seat belt. Raishbrook then retreated for air. He again entered the vehicle through the door opening and made more attempts to release the seat belt but to no avail. Concluding he could not release the seat belt, Raishbrook positioned the belt so that he could pull the man's torso up from under it, and was able to release the man from the belt. Raishbrook removed the man from the vehicle, and with another man, carried him from the immediate vicinity as flames soon grew to engulf it. Raishbrook suffered a cut to his left hand and singed hair on both of his arms, and did not require medical treatment. He recovered. 88903-9992

**JOHN GERARD O'ROURKE**  
Milford, Connecticut

John Gerard O'Rourke saved a 10-year-old boy from drowning, Milford, Connecticut, February 5, 2017. The boy broke through the ice on a pond while playing with friends, moments after O'Rourke had warned the boys about the dangerous ice conditions. O'Rourke, 61, delivery driver, who was walking his dog on a nearby trail, grabbed an 8-foot-long tree branch and moved on his stomach to reach the boy about 75 feet from shore when he, too, broke through the ice a few feet from the boy. O'Rourke, fully clothed, grasped the boy and held him above water while treading water and attempting to break a path through the ice toward shore. As he became nearly exhausted, O'Rourke heaved the boy onto the surrounding ice, which held, then instructed the boy to shimmy across the ice to shore. O'Rourke was unable to hoist himself out of the water even after he moved closer to shore where the water was chest-deep. He was pulled from the water and across the ice by police using a rope and flotation ring. O'Rourke and the boy were both treated for exposure to cold water; both recovered. 88945-9993

**LOUIS MARANO**  
**THOMAS W. BROWN**  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Louis Marano and Thomas W. Brown helped to save two men from drowning, North Wildwood, New Jersey, August 6, 2016. The men, both in their 20s, were swimming in the Atlantic Ocean at twilight when they struggled to stay afloat and shouted for help. Marano, 48, salesman, and Brown, 55, sales executive, were on the beach and alerted to the situation. Despite diminished visibility and large waves, Marano and Brown retrieved boogie boards, entered the water and paddled and kicked to the young men, who were approximately 400 feet from shore. Marano grasped the arm of one of the men, who was bobbing up and down in the water, and told him to climb on his back. Marano held the board and started to kick toward shore. Brown had the other man hold to his boogie board. With difficulty in the waves and current, Marano and Brown moved toward shore with the men. Officials from multiple agencies, including police, fire personnel, and lifeguards, arrived at the scene with rescue equipment and entered the water. They swam to Marano, Brown, and the men and took them to shore. The two rescued men refused treatment at the scene. Marano and Brown were tired after the rescue. Marano also swallowed water and was sore the next day. Marano and Brown both recovered. 88492-9994/88493-9995

**ZACHARY J. COREY**  
**KAREN MARIE MALLON**  
Beulah, Michigan

Zachary J. Corey and Karen Marie Mallon saved Olivia L. Thomas and Addalyn A. Thomas from burning, Benzonia, Michigan, November 1, 2016. Olivia, 6, and her sister Addalyn, 13 days old, along with their mother and 8-year-old sister were in a vehicle that struck a tow truck head on, traveled off the road, and into a shallow ditch where it caught fire. Olivia was in the front passenger seat and Addalyn was in a rear car seat; both were conscious. Corey, 27, driver of the tow truck, ran to the passenger side of the vehicle where he saw Olivia in the front passenger seat. Unable to open the door, Corey grasped the window frame and pulled on it, forcing the door open slightly. He extended his upper body inside the vehicle and removed Olivia's seat belt, then grasped her and pulled her out. Karen Marie Mallon, 51, secretary, arrived and was alerted to the presence of children in the vehicle. Mallon entered through the open rear passenger-side door and knelt on the seat while trying to remove Addalyn from her car seat. With difficulty Mallon freed Addalyn from the seat, picked her up, and exited the vehicle with her, taking her to safety. The vehicle was shortly engulfed by flames. Olivia's mother and 8-year-old sister did not survive. Olivia and Addalyn were treated at a hospital for minor injuries; neither was burned. Corey was treated at a hospital for a minor injury sustained in the accident; he recovered. 88683-9996/88684-9997

**ANDREW L. MELHADO**  
Milton, Massachusetts

Andrew L. Melhado rescued Tahjae Robinson and attempted to rescue Nina T. Lewis from burning, Milton, Massachusetts, December 2, 2016. Tahjae, 17, Lewis, 24, and another man, 23, were trapped inside a sedan that left a highway and struck a tree at night. The car's front end quickly burst into flames. Melhado, 49, security manager, was awakened by the crash in front of his home and saw the car burning from his bedroom window. Quickly dressing, he retrieved a fire extinguisher from his kitchen and ran outside to the burning car. Unable to assist the 23-year-old man, Melhado broke the windows on both rear doors and felt inside for occupants, as he was unable to see through the thick smoke. Melhado felt Tahjae, who was leaning toward the driver's-side rear door. Melhado then extended his head, shoulders, and arms inside through the broken-out driver's-side rear window opening. Melhado grasped Tahjae's shirt collar and pulled him partly out of the car through the opening. Adjusting his grip, Melhado, despite nearby flames and intense heat, pulled Tahjae, who appeared to be semi-conscious, out the window opening and set him on the ground. Melhado then moved to the driver's door and broke that window with the extinguisher. As the fire at the vehicle's front intensified, Melhado reached inside and unsuccessfully tried to free Lewis from the car, but his efforts were thwarted by advancing flames, and he was forced to retreat. Lewis and the 23-year-old man died. Tahjae was treated at a hospital for injuries and recovered. Melhado sustained burns to his left hand; he, too, recovered. 88725-9998

**MICHAEL ALBERT RODRIGUEZ**  
Howell, Michigan

Michael Albert Rodriguez helped to save Matthew S. Harris from drowning, Howell, Michigan, July 21, 2017. Harris, 45, was driving on a highway when he suffered a medical problem and lost control of his car, left the highway and entered a 9-foot-deep retention pond. Witnessing the accident, Rodriguez, 54, carpenter, stopped his vehicle, exited and ran to the pond. Seeing Harris unresponsive and still inside the vehicle that was floating in the water, Rodriguez, a poor swimmer, removed his boots and socks and dog-paddled to the car. As bystanders worked to pull and maneuver the car toward shore, Rodriguez opened the driver's door and used a pocket knife to cut the seat belt and free Harris as the car sank, during which he was submerged. Rodriguez grasped Harris from behind, removed him from the submerged car, and swam him toward shallow water near shore where bystanders were able to assist them from the water. Harris was not injured. Rodriguez was nearly exhausted and aggravated a previous shoulder injury but recovered. 89324-9999

**VICKIE TILLMAN**  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Vickie Tillman helped to rescue Billy A. Aime from assault, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, February 19, 2017. Aime, 44, police corporal, was arresting a man beside his police car in a vacant parking lot when the man, who was partially restrained by one handcuff and leg shackles, spun behind Aime and bear-hugged him. During an intense struggle, Aime placed the assailant in a headlock. The assailant removed Aime's baton, flashlight, and radio from his belt, and grabbed at his holstered handgun. The assailant repeatedly struck Aime in the head and bit his hand. A passing motorist, Tillman, 56, school cafeteria clerk, saw Aime, against the car, struggling with the assailant. She stopped at the scene, called 911, and exited her car. Approaching, she saw blood on Aime's head as Aime attempted to maintain control of his holstered gun. Concluding that Aime required immediate assistance, Tillman grasped the assailant's hand, pulling it away from Aime's gun. Tillman then held the assailant's hand behind him, and as the struggle continued, made further efforts to impede the attack. Arriving police officers eventually subdued the assailant and halted the attack. Aime, who suffered a concussion, was off work for one month; he recovered. Tillman was treated at a hospital for hand and wrist pain from which she also recovered.

88943-10000

**JIMMY RHODES**  
Lumberton, North Carolina

Jimmy Rhodes rescued Patrick E. Mahany, Jr., from burning, Frisco, Colorado, July 3, 2015. Mahany, 64, was the pilot of a medical helicopter that crashed in a hospital's parking lot, where it struck the front of a parked motorhome and overturned onto the pilot's side. Fuel immediately pooled on the ground nearby and quickly ignited, the flames engulfing the helicopter's wreckage. Mahany remained on the ground near his seat after two nurses aboard the helicopter, both of whom were injured, escaped the burning helicopter's cabin. Alerted inside the hospital where he was employed as a radiographic technologist, Rhodes, 38, ran to the helicopter's nose with a handheld fire extinguisher. Standing at the perimeter of advancing flames, Rhodes sprayed Mahany with the extinguisher, bent over, and reached for Mahany's legs before blistering heat forced him to briefly back away several feet. Rhodes then once again moved toward Mahany and, amid encroaching flames, used the extinguisher to clear a space for him to gain hold of Mahany's vest. Using both hands Rhodes pulled him from the helicopter's burning wreckage. As Mahany rolled away, Rhodes sprayed his body with the extinguisher to douse remaining flames. Others arrived and moved Mahany farther away. Mahany was treated at a hospital for severe burns, blunt force and internal thermal injuries but did not survive. Rhodes received medical treatment for smoke inhalation and burns. He recovered.

89186-10001

**JOSHUA K. WATT**  
Bowling Green, Kentucky

Joshua K. Watt rescued Alyssa L. Gore and James B. Allman from burning, Brownsville, Kentucky, June 26, 2017. Alyssa, 16, and Allman, 51, were inside an overturned and burning pickup truck following a highway accident in which the truck had come to rest on its roof with its passenger side against a guide rail. Watt, 26, probation and parole officer, was driving nearby and saw the crash, stopped and ran to the burning pickup. Flames and damage to the truck's cab prevented Watt from seeing the victims from the driver's side. Moving to the truck's passenger side, Watt crawled under the guide rail, where he saw Alyssa, whose arms and upper torso extended outside through the passenger window. Concluding she was trapped by her seat belt, Watt reached into the cab and cut the belt with a pocketknife. He then pulled Alyssa through the window under the guide rail and dragged her to safety. Returning to the passenger side, Watt saw Allman, whose shorts, socks, and legs were burning, crawling toward the passenger window. Watt extended his arms and upper torso into the truck and, despite burning gasoline dripping into the cab and onto Watt's clothes, he pulled Allman through the window to safety. Watt patted out flames on Allman's lower body and then used bottled water to douse Allman's smoldering clothes. Alyssa was treated at a hospital overnight for burns to her lower legs; she recovered. Allman was hospitalized for treatment of extensive burns. Watt was not injured. 89215-10002

**JASON ALAN DOIG**  
Sequim, Washington

Jason Alan Doig helped to save a woman from falling, Port Gamble, Washington, March 3, 2017. A distraught woman attempting to commit suicide stood atop a railing of a bridge that spanned Hood Canal. The bridge's deck was about 30 feet above a concrete structure and the canal below. Doig, 44, cabinet shop owner, was a passenger in a vehicle that was traveling on the bridge and had stopped at the scene. Doig exited the vehicle and quickly crossed to the opposite side of the bridge, remaining out of the woman's view. As another man approached the woman, distracting her, Doig ran a short distance to her and grasped her body as she struck him in the face and leapt backward from the railing. Doig maintained his hold on the woman as she dangled above the structure and struggled with him. The other man arrived and also grasped the woman. They began to pull her upward when a third man arrived and helped Doig and the other man lift the woman over the railing and back to the deck of the bridge. The woman was transported to a hospital for treatment. Doig sustained abrasions to his hands, face, chest, and stomach, and was treated at the scene. He recovered. 88730-10003

**WILLIAM M. MACK III**  
Aston, Pennsylvania

William M. Mack III rescued Mary Dugan from burning, Aston, Pennsylvania, March 24, 2017. Before dawn, Dugan, 54, remained in a rear bedroom of her home after a fire broke out in the home's attached carport. Three family members had escaped the house by the time Mack, 29, on-duty police officer, and another officer went to the rear of the home where they scaled a fence and approached Dugan's bedroom window, which was about 8 feet above the ground. Mack then climbed a stepladder to the window and used his flashlight to help break its glass before kicking in the window frame so he could enter the bedroom as flames spread through other parts of the house. Despite thick smoke in the room, Mack, following Dugan's moans, crawled about 9 feet, grasped her and carried her back to the window where he handed her to the officer on the ladder outside. Dugan was hospitalized several days for smoke inhalation and thermal burns. She recovered. 89027-10004

**THOMAS JULIUS SAIS, JR.**  
Palm Bay, Florida

Thomas Julius Sais, Jr., helped to save a man from burning, Palm Bay, Florida, October 16, 2016. A male motorist, 60, was in a sport utility vehicle that, in a highway accident, left the highway, descended a steep embankment, overturned and came to rest on its passenger side in dense vegetation at the embankment's base. The front of the vehicle caught fire along with nearby vegetation. Sais, 62, construction project manager, stopped at the scene. He descended the embankment to the vehicle and broke out glass from its rear hatch window, then climbed fully inside. Sais moved to the motorist, who was in the driver's seat and suspended by his seat belt. Unable to release the belt, Sais exited the vehicle and called out to onlookers for a knife. Unable to secure a knife, Sais re-entered and this time was successful in releasing the motorist from his belt. Despite intense heat and advancing flames at the vehicle's front, Sais grasped the motorist and, with difficulty, began to pull him toward the rear hatch. A police sergeant arrived and fully entered the vehicle through the broken hatch window, grasped the motorist, and made efforts to pull him toward the rear window. Sais and the sergeant exited, and standing outside at the rear window with a police officer, reached into the vehicle and pulled the motorist from the vehicle's cargo area out onto the ground as flames spread. The motorist was moved up to the embankment to safety. The motorist was then taken to a hospital for treatment; he was not burned. Sais sustained lacerations to his hands, arms, and legs; he recovered.

88604-10005

**MATTHEW JOHN KALAFAT**  
Scotch Plains, New Jersey

Matthew John Kalafat saved Dishita Pandya from drowning, Point Pleasant Beach, New Jersey, September 25, 2016. Pandya, 26, was in wadable water in the Atlantic Ocean near high tide when she was struck by a wave and carried away from shore. On the beach, Kalafat, 46, teacher, was asleep when his wife woke him to alert him to a possible emergency in the ocean. Kalafat immediately ran to the nearby shoreline where a small crowd had gathered and, though he did not immediately see Pandya, entered the ocean and swam into deeper waters to search for her. Finding her face-down and unconscious, Kalafat grasped her around the waist and, with difficulty, towed and pushed her toward the beach. As he made his way toward shore with Pandya, the two were struck by a large wave and briefly separated. Kalafat, who had submerged, surfaced beside Pandya and, grasping her, resumed towing and pushing her toward shore, ultimately gaining a point of safety in wadable water where others took Pandya from him and began efforts to resuscitate her. Pandya was taken to a hospital where she was treated for several days; she ultimately recovered. Kalafat was nearly exhausted but did not seek medical treatment.

88629-10006

**ROSS A. JOHNSON**  
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Ross A. Johnson rescued a woman from assault, Colorado Springs, Colorado, March 7, 2016. A 65-year-old woman was in the driver's seat of a car that was parked at a self-service car wash when her estranged husband in the front passenger seat suddenly punched her in the face and began to stab her in the abdomen with a pocket knife. As the woman cried out for help and struggled with the assailant, Johnson, 52, maintenance man, heard her cries and approached the car where he saw the assailant stabbing her. At the open front passenger door, Johnson shouted forcefully for the assailant to stop, prompting him to cease his attack and exit the vehicle. As the wounded woman began to exit the car through the open door, the assailant, who had remained at the door, grabbed her and stabbed her three more times before Johnson, several feet away, could intervene. After the woman collapsed outside the vehicle, Johnson pushed away the assailant, who had placed the knife down nearby. Johnson knelt beside her, putting himself between her and the assailant to prevent further injury to her. Johnson comforted the injured woman until police arrived shortly. Police arrested the assailant without incident. The woman spent eight weeks hospitalized and in rehabilitation, and suffered partial paralysis from her wounds. 89566-10007

**ROBERT LEE THORNTON, JR.**  
Warren, Michigan

Robert Lee Thornton, Jr., rescued a woman and attempted to rescue a man from burning, Center Line, Michigan, November 23, 2016. A woman, 77, was a passenger in a pickup truck driven by a man, 79, that collided with a power pole carrying high-voltage lines, rolled over onto its passenger side, and caught fire. Thornton, 40, business operator, who was driving nearby, saw the wreck and stopped at the scene where downed power lines near the front end of the truck arced. Thornton, seeing the man inside the truck and quickly surmising that it was not energized, climbed atop its driver's side and moved to the driver's window. As the man pushed the woman up to the window, Thornton extended his upper body inside, grasped her under her arms, and pulled her up through the opening. Thornton handed her down to two police officers who had responded. One of the officers carried her further away from the burning vehicle. Despite spreading flames, Thornton again reached inside the opening to briefly grasp the man, but the man disengaged as flames entered the truck's cab. As a transformer on the power pole exploded, Thornton retreated to safety and flames soon engulfed the truck. The woman was taken by ambulance to the hospital. The male driver, unable to escape, did not survive. 88860-10008

**JOHN ANDREW USSERY, *deceased***  
Sanford, Florida

John Andrew Ussery died after attempting to save Jason E. Deleon from drowning, Palm Beach, Florida, May 16, 2017. Deleon, 25, was wading in the Atlantic Ocean near a beach when he was swept into deeper, unwadable water and called for help. A co-worker, Ussery, 51, cable lineman, who was on the beach, entered the water, and swam to Deleon. Ussery grasped Deleon but told him he could not maintain his hold. Ussery and Deleon separated and drifted farther apart and away from shore amid rough surf. Responding police officers swam out to Deleon and Ussery, who were then about 200 feet from shore, with flotation devices, followed by firefighters who paddled out with rescue boards. Officers secured Deleon and Ussery and towed them to the firefighters, who brought them ashore atop the rescue boards. Deleon recovered after hospitalization. Ussery fell unconscious on the beach. He was taken to a hospital but could not be revived. 89171-10009