Carnegie Hero saves another life

Inspired by advice from the woman he saved, Carnegie Hero David Michael McCartney, 35, of Darlington, Ind., became a hero once again this year by donating a kidney to a stranger.

McCartney met Elizabeth A. Testerman, then 54, when he and another man, Lee Pierce, removed her from her burning vehicle after a January 2006 highway accident in Atlanta, Ind. At the time of the rescue, Testerman referred to McCartney and Pierce as her “angel babies.”

Testerman told McCartney, then 21, to make certain that he always helped others. McCartney and Testerman, who lived in Texas, kept in touch by phone and through letters until her death from lung cancer three years later.

McCartney said he took Testerman’s words to heart, and in February, McCartney donated one of his kidneys to an anonymous recipient.

Although he always knew he wanted to help people, the decision to become a living organ donor didn’t cross his mind until a friend of his wife, Kelly, lost a brother to renal failure after receiving two kidney transplants. The transplants allowed the man to live an additional 10 years before he passed away.

McCartney said he thought an organ donation sounded like a great way to help someone else, so he requested information on live kidney donations from Indiana University Health. He also talked to a woman he met at a charity golf outing who had donated a kidney. McCartney said he learned that live kidney donations had a
Organ donation

higher success rate than those donated by a deceased donor.

After seven months of testing, including blood type compatibility and psychological testing, to see if he was eligible to donate, McCartney was given the go-ahead in December 2018. He said it all stemmed from Testerman’s words of wisdom.

McCartney said that none of his family members discouraged him from donating a kidney, “but one of them thought I was crazy.” McCartney said he did not think about the “what if’s” of donating, but about “what will be,” and realized recipients are looking for “a hope and a dream.”

McCartney, who was in good health and extremely active before the surgery, recovered from surgery quickly, returning to work in half the typical recovery time. He ran two half marathons four months after his transplant surgery. The half marathons both took place the same weekend, one in Indiana and the other the next day in Ohio.

He and his wife raise lambs, pigs, cows, and chickens at their home in Darlington, a rural town in Indiana. His full-time job is in the maintenance department at the City of Carmel. McCartney was given scholarship money from the Carnegie Hero Fund in 2009 to attend school to get his commercial truck driver’s license. He said he uses the skills he learned there at his maintenance job.

McCartney said he believes strongly in the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have done to you. He said he didn’t donate his kidney to get a pat on the back. He emphasized that his email to the Commission about his kidney donation was simply to convey how being awarded had continued to affect him.

Testerman reached out to the Carnegie Hero Fund to nominate you for an award, the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission then reached out to me, and now I’m reaching out to you,” McCartney said. “After my nomination, my life changed in how I look at people and how I serve them. I just wanted the Commission to know what they do has a lasting impression.”

And what does McCartney think Testerman would say about his donation if she were still alive?

“First, she’d scold me for risking my life, then applaud me for a great sacrifice. She understood risk versus reward,” he said.

McCartney said he hopes to meet the recipient of his kidney one day, but it is up to them to decide if that will happen, and so far the recipient has not been in touch with him.

—Susan Rizza, case investigator

Carnegie Hero David Michael McCartney, left, with his son Elijah, after a half marathon May 4 in Indianapolis. McCartney ran two half marathons in one weekend four months after donating a kidney to a stranger.

Carnegie Hero Charles E. Britt gets ready to blow the candles out during his 95th birthday celebration. Britt was recently the subject of his daughter-in-law’s newspaper column.

Carnegie Hero Charles E. Britt celebrates his 95th birthday

This column, dated April 17, appeared in The (North Augusta, S.C.) Star. Columnist Phyllis Britt is the daughter-in-law of Carnegie Hero Charles E. Britt, who, at the age of 73, saved a 5-year-old boy from a burning home Nov. 3, 1997, in Norfolk, Va. Britt was awarded the Carnegie Medal in 1998. We are reprints Britt’s column about husband Tom’s father with permission.

We have just returned from a visit to Virginia, in large measure to see Tom’s dad. Charlie Britt will be 95 on May 10. He still has all his faculties. He mortifies alone – happily, I might add. He still tries to cut his own grass – though his son-in-law has him on a string. He runs two half marathons in a weekend, four months after donating a kidney to a stranger.

Britt’s life is a testament to the continuing strength and vibrancy of Carnegie’s visions in the number and quality of the people who, even today, devote their lives to realizing his vision of a “city on a hill.”

Knowing there has been one of the great rewards of my association with the Carnegie Hero Fund, (the greatest reward, of course, has been knowing some of our heroes) They lead and work in the twenty-odd Carnegie organizations that even today make Carnegie’s visions a reality.

I’d love to write profiles of so many of them, beginning with every single member of the Hero Fund’s daughter staff (I’m that staff; watch out, someday I might do it)!

For today, let me focus on just two. I wish Andrew Carnegie could meet Vartan Gregorian – and that I could be in the room when he did.

Gregorian leads the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the last and largest of Carnegie’s philanthropic projects. His position is central to the Carnegie project, and I think Andrew Carnegie would be most pleased with the man in the position.

Gregorian is a product of the Armenian community in Tabriz, Iran, who became a formidable Armenian intellectual and leader. He taught at a number of universities before coming to the University of Pennsylvania, where he became the Provost, or chief academic officer of the University.

From there he went to the New York Public Library, where he engineered a celebrated turnaround of an important but declining institution.

He served as president of Brown University, then in 1997 became the 12th president of Carnegie Corp. Gregorian has used his position, combined with his vision and intellect, to revitalize the world of the Carnegie philanthropists and to build a common understanding of our Carnegie heritages.

In 2001 he gathered the Carnegie organizations to create the Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy, with great positive effect on the Carnegie “brand.”

His action had a side effect which may prove just as important. The Medal of Philanthropy brought the Carnegie organizations together on a regular basis, meeting that had not happened before.

This has strengthened the Carnegie culture within the organization, which has in turn added to the vitality and resilience of many of them. Gregorian daily deals with the many names of culture, business and academics, but he has also been very helpful to the smallest of the Carnegie organizations.

Andrew would smile at his work. Gregorian makes the rest of us smile, as well.

From Vartan Gregorian let’s turn to a young woman in her early twenties who might be the newest and most junior associate of the Carnegie organizations world-wide.

Anna joined the Carnegie Hero Fund a few weeks ago as a volunteer summer intern.

Anna hopes to gain some experience relevant to the communications degree she will earn next year, but she was also attracted by the Hero Fund’s mission and by the heroes themselves. But with just a few days on the job, she picked up a sense of the “Carnegieness” of the organization. She was spotted in an idle moment at home working on a sketch of Andrew Carnegie.

And so goes. As the years go by, new hands join the thousands working to keep the Carnegie vision real and relevant. As the next few lines of that song go, In those far visions we believe What years have builded we receive, And ours shall be the charge to leave Our high banner higher still

GENERATIONS CARRY ON

FOUNDER’S VISION

By Mark Laskow, Chair

Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

FOUNDER’S VISION

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Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

GENERATIONS CARRY ON
Boy Scouts

American flag and Troop 101 flag. Prayers were offered by Deacon Barney Rodrigues of St. Mary's Catholic Church, where John and Norman served as altar boys together.

To honor and remember the extraordinary actions John performed, his story was shared and the official Carnegie Hero Fund citation was rectified.

Seventy-three years ago, on April 22, 1946, sorrow gloomed in Temple, Texas. John, a 13-year-old schoolboy died while attempting to save his fellow classmate 12-year-old Norman from drowning.

The day after Easter, John, Norman, and several other boys decided to spend their holiday break fishing at Pepper Creek. The banks were slippery and full of mud due to recent rain. Norman fell from the bank into a pool, where water was 8 feet deep.

John was a member of Boy Scout Troop 106, a troop no longer in existence, and had completed swimming and life-saving courses through scouting. He immediately jumped in, while still fully clothed, and swam 15 feet to Norman, who was desperately flailing.

When John reached him, a violent struggle ensued. Another boy dove from the bank, but the dogs pulled him from it, took him to the bank, and Norman, still fully clothed, pulled him to the bank.

During the ceremony, Scout Adam Dlugas, then 16, read the words taken from 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 aloud. “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.”

In addition to the Carnegie Medal, John was posthumously awarded the Boy Scout Gold Medal for Heroism. It was the 36th such award given by the Boy Scouts in their 35 years of existence at the time, and the first ever award given posthumously.

Scouting works to instill values that we see as heroic and worthy, and to develop men and women of good character. The McBee boy let go of his lifeline to save another,” said Smith.

—Laury Mayneich, intern

from Hillcrest and buried next to his father. She said she was gratified to know that the family would finally be together in death, if not in life.

Each of the boys were represented at the Texas ceremony by family who traveled nearly five hours to join in recognizing the heroic efforts displayed that day 73 years ago. The families were given the opportunity to share a few words in honor of their loved ones.

Although Carnegie Hero Fund’s records show the McBee family received a medal, its whereabouts are unknown. To honor John during this ceremony, the Carnegie Hero Fund supplied a grave marker to adorn his gravesite.

“Howing that [marker] there for the family really made the ceremony special,” shared Smith.

In addition, Troop 101 arranged for a memorial stone, donated by Terrell Granite, to be placed at the empty grave next to Norman.

The ceremony concluded with the playing of taps while the scouts retired the colors. A reception with light refreshments was held immediately after at the Lamar Middle School cafeteria for all guests to join in fellowship.

“We teach the scouts that you don’t have to know someone to honor them or respect what they did. When we quit remembering those individuals, they are lost to the ages,” said Smith.
Hero Fund contributes to Carnegie Corporation’s ‘Dear Mr. Carnegie’ project

A volume of letters written to Andrew Carnegie by today’s leaders of the more than 20 organizations he founded will be published this fall. Carnegie Corporation of New York presented the idea to continue the yearlong tribute on the centennial anniversary of Carnegie’s death, Aug. 11.

Carnegie Corporation President Vartan Gregorian wrote that the project was inspired by a speech given by Henry James, president of insurance service company TIAA, in 1935 in recognition of the centennial anniversary of Carnegie’s birth. Gregorian asked organization heads to write a letter to Carnegie that “conveys not only Andrew Carnegie’s influence on your organization, but also your reflections on the founder of the institutions we have the honor to serve.”

“I believe that this will be the best way for all of us to express our gratitude to Andrew Carnegie and bear witness to his enormous and continuing impact,” he added.

The compilation book will be distributed at the Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy ceremony in October.

The Carnegie Hero Fund Commission was pleased to contribute its part honoring Andrew Carnegie, expressing gratitude from everyone in the staff through the words of Commission President Eric Zahren.

Zahren said “the letters to Andrew Carnegie” project was a great idea, and perfectly timed to coincide with the 100th Anniversary of Carnegie’s death. … I jumped at the chance to communicate our thanks for Carnegie’s vision and inspiration, our pride in the accomplishments of the Hero Fund, and our collective resolve, as strong as ever, to carry out the work.”

THE HERO FUND’S CONTRIBUTION

April 15, 2019
Dear Mr. Carnegie,

It is with great pride that I write you on this 115th anniversary of the first meeting of the Hero Fund Commission. I am pleased to report that this most venerable institution, which you considered your own child, created to render and celebrate the better angels of mankind, has endured and thrived.

You once referred to the Hero Fund as the “noblest fund in the world.” After giving more than 10,000 Carnegie Medals for heroism, and nearly $414 million in support for heroes and dependents, our work to honor the true heroes of our society goes on, having proven time and again the noble truths of your insights and the enduring value of your gift.

Beyond the medals and the support that you demanded for heroes and kin so that they “not suffer,” the work of the Hero Fund has unraveled the mysteries of the acts and actors in impacting our society as well as the hearts of those who have struggled, overcame, and endured by elevating the value of another’s life beyond their own. We have seen that, in all cases, as you so clearly understood over a hundred years ago, the hope that has come to those in peril, in the faces of strangers and friends, has been as the presence of angels. Whether lives were saved, or lost, or changed, the hero has imparted hope to the hopeless. Heroes can be considered saviors, in a sense, for all of us who have witnessed what they did for others, often strangers. This you recognized early on in the person of “young Hunters” of Dunfermline, and in those who braved the fire and smoke of the Harwick mine. It exists today in the hearts and minds of the rescuers and victims who have locked eyes in fearsome, and often final, moments.

Every one of the Carnegie heroes the Fund has recognized personifies that invaluable, God-given trait that you cherished most, and we cherish still: that they love enough, another enough to risk, and in many cases sacrifice, their own lives to try to save them. As purveyors of selflessness, hope, and equality, they represent the possibility for a more peaceful world if, as an ideal, their actions are taken into the hearts of the many, who then do likewise by putting others first.

The Fund has provided much-needed support for disabled heroes and those from whom heroes were taken away, many times far too soon, as a result of their selflessness. As you had hoped, there have been many “exceptional children” for whom the fund has made “exceptional education” a reality. It has soothed the wounds these heroes bear, both visible and unseen. And in all it has done, the Fund continues to honor the selfless acts of the heroes among us, for our time and for future generations.

You once said that “the whole idea” of your Hero Fund was contained in the poem “In the Time of Peace” by your good friend Richard Watson Gilder. Its beautiful words ring as true now as they did more than a century ago:

“A civic hero, in the realms of love,
Died that which suddenly drew a world’s applause;
And one to the pest his lithe young body gave
That he a thousand thousand lives might save.”

As you had hoped, there have been many “exceptional children” for whom the Fund has made “exceptional education” a reality. It has soothed the wounds these heroes bear, both visible and unseen. And in all it has done, the Fund continues to honor the selfless acts of the heroes among us, for our time and for future generations.

Three-year-old Andrew Cooper stands in front of his great, great, great-grandfather’s gravestone holding the original Carnegie Medal.

Lewis G. Burkhalter, 27, died July 28, 1912, attempting to save his sister-in-law from drowning in Bradley, Ill. Kate Graper, Andrew’s mother, had a grave marker reved in Burkhalter’s hometown, 106 years after his death. Cooper and her children traveled 90 minutes last summer to view the newly installed marker.

Eric P. Zahren
President, Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

Great, great granddaughter marks Burkhalter grave

Our work to honor the true heroes of our society goes on, having proven time and again the noble truths of your insights and the enduring value of your gift.

This unexpected event shocked my family and the city. We had to heal together from this tragic event through supporting one another.

The bravery of the officers and willingness to risk their lives for the safety of others is inspiring and forever left an impact on me.

Learning about the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission through my dad has opened my eyes to how much good is in the world, especially in the wake of such a family tragedy.

Honoring the lives of people who commit such selfless acts of heroism through the graciousness of Andrew Carnegie’s foundation is incredibly inspiring.

Remembering those who risk their lives for the safety of others is an incredibly admirable attribute of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission.

I think about my uncle when I’m in the office as I look through the pages that lists all of the heroes’ names. It reminds me to stop and remember not only their name, but also their story, their family, and the impact of their selfless act.

Zahren shot Andrew Carnegie at her home in Pittsburgh.
allowed him to achieve his goal of working toward a better America and better tomorrow without the financial stress that accompanies higher education, he said.

“The Carnegie Hero Fund scholarship helped alleviate the fear that I would graduate so far in debt that I would not be able to outearn the debt and interest I accumulated,” he said.

During his studies, Ellison achieved certifications in many areas. In February 2018 he was recognized by the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma for completing a bleeding control course. In April of that year, he finished the Emergency Management Institute’s introduction to CERT, reaffirming his dedication to serve in times of crisis through continued professional development and completion of the independent study course. Finally, in June, Ellison completed the Emergency Care & Safety Institute’s course on wilderness first aid.

Ellison was also awarded for his success inside the classroom and outstanding service in his community. In September 2017, he received Utah National Parks Council’s highest recognition— the Silver Beaver Award. This honor was introduced in 1931 and is a council-level, service award granted by the Boy Scouts of America to registered Scouters for distinguished service to youth. Aside from his master’s degree, Ellison considers this honor his proudest accomplishment.

“For those of us that have spent thousands of volunteer hours in the cause of Scouting, it is as if you have arrived,” Ellison said.

Upon graduation, he received the Gloria Wheeler Good Works Award. As indicated in the ceremony program, this award is given each year to a graduating Master’s Degree of Public Administration student who exemplifies the characteristics of former faculty member, Gloria Wheeler, Ph.D. She was known as a competent and caring person, a friend of students, a loyal colleague, a champion of diversity, and a faithful person who served others generously and demonstrated a devotion to public service and management excellence in government.

When he began the three-year program in 2015, Ellison knew he wanted to take full advantage of the opportunity to develop relationships with the 45 students in his class. He worked hard and strived to add value to classroom discussions and group assignments.

“I knew that [my peers] were not average, but a group of intelligent, hardworking individuals that were adding value to their community. Each one of my fellow students had a story to tell, their story, and I received inspiration listening to each one of them,” he said.

While working toward his master’s, Ellison stayed busy. He worked full-time during the week, had a part-time job on the weekends with the National Park Service, gave tours of Timpanogos Caves, and still managed to organize a group of 30 young men to attend the 2019 World Scout Jamboree, a quadrennial event that brings together tens of thousands of members of the World Organization of the Scout Movement.

After graduation, Ellison was promoted to events services supervisor from his previous role as an administrative assistant with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He said he considers it another step in the right direction and is excited for the opportunities that come.

Congratulations, Marc!

—Abby Brady, operations and outreach assistant/archivist

\[\text{For those of us that have spent thousands of volunteer hours in the cause of Scouting, it is as if you have arrived.}\]
COMMISSION BOARD MEMBER
SERVES HERO FUND FOR 30 YEARS

At the Herd’s 115th annual meeting held in June, board member Priscilla “Sibby” J. McCready was recognized for her 30 years of service on the Commission. A resolution was prepared, framed, and presented to her at the meeting.

“Resolved, that the Minutes of the 115th Annual Meeting of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission record its members’ acknowledgment of the distinguished service given by their esteemed colleague,” the resolution stated.

McCready was elected to the board on June 22, 1989, as the first woman on the board. Her untold service has included active participation on the Salary and Benefits sub-committee and the Executive Committee, at one time serving as chair and vice president of the Executive Committee.

“This Commission recognizes that any success in effecting the charitable purposes ascribed to it by Andrew Carnegie is due in no small part to the selfless participation and skill of its members, as exemplified by Sibby, and, that this Commission extends its sincere appreciation to Sibby for her dedication, with every expectation and hope that it will remain her beneficiary for years to come,” the resolution stated.

Charlie Britt turns 95

He then let the homeless family move in until they got back on their feet after losing everything in that fire—which turned out to be nearly three years. And since then the Norfolk Fire Department has established the Charles E. Britt Award for exceptional bravery.

Also since retirement, he’s continued to be self-sufficient. As he decided his roof (on his two-story home) needed replacement. Without discussing it with his kids, he took it upon himself to do the job alone. Picture an 80-year-old climbing up and down a ladder with pallets of shingles on his shoulder. I knew his son, my husband, wouldn’t think of doing something like that, and Tom’s not anywhere near 80. (And after that, Granddad’s ladder “disappeared,” with a little help from Deb.)

Of late, Granddad is finally admitting that he has a few aches and pains. The main problem is his shoulder, which he broke long ago by falling from a ladder while replacing a light bulb in a telephone pole (a security light in the backyard of his mother, who lived down the street until her death). He’s also back on the road driving, limiting his time behind the wheel to daylights and short trips, mainly to eat dinner with friends.

So while we were there this time, Tom’s sister Deb expressed some concern about her father living by himself. She has tried to get him to move in with her, but he won’t budge. Tom tried to talk to him about it, but Granddad enjoys his solitude and his house, which he’s lived in for more than 60 years, and his independence.

The good news is that currently our nephew, Justin, is living there with Granddad, but Justin’s often away—the one reason Deb is concerned. She worries he’ll try to do things he shouldn’t be doing—a tendency, rather than calling you.

Tom spent our time in Virginia at the house he grew up in, and he had insight into what must be going through Granddad’s head. After enjoying a few days sitting with his father in the swing on the porch and in the backyard, enjoying the quiet, my husband said, “I can see how hard it would be for me to give up living where we’ve been for 30 years (and counting),” Tom pointed to our backyard, reminiscing on how many hours he’s spent pushing children and grandchildren in a swing; how much time he’s given over to planting flowers, trees and even vegetables in our yard; and how many days he enjoyed swinging in our “porch” swing, listening to the pond he built bubbling away.

Independence is a difficult thing to relinquish, I admit. Perhaps my biggest fear as I age is not being able to drive anymore. I cannot imagine the isolation that must come with no longer being able to go where I want when I want. Tom’s sister, along with many of her dad’s younger friends and former colleagues, have worked hard to be available to drive Granddad where he wants to go, particularly at night. But there’s still that dependence that, in your heart of hearts, you didn’t appreciate.

So Deb has wisely tried not to take away that feeling of independence. While she’d be happier with her father under her roof, she and her husband (whose own mother is likewise trying to age in place) are making every effort to do whatever they can to keep Granddad safe and happy at home for as long as possible.

As Rose Kennedy once said, “Age… has its privileges.” Indeed.
the man who was calling for help. Ryan removed his outer clothing and shoes, entered the 65-degree water and swam about 100 feet to the man. He directed the man, who was panicking, to lie on his back, and Ryan grasped him around the chest. With one free arm, Ryan backstroked and used the current to help tow the man about 150 feet to wadable water downstream. There, someone assisted Ryan and the man out of the water. The man was taken to the hospital. Ryan was nearly exhausted and cold, but he was not injured.

Marvin George Dixon and Jesse L. Casanova helped to rescue a police officer from a rip current on May 17, 2018, in Hartford, Conn. Responding to a complaint, a police officer, 34, was inside a female resident’s apartment when the resident attempted to kneel, prompting a violent struggle. As they wrestled in the kitchen, the woman obtained a kitchen knife, which she used to repeatedly stab the officer in the neck. In the building’s lobby, Dixon, 38, the building’s senior maintenance supervisor of Cromwell, Conn., and Casanova, 32, maintenance technician of New Britain, Conn., were alerted that the officer needed help and responded. In the hallway, they saw the assailant, still holding the knife and choking the officer. The men ran to them; Dixon grasped the assailant from behind and Casanova seized the knife from her hand. Dixon restrained the assailant while a building manager tended to the officer’s wounds until backup officers arrived. The officer survived and was hospitalized for treatment of serious wounds.

On July 19, 2018, 12-year-old Blake Broek was playing in the ocean with his brothers off of Southern Shores, N.C., when a rip current carried him into water that was about 12 feet deep. Blake’s mother’s friend, Kenneth Royal Gooch, Jr., 32, a laborer of Powell Point, N.C., and volunteer lifeguard Michael S. Chandler, 52, of Stafford, Va., responded. Gooch swam about 200 feet to Blake, removed his gloves, grasped his arm, and threw Blake away from the rip current. Gooch struggled to stay afloat as he was carried by the current about 60 feet farther from the beach. By then, Chandler had entered the water and swam about 240 feet to Blake. Chandler grasped one of Blake’s arms and towed Blake to shallow water atop a sandbar where others assisted Blake to shore. Blake had swallowed sea water and was treated at the hospital for shock. He recovered. Chandler was nearly exhausted after the rescue, but he was not injured. Ocean rescue crews pulled Gooch from the water, but efforts to revive him were unsuccessful. He had drowned.

Off-duty state trooper Raoul Carrillo responded to a Feb. 21, 2018, interstate highway accident in which a tractor-trailer truck’s driver 19-year-old Ricardo Rodriguez trapped inside and freed the driver who was pinned inside. The officer arrived. The officer survived and was hospitalized for treatment of serious wounds.

Taylor Rod White, 21, a year-old crane operator from New Haven, N.L., on March 13, 2018, entered 40-degree water after witnessing a vehicle travel off a road and into a bay of the Atlantic Ocean off of New Harbour. Despite heavy rain and wind, White swam about 90 feet to a 22-year-old woman who had exited the submerged vehicle and was floating, unconscious, near it. White towed the woman back to a dock, struggled in the cold water. Once he reached the dock, others assisted both of them from the water. White was cold after the rescue, but he recovered.

A water meter reader, Andrea L. Harris, 33, of Tuscannia, Fla., entered an overturned and burning car to save 7-month-old Demarcus T. Richardson on July 27, 2018. Students were at lunch in a high school cafeteria when a 14-year-old boy showed several students the .40-caliber, semiautomatic pistol he had brought to school. One student informed teacher Angela Lynn McQueen, 40, of Mattapan, and as she approached him, the boy began to fire the gun toward other students. McQueen lunged for the gun and forced the assailant’s hand upward toward the ceiling as he continued to fire. McQueen kept the gun pointed to the ceiling until the gun was emptied, and then disarmed him as a school resource officer arrived to handcuff him. One student was hit with a bullet and recovered. McQueen suffered minor tearing loss in both ears and post-traumatic stress disorder. The remaining students and staff escaped the cafeteria unharmed.
New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell, left, hugs Doretha Williams, who accepted her late husband’s posthumously awarded Carnegie Medal. Cantrell and New Orleans Fire Chief Tim McConnell presented the award to Williams during a ceremony held May 13 in the press room at Cantrell’s office.

Frank Williams, Jr., died Dec. 5, 2017 helping rescue a 25-year-old man from drowning. Williams, 50, restaurant cook of New Orleans, removed his boots and dived into a 10-foot-deep canal to swim toward a submerging vehicle. He reached a passenger of the car and began to move him toward the dock while struggling to keep him afloat. Eventually, Williams submerged, while others were able to remove the passenger from the water.

“It mattered then, and it matters now, and we want to make sure it continues to matter in the future of our city. New Orleans will not forget this act of kindness and heroism,” said Cantrell during the ceremony.

Frank Williams’s nephew Tyrone Williams Jr., lauded the way his uncle lived his life to local reporters. “He goes above and beyond — not just for family members or friends — for anyone in help or in need,” he said.
Kentucky state Sen. Wil Schroder, left, and state Rep. Donna Keene, right, pose with Carnegie Hero Kristian R. Harrison to celebrate his act of heroism at a special ceremony June 3 in Dayton, Ky. Mayor Ben Baker presented Harrison with the Carnegie Medal and a key to the city.

On an early November morning in 2017, Harrison saved a man from a burning house. Once alerted to the fire, he forced open the front door, went to his knees, and crawled inside. Harrison grabbed the man by the ankles and dragged him while crawling backward toward the front door, where he exited.

“It’s amazing what you’ve accomplished,” Keene told Harrison. “You really changed a person’s life, and that’s bigger than any award you could get. Your heroism is phenomenal.”

Photo courtesy Schroder.

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Photo courtesy Schroder.
rapidly rising and swirling muddy water, further trapping Limbird and blocking any exit by the closed door. When she arrived at the window, measuring 1 foot high and 30 inches wide, the water was even with the sill. She opened the window by removing a screen, but couldn’t remove the screen because it was fastened from the outside. The water had reached the height of the outside ledge. LoRena became very alarmed and started yelling loudly for help.

Back on the tractor, Kresser and Smith were driving through 18 inches of rain. Above the noise of the wind, thunder, lightning, and tractor engine, Kresser thought he heard cries for help. At this point, they were 150 feet away from Limbird’s house. Smith stopped the tractor and they listened carefully. Hearing someone faintly calling for help, Smith noticed Limbird’s porch light was on. At the same time, 14-year-old neighbor, Patti Rausch, was in bed when she heard screams for help. She woke her father, Richard Rausch, who dressed himself in a swim suit and raincoat, and took off barefoot to check out the situation.

Kresser and Smith got off the tractor and began walking toward Limbird’s house. Smith, remiss of the pond-like depression near the home, fell into the water and was briefly submerged. After resurfacing, both men continued on to find Limbird, calling for help through a route of entry.

Limbird explained that the south wall of the basement had caved in, but Larry said he didn’t believe her. He used his flashlight to inspect the scene and realized then, that Limbird, standing in 4-5 feet of water up to her neck, was in danger of drowning.

Rausch arrived to the scene and asked if anything was wrong. Smith replied, “Yes,” but expressed uncertainty of what to do.

Using his flashlight, Smith broke the screen so Limbird could stick her head out the window and breathe. Smith was becoming increasingly nervous of Limbird’s trapped status and feared for her life. As the group discussed their options, she remembered that she had locked the back screen door from the inside. He told her not to worry and that he’d get inside somehow.

With no water rescue training, Smith forced his way into the home wearing his regular clothes, rain jacket, and boots. Kresser started to follow, but Smith suggested he would be more help from the outside.

LoRena heard someone loudly calling for help. The group discussed their options, and she feared for her life. As the group discussed their options, she decided to remove Limbird from the basement.

Before Smith descended the stairs to the flooding basement, Rausch warned him of the electrical danger of this rescue and encouraged him to get in and out as quickly as possible.

Commission Case Investigator Fred R. Inglis interviewed an Ottawa hydro inspector.

“He stated that there is always a possibility of shock hazard where water is involved with electricity; that if [the rescuer] had tested the water with his finger for shock and got a tingle, he might not have recognized it, or in his desperation to reach [Limbird], would probably have ignored it and gone in anyway; that if the water were not changed when he entered it, it could be made so by rising water as it is reached electrical outlets or equipment as he swam through it, making it lethal; that escaping gas could be ignited by anyone equipment and cause an explosion ... His final opinion was ‘where there’s water and electricity, you’ve got problems.’” Inglis’ notes stated.

Outside, Kresser took his position at the window while Rausch went to fetch a screwdriver and hammer to remove the screen.

Inside, the basement stairway was completely dark. As Smith walked down the steps, he tripped, and fell into 6 feet of water. He immediately began to tread water to get his bearings.

Smith inspected the scene. From the outside of the fruit room, the door was closed shut. Smith shouted to Limbird, indicating that he couldn’t get the door open. She informed him that it was shut from pressure on his side of the wooden partition, separating the rest of the basement from the fruit room.

Feeling around in the dark, Smith could tell that the wooden boards of the partition went up as high as the rafters that supported the ceiling. Bracing himself, he pulled as hard as he could and broke off a step. The boards until the top one was just below the water level in the basement. Smith swam and crawled over the partition into the fruit room, but he encountered another obstacle in the floating freezer. Its uppermost side pressed against the rafters and there was no space on either side for him to swim around. In that moment, Smith decided to dive under the freezer and swim to the other side to reach Limbird. In the muddy, swirling water, he was surrounded by baskets, boxes, bottles, papers, and other objects.

When Smith surfaced, he found Limbird in a state of panic, floating face up, holding onto the window ledge and a rafter with one foot braced against the wall. On the outside, Rausch was removing the screen from the window screen. Smith kicked his legs until he found something solid to stand on. He went under Limbird and supported her head and shoulders in the still rising water.

It took Rausch almost two minutes to remove the screen, which allowed for about 2 inches more of precious space, but no more than the 1 foot height of the window. Smith looked around and noticed that the water was now almost level with the base of an electric light that was mounted on the wall.

With time running out, Smith briefly thought about other options to get them both out of the basement safely, but the only other exit, the door, was blocked. So as not to frighten Limbird, Smith decided to remove Limbird from the position he found her.

Smith hoisted Limbird up on his shoulders to get her feet started out through the window. Outside, Rausch and Kresser each grasped a leg and pulled her carefully through the window while Smith supported her head above water until she made it out safely. Limbird was okay, but still very upset by the whole ordeal.

Smith remained in the water-filled basement. As he looked around, he noted that the water was almost halfway up the itching light bulbs. Smith didn’t have enough time to swim back toward his route of entry.

With the water rising rapidly, he was surrounded by baskets, boxes, bottles, papers, and other objects.

Looking back, Smith told Inglis that he realized his life might have been in danger the next morning when he inspected the scene and saw how much of the wall had collapsed. After further processing the event and considering the broken gas can, electrical shock, flash lightning, rising waters, and Limbird’s panic, Smith realized the full magnitude of his act.

Smith was awarded the Carnegie Medal in 1970, along with a grant of $750. At the time, he and his wife, Vicki S. Smith, were raising a 2-year-old girl Meline and were expecting their second child.

Smith forces his way into the home and makes his way toward the basement where, on the steps, he falls into 6 feet of water. In complete darkness he finds the door to the fruit cellar forced shut. Another man waits outside the window while a third man fetches a screwdriver to remove the screen.

Smith crawled over to the partition to enter the fruit cellar, then submerged and swam under a floating freezer to reach Limbird, where he held her up to the window.

The men outside removed the screen within two minutes and white Smith pushed from inside, the other men pulled Limbird through the ground-level window.

Smith remained in the basement, but having no other exit, he pulled himself through the window and climbed outside.
GRAVE MARKERS  Bronze grave markers (below), cast in the likeness of the Carnegie Medal, are available at no cost to the families of deceased awardees. They are designed for mounting on stone or bronze memorials. Contact Susan Rizza (susan@carnegiehero.org).

MEDAL REFINISHING  The Hero Fund will refinish Carnegie Medals at no cost to the owner. The medals are to be sent to the Hero Fund’s office by insured, registered mail. Allow a month for the process. The contact is Jo Braun (jo@carnegiehero.org).

OBITUARIES  Written accounts of the awardee’s life, such as contained in an obituary, are sought for addition to the awardee’s page on the Commission’s website. Contact Chris Foreman (chris@carnegiehero.org).

ANNUAL REPORTS  Copies of the Hero Fund’s most recent annual reports (2017-2018) are available online or by contacting Jo Braun (jo@carnegiehero.org).

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