



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

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News Release

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16 RECOGNIZED FOR ACTS OF EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM

PITTSBURGH, September 20, 2018— Sixteen people – 15 Americans and one Canadian – make up the most recent class of those named Carnegie Heroes for risking their lives for others found in perilous circumstances, including a 12-year-old boy who was being attacked by two large dogs, three 16-year-olds trapped in an overturned, burning car, and a 62-year-old man who was assaulted by two 17-year-olds after exiting a subway car.

Thirteen of the 17 victims survived due to the intervention of these heroes, who include **Jason A. Sigelow**, a 39-year-old caterer who led a rescue of a 9-year-old boy struggling in deep water in Lake Ontario. Sigelow died in the rescue attempt, but others were able to join his effort and save the boy. Other posthumous Carnegie Medal awardees include **Sean Zacharey Thayne**, a 30-year-old programmer who entered a cold river in an attempt to rescue a mother and her 4-year-old daughter who were being swept downstream; 17-year-old **Jay Agli**, who died attempting to rescue his 19-year-old sister from drowning; and **Delbert G. Blare**, 65, who also drowned while attempting to save a man who was carried 200 feet from shore by a rip current.

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 third group of awards made in 2018 and bring to 10,044 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, \$40.4 million has been given in one-time grants, scholarship aid, death benefits, and continuing assistance. The awardees are:

Ana Maria Ramirez	Turlock, Calif.	Sean Zacharey Thayne*	Sandy, Utah
Liam Bernard	Chapel Island, N.S.	Jay Agli*	Meriden, Conn.
Blake Keith Huff	Kalkaska, Mich.	John E. Meffert	Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif.
Benjamin M. Hawkins	Kalkaska, Mich.	Jason A. Sigelow*	Rochester, N.Y.
Delbert G. Blare*	Melbourne, Fla.	Philip Russell Orzech	West Hartford, Conn.
Michael Eugene Chestnut	Foster, Ky.	Ronald W. Manning	Bogalusa, La.
John Hazelrigg	Lunenburg, Mass.	Jennifer E. Emo	St. Louis, Mo.
Russell D. Phippen	North Billerica, Mass.	Andrew William Miller	Frisco, Texas

**deceased*

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. Follow us on Facebook: facebook.com/carnegiehero and Twitter: twitter.com/carnegie_hero.

ANA MARIA RAMIREZ
Turlock, California

Ana Maria Ramirez rescued Jose J. Ramos from attacking dogs, Turlock, California, April 18, 2017. Jose, 12, was walking his family's dog on a leash in a suburban neighborhood when two, 65-pound pit bulls, a male and a female, approached and began to attack his dog. During the attack, Jose and his dog were bitten, and he was unable to release his grip on his dog's leash. Ramirez, 47, receptionist, was driving by and witnessed the attack. She stopped at the scene and, concerned that Jose would be pulled to the ground in the struggle to control and protect his dog, Ramirez blew the car's horn. She exited the car, approached, and shouted at the pit bulls. The female pit bull moved away, but the male continued its attack on Jose and his dog. Ramirez returned to her car and, retrieving part of a child's booster seat, approached the male pit bull, and struck it. The dog bit her wrist and forearm and held on. Ramirez struck the dog again with the booster seat, and the dog released her. Both pit bulls fled the scene. Jose was treated for a bite wound to his finger, contusions, and lacerations. He recovered. Ramirez was treated for a bite wound to her wrist and forearm and lacerations to her arm. She also recovered. 89178-10029

LIAM BERNARD
Chapel Island, Nova Scotia

Liam Bernard helped to save Ralph E. Chrisman from burning, Melford, Nova Scotia, September 16, 2016. Chrisman, 68, was the driver of a pickup truck that, following a rural highway accident, came to rest in a ditch at an angle. Chrisman remained in his seat, his legs pinned, as smoke issued from the truck's engine compartment. Multiple people who stopped at the scene, including Bernard, 37, welder, tended to Chrisman's injured passenger and helped him to safety. After fire broke out in the truck's engine compartment, Bernard opened its front, passenger door and climbed fully inside the cab while a bystander held the door ajar. Bernard released Chrisman's seat belt and removed part of the dashboard in an effort to free Chrisman but was unsuccessful. Bernard exited the cab briefly and moved away from the truck as smoke and fire intensified, but hearing Chrisman call for help, Bernard returned to the truck and, despite advancing flames, fully reentered the truck's cab. Bernard grasped Chrisman's upper body, and as others held onto him and tugged, Bernard pulled Chrisman into the passenger seat and toward the door where others helped to remove him. Bernard also exited the cab, and the truck was shortly engulfed by flames. Chrisman, who was not burned, had a lengthy hospitalization for treatment of serious injuries. 89254-10030

BLAKE KEITH HUFF
BENJAMIN M. HAWKINS
Kalkaska, Michigan

Blake Keith Huff and Benjamin M. Hawkins rescued Mary Jo Tester from burning, Kalkaska, Michigan, February 22, 2017. Tester, 50, a paraplegic, was in her home's living room when fire broke out and began to spread in that room. Tester called for help. Huff, 23, police sergeant, and Hawkins, 35, deputy sheriff, responded to the home after learning of the fire. Seeing flames through the living room window and black smoke issuing from the eaves, Huff and Hawkins entered the home. Huff crawled on his belly about 15 feet across the living room toward Tester, who was on the floor with flames nearby. Along the way he moved a recliner, which was on fire, from his path. Hawkins crawled inside behind Huff. Reaching Tester on the far side of the room amid nearby flames, Huff grasped Tester by the ankles and crawled backward, dragging her. Hawkins grasped Huff's pant leg and pulled and guided Huff, Tester in tow, to the door. Huff and Hawkins lifted Tester and carried her from the home. Tester, who suffered smoke inhalation and severe burns, died five days later. Huff and Hawkins were each treated at a hospital for smoke inhalation. They recovered. 88964-10031/88965-10032

DELBERT G. BLARE, *deceased*
Melbourne, Florida

Delbert G. Blare died attempting to save Robert E. Shepard, Jr., from drowning, Melbourne Beach, Florida, October 14, 2017. Shepard, 61, was swimming in the Atlantic Ocean when a rip current carried him away from shore. He called for help. Blare, 65, retired gas company employee, was on the beach with his family when he heard Shepard's calls for assistance. As others made unsuccessful efforts to aid Shepard, Blare removed his shirt, shoes, and glasses, and ran a few steps into the ocean. Despite rough water conditions, Blare dived through the waves and swam toward Shepard, who was approximately 200 feet from shore. During the rescue effort, Blare submerged and was not seen for several minutes. Shepard ultimately reached wadable water where he was assisted by others to shore. Shortly, Blare was observed floating facedown in the ocean and was recovered from the water by a sheriff's deputy. Efforts were made to revive Blare, who was unresponsive, and he was taken to a hospital for treatment. Blare died the following day; his death due to drowning. 89442-10033

MICHAEL EUGENE CHESTNUT
Foster, Kentucky

Michael Eugene Chestnut saved John J. Keuper III, Chance E. Augenstein, and Maxwell R. Millbourn, from burning, Foster, Kentucky, August 24, 2017. Sixteen-year-olds John, Chance, and Maxwell were seat-belted inside a four-door sedan that had overturned and caught fire following a collision with a van on a narrow, country road. Coming upon the scene less than a minute later, Chestnut, 59, retired tractor-trailer driver, stopped and heard the semi-conscious teens moaning and calling for help. Chestnut ran to the sedan with a knife and a fire extinguisher and called 911 on his cell phone. Chestnut crawled through the driver's window and cut part of the seat belt that restrained John, who was upside-down in the driver's seat. He then handed the knife to John to cut another portion of the belt. Retrieving a second knife from his truck after the first broke, Chestnut grasped John, who had fallen from his seat, and dragged him from the vehicle. Chestnut then discharged the extinguisher to suppress flames burning on the underside of the engine compartment and issuing from the floorboard. Crawling into the sedan through the rear, passenger-side window, Chestnut cut Chance's seat belt and dragged the teen, who was nearly 100 pounds heavier and more than a foot taller than Chestnut, to safety. As the fire intensified, Chestnut returned to the sedan a third time and pulled Maxwell to safety. John was hospitalized for four days for treatment of broken bones and other injuries; he recovered. Chance and Maxwell were each hospitalized for several weeks for multiple broken bones and other serious injuries. The teens were not burned. 89376-10034

JOHN HAZELRIGG
Lunenburg, Massachusetts
RUSSELL D. PHIPPEN
North Billerica, Massachusetts

John Hazelrigg and Russell D. Phippen rescued Revath Than from drowning, Lowell, Massachusetts, January 3, 2018. At night, Than, 24, clung to a rock in the Merrimack River and called for help. Authorities, including police and fire departments, arrived shortly but initial efforts to rescue Than were unsuccessful. Hazelrigg, 52, state trooper, was piloting a police helicopter equipped with a searchlight that was dispatched solely to illuminate the dark river, which flowed swiftly and contained ice. The helicopter was not designed or equipped for rescue operations. Arriving at the scene, Hazelrigg and Phippen, 43, tactical flight officer, observed Than, who had been partially submerged in sub-freezing temperatures for more than 20 minutes, to be lethargic and determined that he required immediate assistance. Hazelrigg descended to water level near Than as Phippen, attached to the helicopter by a strap at an open door, positioned himself outside the cabin on a skid. With Than beyond Phippen's reach, Hazelrigg maneuvered the helicopter closer to him as Phippen moved to the other side of the cabin, opened another door, and again positioned himself on a skid. With the helicopter skimming the surface of the water, Phippen handed Than a life vest, grasped his arm, and pulled his upper body into the cabin. Unable to pull Than's entire body inside, Phippen held to Than and, with the helicopter's rear doors open, Hazelrigg flew to a nearby hospital. Than suffered hypothermia and a cut on his chin; he recovered. Phippen was sore and wet. 89614-10035/89615-10036

SEAN ZACHAREY THAYNE, *deceased*
Sandy, Utah

Sean Zacharey Thayne died attempting to save London Razo and Brenda N. De Dios from drowning, Provo, Utah, May 29, 2017. London, 4, and her mother, De Dios, 34, entered the cold, swift-flowing Provo River from a rocky bank adjacent a recreational trail at a county park. De Dios screamed as the powerful current swept her and London downstream, alerting Thayne, 30, programmer, and his family on the trail. Thayne ran about 500 feet on the trail along the bank, then entered the water, where he was seen a short distance from De Dios. The river carried De Dios and Thayne to a dam about 3 miles downstream, where they were removed from the water in critical condition. They were taken to a hospital, where both later died of drowning. Searchers located London's body the following morning, more than 1 mile from the scene; she had drowned. 89172-10037

JAY AGLI, *deceased*
Meriden, Connecticut

Jay Agli died attempting to save Kishana M. Rivera from drowning, Haddam, Connecticut, June 11, 2017. Rivera, 19, and a girl were struggling to swim back to a submerged sandbar in the cold, swift current of the Connecticut River at a state park. Rivera's family, including her brother, Jay, 17, high school student, were in knee-high water on the sandbar. While Rivera called for help, the other girl's stepfather swam to the girl and, with difficulty, took her to safety. Although Jay could not swim, he left the sandbar and began to move toward Rivera, attempting to reach her, but upon entering deeper water he submerged. Others, too, entered the river in an attempt to reach Rivera, who floated downstream to a point where those on a boat removed her from the water. Rivera, who swallowed water, was evaluated by paramedics at the scene and recovered. Authorities employed boats and divers to search the scene and located Jay's body two days later in 25-foot-deep water in the vicinity of where he was last seen. He had drowned. 89191-10038

JOHN E. MEFFERT
Rancho Santa Margarita, California

John E. Meffert saved Francis X. Pisano from burning, Irvine, California, June 30, 2017. Pisano, 62, was in a twin-engine plane that had taken off from a nearby airport when an engine problem caused the plane to lose altitude. Pisano was piloting the plane, his wife was in the passenger seat beside him. As Pisano turned back to the airport to make an emergency landing, the plane rapidly descended onto a multi-lane expressway, crashed, and burst into flames. Pisano's wife opened the door and stepped onto the wing, then remained at the plane as she made efforts to free Pisano from the wreckage. Meffert, 47, fire captain, who was off-duty and out of his jurisdiction, had been driving on the expressway when the front of his vehicle was struck by the plane as it flew past and crashed nearby. Meffert stopped and ran to the plane where he climbed onto the wing and aided Pisano's wife away from the plane. Despite flames several feet high on the wings, Meffert returned to the plane, stepped onto the wing a second time, and extended his upper body through the door to free Pisano's foot from the wreckage. Meffert grasped Pisano under the arms and pulled him from the plane. He then dragged Pisano to safety as the plane continued to burn. Pisano was transported to a hospital for treatment of fractured vertebrae and other injuries. He was not burned. 89211-10039

JASON A. SIGELOW, *deceased*
Rochester, New York
PHILIP RUSSELL ORZECH
West Hartford, Connecticut

Jason A. Sigelow and Philip Russell Orzech helped to save Jose Cruz-Gonzalez from drowning, Irondequoit, New York, August 19, 2017, Sigelow drowning as a result of his actions. Jose, 9, student, was swimming with his 10-year-old brother in Lake Ontario when a current carried them into deep, rough water adjacent a jetty, and they called for help. Sigelow, 39, caterer, who was on the beach, entered the water and swam to Jose, grasping him. Jose's brother swam back to shore. Sigelow and Jose submerged at least once and became separated as Jose floundered and yelled in distress. Observing Jose's plight from atop the jetty, Orzech, 56, sales executive, entered the water and swam about 150 feet from the jetty to Jose, where he calmed him and towed him toward the jetty. A woman who arrived in a boat assisted with getting Jose to the jetty. A man who accompanied her recovered Sigelow, who was unconscious, from the water. First responders were unable to revive Sigelow, who had drowned. Jose and his brother were evaluated at a hospital then released. 89345-10040/89396-10041

RONALD W. MANNING
Bogalusa, Louisiana

Ronald W. Manning saved Bridget D. Stogner and Brittany R. Purvis from burning, Bogalusa, Louisiana, July 14, 2017. Stogner, 34, and Purvis, 30, were in the front seats of a sedan that left a rural road and came to rest on its passenger side at the edge of a wooded area. Its front end caught fire. Manning, 68, deputy sheriff, was on duty and working for his department nearby when he saw smoke and responded to the accident scene. Seeing flames and hearing screams for help, he brought a small fire extinguisher from his vehicle and emptied it on the fire that issued from the engine compartment. Unable to extinguish the fire, Manning retrieved a hammer from his vehicle and used it to break out an opening in the sedan's rear windshield. Inside the car, Stogner had crawled to the rear windshield. Manning, partially entering the vehicle despite the front-end flames, grasped her arms and pulled her through the opening. Manning then fully entered the vehicle through the opening and knelt on the rear, passenger-side door. He extended his arms out and told Purvis to grasp his arms; she did so. He grasped her arms and backed toward the rear windshield, then exited through the opening as he removed her from the vehicle. Flames grew to engulf the front passenger compartment. Stogner suffered smoke inhalation and a cut to her head. 89253-10042

JENNIFER E. EMO
St. Louis, Missouri

Jennifer E. Emo rescued Paisley S. Ervin from burning, O'Fallon, Missouri, August 26, 2017. Paisley, 2, was in the backseat area of a sedan traveling on an interstate highway when the sedan's undercarriage struck a large piece of metal that became lodged in its fuel tank. Fire broke out on the sedan, which also contained Paisley's grandparents and 8-year-old brother, and it was brought to a stop on the highway's shoulder. Emo, 37, veterinarian, traveling on the same highway, saw the sedan on fire and stopped at the scene. After the grandparents made efforts to remove Paisley amid rapidly spreading flames, Emo moved to the car and saw Paisley standing on the floorboard behind the driver's seat. Emo ran to the driver's side of the car and approached the rear door, which was open. As flames began to engulf the car, Emo extended her right arm inside, and despite blistering heat and flames, grasped Paisley's wrist and pulled her outside. Emo lifted Paisley and took her to a grassy area adjacent to the shoulder and rolled her in the grass to put out flames on her clothing. An off-duty officer arrived and, with Emo, tended to Paisley until the arrival of emergency responders. Paisley was airlifted to the hospital for treatment of extensive burns but later succumbed to her injuries. Paisley's grandparents also sustained burns. Emo suffered burns to her hands and left arm. 89358-10043

ANDREW WILLIAM MILLER
Frisco, Texas

Andrew William Miller rescued John P. Rowley III from assault, Washington, D.C., May 12, 2017. Rowley, 62, exited a train in a subway station and walked toward an exit when he encountered a group of males, which included two 17-year-olds. Rowley was attacked by the 17-year-olds, who forced him onto the platform and kicked and punched him in the face and head. The assailants pushed Rowley toward a train accelerating out of the station, and Rowley struck it, then fell back onto the platform, where he was kicked. Miller, 23, law student, had exited a separate car of the same train and observed Rowley being attacked. Miller moved toward the group, shouting at them to stop their attack on Rowley, who was lying on the platform. One of the assailants stumbled over Rowley and toward Miller, and the two struggled. The assailant punched Miller twice, and Miller fell to the platform. The assailants and the other young men fled the scene, and the assailants were later apprehended. Rowley sustained a concussion, a broken right hand, and contusions and lacerations. Miller sustained a head injury and an abrasion to his face. 89157-10044