



# imPULSE

*A Periodic Newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission* ISSUE 41 • MARCH 2015

## 'LIKE US' ON FACEBOOK: THE HERO FUND AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The Carnegie Hero Commission is now on Facebook. Would Andrew Carnegie have *liked* that?

Of course. During his lifetime, he knew the value of communicating to a wide audience: "To be able to tell the world what you have done, that is the greatest accomplishment," he said.



And he knew the value of communicating efficiently, undoubtedly learned at the age of 13 when he became a messenger boy for a telegraph company in

Pittsburgh. Later on, his own messages sent by wire used phonetics-based spelling—he eliminated "useless letters"—and in this regard he wud hav fit rite in with today's texting practices.

In the same spirit, the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission is pleased to announce the launch of its official Facebook page ([facebook.com/carnegiehero](https://facebook.com/carnegiehero)), where it hopes to tell the world what it and, more importantly, what our awardees have done.

The page, which went live last December, includes the most recent news, photos, and award announcements from the Hero Fund, and it also gives users a chance to communicate with the Commission and each other. Through the page, and eventually other forms of social media, the Hero Fund hopes to garner more nominations for the Carnegie Medal, as well as make known the accounts of heroism.

Whether it's a #ThrowbackThursday post about an act that occurred long ago or the most recent announcement of its awardees, the Facebook page provides an opportunity for readers to see that we are still living in "a heroic age," just as Carnegie proclaimed in the Commission's Deed of Trust 111 years ago.

In addition to the Facebook page, the Commission

*(continued on page 4)*



*Paul W. Mongiello, one of the 84 awardees of the Carnegie Medal in 2014, at the scene of his heroic act. Photo by Ryan Kath of KSHB, Kansas City, Mo.*

## 2014 in review: Finding it an honor to recognize extraordinary heroism

*By Sybil P. Veeder, Ph.D., Chair, Executive Committee  
Carnegie Hero Fund Commission*

Returning home from work two years ago, **Paul W. Mongiello**, a 57-year-old insurance executive from Overland Park, Kan., was stopped in traffic in Kansas City, Mo., when a massive natural gas explosion reduced the building to his left to a pile of rubble. He parked beyond the scene and returned to it on foot. Hearing screams from inside the burning remains of the building, he set out to effect the rescue of two of the deadly explosion's victims...and then he faded into anonymity. Tracked down by the media, Mongiello was recognized as the day's hero and later cited by this Commission. His response:

*I'm extremely honored to have been nominated and to have received the Carnegie Medal. I was aware of this award long before February 19, 2013, and greatly admired Mr. Carnegie for its conception, implementation, and stewardship.*

*(continued on page 2)*



✧ BOARD NOTES ✧

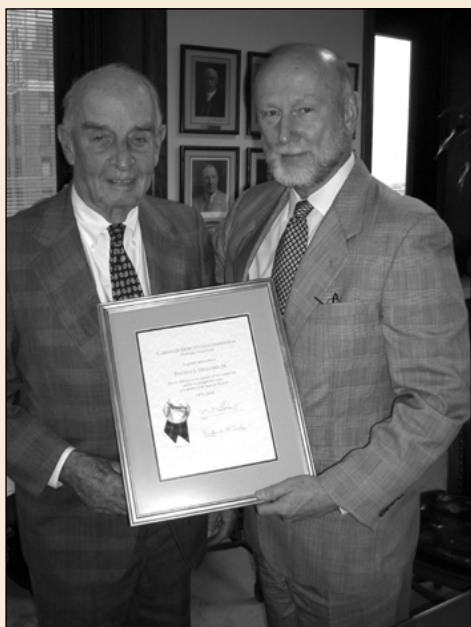
**THOMAS J. HILLIARD, JR.:  
A PERSONAL REMEMBRANCE**

*By Mark Laskow, Chair  
Carnegie Hero Fund Commission*

Thomas J. Hilliard, Jr., a valued member of the Commission for 36 years, died Jan. 29 at the age of 94.

Tom was one of a generation of Pittsburgh leaders who left an indelible mark on the community. He was one of a kind, both a visionary and a warm, wonderful human being, and a great friend of the Carnegie Hero Fund and of me personally. His passing has left a gap in our hearts and our community.

A thoughtful contributor to the Hero Fund's deliberations, Tom gave careful consideration to the degree of risk involved in each rescue we considered and in so doing encouraged us all to maintain the highest standard for the award of the Carnegie Medal. His care in this regard did much to maintain the integrity of our process and the value of the medal itself.



*Mr. Hilliard, left, was recognized for 30 years' service to the Hero Fund in 2009 by Mr. Laskow, board chair.*

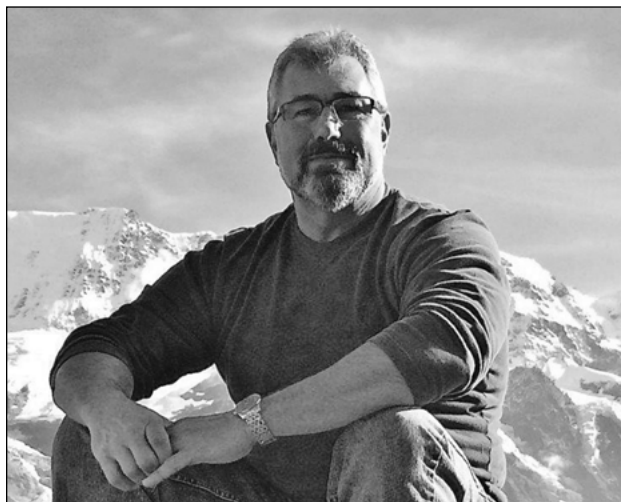
Deeply involved with many community organizations in addition to the Hero Fund, Tom served on the board of Shadyside Hospital from 1953 until it merged with UPMC Health System in 1997. He served as chair of the hospital or its parent from 1986 until 1990. In that role he strengthened the hospital as it entered a turbulent period in modern healthcare. Tom nurtured a strong culture of governance on the hospital's board, a culture that was one of Shadyside's important contributions to the

*(continued on page 3)*

**2014 in review**

*(continued from cover)*

The Executive Committee cannot take credit for the conception of Andrew Carnegie's idea to recognize civilian heroism, but the *stewardship* of the Hero Fund rests squarely on our shoulders. We appreciate the nod from Mongiello that we have remained on course for 111 years, and we *fully* appreciate that his extreme altruism, and that of his fellow awardees, is what prompts us to commit to the continuation of Carnegie's initiative.



*Frederick J. Levesque, Jr., of Stafford Springs, Conn., was one of the 14 awardees in 2014 who performed a rescue from a burning building.*

The year just past was routine in many ways, inasmuch as exposure to the extraordinary can be considered routine: After casting her vote in favor of a particularly harrowing and drawn out rescue act, one Committee member concluded she felt *honored* to do so. The honor was extended 84 times during the year.

As usual, the heroes represented a wide geographic scope, hailing from 33 states and three of the Canadian provinces. Home to the highest number of U.S. awardees was California, at eight, followed by Illinois, six, and Texas, Florida, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Washington, five each. There were five Canadian heroes (British Columbia, Ontario, Alberta), or 6% of the total, as compared with the ratio of 7.7% over the life of the Fund. The number of female awardees—two in 2014, or 2.4% of the total—was also lower than the traditional ratio, 8.9%. Sadly, both heroines died in the performance of their acts, **Madison Leigh Wallace** at 16 while attempting to save her brother from drowning and **Virginia R. Grogan** while attempting to save three young grandsons from a house fire.

By age, the heroes ranged from 11 to 62, with 10 of them in their teens, 18 in their 20s, 13 in their 30s, 21 in their 40s, 20 in their 50s, and two over 60. The oldest awardee in 2014 was **Keno Goode**, who cast aside crutches to rescue a girl caught by flash flooding in a desert wash, and the youngest was **Graham W. Fath**, who with three male contemporaries worked to free stranded rafters from the boil of water at the base of a low-head dam. A co-rescuer in the case, **Tyler T. Fredrickson**, already knew what the medal looked like, as his father, **Thomas S. Fredrickson**, was cited by the Commission in 1998 for saving a small boy from drowning. In another repeat, **Charles T. Carbonell, Sr.**, received his second medal, for removing a woman from her overturned and burning car; the first came in 2007, when he rescued a police officer from assault. Carbonell was a guest of the Committee at its December meeting to be presented the medal (see photo, page 9).

Including Wallace and Grogan, 13 of the 2014 heroes, or 15.5% of the total, lost their lives as the result of their heroic actions, as compared with 20.5%—2,000 of 9,737—over the life of the Fund. We join their families in mourning them, as their stories are "written in our hearts," in the words of Wallace's family.

The threats encountered by the 2014 awardees essentially followed traditional lines: There were 29 rescues or attempted rescues from drowning; 18 burning-vehicle rescue acts; 14 burning-building acts, nine assault-rescue acts, four each in the submerging-vehicle and moving-vehicle categories, three ice-rescue acts, two animal-attack rescues, and one "falling" rescue, which was performed by 61-year-old **Donnie Navidad** when he positioned himself under a woman who was dropping 67

*(continued on page 3)*



## 2014 in review

(continued from page 2)

feet from the upper level of a stadium to a concrete deck. Both survived. Another of the extraordinary threats was assumed by **Steven David Pippin**, who went to the aid of a police officer under assault by a 245-pound man exhibiting signs of excited delirium, and four of the awardees—**Gregory D. Plancich**, **Daniel C. Hardwick**, **Jim O. Fultz**, and **Wayne Kitt**—spent hours in their ice-encrusted fishing boat to rescue the crew of a boat off Kodiak Island, Alaska, that was capsized by 25-foot seas in 66 m.p.h. winds and sub-zero temperatures...at night (see pages 11-12). “Such the heroes of civilization”—Andrew Carnegie, 1904.

Many of the medals were presented personally, a few by fellow heroes in a “recipient-to-recipient” program that was proposed by 2002 Carnegie Hero **Chris A. Cole**. Mark Laskow, Commission Chair, presented **Steven L. Rogge** the medal in Farmington, N.M., and Committee member David McL. Hillman joined Douglas R. Chambers, director of external affairs, in making a presentation in suburban Philadelphia. The feeling among presenters is unanimous that involvement in these face-to-face encounters is rewarding in and of itself. A unique scenario developed with the presentation of the medal to **Justin Lowell Hanley**: The family of the girls he rescued from drowning asked to initiate the event, and they then took part in it, both girls publicly thanking their rescuer (photo, page 9).

Other outreach efforts involving board and staff included a visit by Walter F. Rutkowski, president, to the Jimmy Dyess Symposium in Augusta, Ga.; **James A. Dyess** is the only recipient of both the Carnegie Medal and the Medal of Honor, and the annual event calls attention to both awards. His visit preceded one to Arlington Cemetery for the presentation, to Carnegie Hero **Connor Farland Stotts**, of the Medal of Honor Foundation’s citizens service recognition, and the following month he attended a ‘heroes day’ celebration in Seneca Falls, N.Y., where a 1904 rescue act by awardee **Antonio Varacalli** is believed to have been the inspiration for the Frank Capra film, *It’s a Wonderful Life*.

In May, Laskow and Rutkowski were joined in Rome by Committee member Linda T. Hills in meeting with representatives of four other of Carnegie’s original 11 hero funds. Efforts to meet for general updating and sharing mutual concerns began in Scotland in 2005 during the third presentation of the Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy, and a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York was dedicated to establishing a more formal association of the funds. The Rome gathering was something of a high-water mark, as all of the nine existing funds were represented either in person or by proxy; the fund in Italy, hitherto underrepresented in the international gatherings, was highlighted; and progress was made in drafting a set of operating guidelines for what is now known as the Carnegie Hero Funds World Committee.

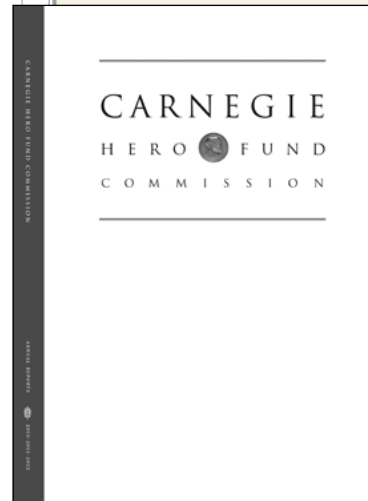


*Representatives of the Hero Fund traveled to Rome in May to meet with colleagues from four European hero funds established by Andrew Carnegie. From left, Walter F. Rutkowski, Linda T. Hills, and Mark Laskow stand outside the Viminale Palace, home to the hero fund of Italy. Photo by Agneta Ahlbeck, Carnegie Stiftelsen, Sweden.*

The Executive Committee’s authority  
(continued on page 5)

### 2013-2014 ANNUAL REPORTS AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION

A booklet containing reports that summarize activities of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission in 2013 and 2014 has just been printed and is available for distribution.



The publication centers on the actions of the 77 awardees of the Carnegie Medal in 2013 and the 84 awardees of 2014 and makes special mention of the 21 individuals who died as the result of heroic acts. Financial granting of \$1.8

million to awardees or their survivors is listed.

Copies of the book may be requested through contacting the Hero Fund by mail, telephone, or emailing Gloria Barber: [gloria@carnegiehero.org](mailto:gloria@carnegiehero.org).

### BOARD NOTES

(continued from page 2)

merger with UPMC.

This is inevitably a personal remembrance of Tom Hilliard as much as an institutional one. No one who knew him would forget his remarkable stutter, but what you remembered about him was not the stutter but the grace with which he dealt with it. He was at once a very direct man and a very kind man. If he asked you a question and you began to beat around the bush with your answer, he would interrupt with a story about ants (yes!) that ended with the phrase, “Cut the BSI!” It was so funny you couldn’t be offended, but even more important it showed how interested he was in what you really thought on a topic. Slightly profane, totally charming!

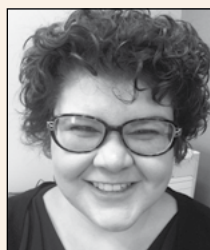
Tom recruited me to the board of Shadyside Hospital and to the Hero Fund, with profound effects on the course of my life. I came from modest circumstances and a distant city, but Tom truly welcomed me into the civic life of Pittsburgh. I eventually came to serve as president and chair of the Hero Fund and vice chair of UPMC. Such was Tom’s personal example, and the power of the loyalty he engendered, that my constant goal in those roles is to live up to the standard he set. *And no BS.*



## 'LIKE US' ON FACEBOOK

(continued from cover)

may utilize other forms of social media in the future, including Twitter and a private Facebook group for awardees. But we also want to know what platforms you use and how you consume your information. What other ways should we be distributing our news? What would you like to see us post online? Please share your ideas by messaging us on Facebook or emailing the Hero Fund's social media coordinator, Julia Panian, at [jewels@carnegiehero.org](mailto:jewels@carnegiehero.org).



*Ms. Panian is a graduate of the University of Missouri with a degree in journalism. She joined the Hero Fund in 2013.*

## TO THE HERO FUND

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

I am greatly honored and thankful for this award. The monetary grant will give me the opportunity to give something to those who participated in the rescue.

Your organization is valuable in seeing some of the good things that happen each day. I hope to take the lessons from that day and make a difference in the future. You have made a difference in mine.

*Jeffrey A. Johnson, North Freedom, Wis.*

*Johnson was awarded the Carnegie Medal in December (see pages 12-13) for helping to rescue a man who had fallen through ice while fishing on a lake in Wisconsin last winter.*

### PROVING GOOD

John feels incredibly honored to have won the award. Receiving it was something he nor I will ever forget. The work the fund does is so important and needed. There are so many bad stories of bad people doing bad deeds. To honor selfless individuals who sacrificed, sometimes their lives, for another helps a person remember there really is good left in the world. Thank you for continuing to prove that!

*Cyndi Krahn, Muskego, Wis.*

*John M. Krahn was awarded the medal in 2010 for his actions of May 25, 2009, by which he saved a woman and her young son from their minivan, which was stranded on a railroad track as a train bore down.*

## Commission's founding during Progressivism challenged traditional definitions of heroism

*By Simon Wendt, Ph.D.*

*Goethe-University of Frankfurt, Germany*

In 1916, the African American newspaper *Chicago Defender* recounted the thrilling story of a black steel worker named **James Duncan**, who rescued a white coworker from a pit of red-hot slag at a mill in Pittsburgh. Other black newspapers were publishing similar stories, lauding the heroism of African American citizens who had courageously risked their lives to save those of others.



*Ernestine F. Atwood was the fifth person to be awarded the Carnegie Medal, and the first female. At age 17 in 1904, she saved a man from drowning in Boston Harbor.*

The unprecedented prominence of these everyday heroes of color was due to the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, which had begun to honor them with medals as well as pecuniary awards in 1904. The Hero Fund marked a watershed moment in the history of heroism in the United States because it institutionalized the public recognition of ordinary citizens' long-ignored heroism, challenged cherished traditions of military heroism, and brought unprecedented visibility for heroic working-class people, especially women and African Americans.

The Hero Fund's history is inextricably intertwined with Progressivism, a white middle-class reform movement that emerged in the 1890s and sought to alleviate the negative consequences of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration. Between 1890 and 1918, progressive reformers advocated limited forms of governmental and private interventions in U.S. society to safeguard American democracy as well as traditions of individualism and economic opportunity.

Progressives had a number of different goals. Some activists sought to regulate big business, fearing that large industrial monopolies would impede citizens' economic independence. Others wanted to reform politics, blaming rampant urban problems on political corruption and inefficient city governments. Yet others were interested in social justice for industrial workers, immigrants, and the poor. Steel magnate Andrew Carnegie became part of the movement's social justice wing, explaining to critics of his capitalist ventures that his purported acquisitiveness was justified because he would eventually return most of his wealth to society. True to his word, he sold his company in 1901 and initiated hundreds of philanthropic projects, including thousands of public libraries, parks, and concert halls as well as various humanitarian institutions.

(continued on page 6)




## 2014 in review

(continued from page 3)



*Dr. Veeder joined the Commission in 1992 and has chaired the Executive Committee since 2002.*

extends to financial grants made to the awardees or their survivors. Heroes disabled by their acts are eligible for ongoing support, as are the dependents of posthumous awardees, and in 2014 the Hero Fund provided aid to 65 such families in the form of monthly grants that totaled \$296,890. Conscious of the founder's mandate to care for the "widows and children" in death cases, staff directed letters of inquiry to numerous ostensibly eligible candidates for assistance. Another area of giving is in scholarship grants, which are offered, based on need, to all pre-retirement awardees and the dependents of disabled and posthumous awardees. Aid of the type totaled \$202,689 in 2014, and the recipients tend to form a bond with the Hero Fund. See a piece on **Jacob A. Greving** at right.

As in previous years, I remain greatly appreciative of the diligence and enthusiasm exhibited by Executive Committee members and the Hero Fund's staff. We can at the same time be proud of the work we have done and fortunate enough to share in it. 



### ADVANCING BY DEGREES

Carnegie Medal awardee **Jacob A. Greving** of Quincy, Ill., recently completed the Specialist in Education Administration program at William Woods University of Fulton, Mo. The Hero Fund provided tuition assistance, but the heavy lifting—getting a 4.0 grade-point average—was all Greving's. The December graduation ceremony featured another member of the family: Greving's wife Valerie received a master's degree in business administration. Shown with the couple are their children, from left, Nick, 3; Nate, 6; and Ella, 8. "I cannot thank the Carnegie Hero Fund enough for the time and resources you have provided for my education. God bless you," Greving wrote. Greving, who is dean of students at Hannibal, Mo., High School, was awarded the medal in 1991 for helping to save a young girl from drowning in the Mississippi River at Quincy when he was 13. He is a graduate of the University of Kansas and then received a master's degree in education from Quincy, Ill., University.

5



### RETURNED MEDAL DISPLAYED

The City of New York became the custodian this year of a silver Carnegie Medal awarded to **William H. Edwards** more than a century ago when members of Edwards's family could not be located. After securing the medal from a collector in Kentucky and conducting the search, the Hero Fund offered the medal on a permanent-loan basis to the city's Department of Records and Information Services, whose visitors center at 31 Chambers Street in Manhattan features displays and interpretive exhibits highlighting the city's 400-year history. Shown with the medal's display are Kenneth R. Cobb, assistant commissioner of the department, and Alexandra Hilton, exhibit curator. Edwards was the city's commissioner of street cleaning when on Aug. 9, 1910, he was shot in the arm while preventing a man from killing the mayor, William J. Gaynor. (See December 2013 issue of *imPULSE*.) Cobb said the medal is a "fascinating addition to our collection."

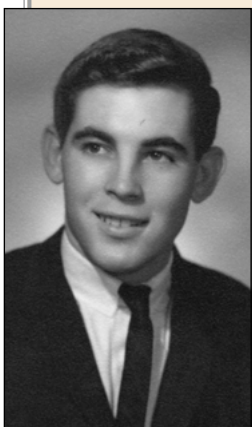
### FRIENDS REMEMBERED

**Ethel Sindelar Klemsz**, 73, of Ithaca, Neb., died Jan. 22. At age 16, she saved two boys from drowning in the Trempealeau River at Hixton, Wis., near her home, on July 2, 1957. While wading in the river, the boys, ages 11 and 12, neither of whom could swim, stepped into a deep hole and called for help. Ethel, also a nonswimmer, waded toward them but submerged in the hole and became mired briefly in the silt on the river floor. She surfaced and struggled in the deep water until someone threw an inflated inner tube to her. Using the tube, she rescued both boys. She was awarded the Carnegie Medal the following year, and the next year she entered Kahler Nursing School on Rochester, Minn., using a Hero Fund grant.



### POSTHUMOUS AWARDEE WAS RESPECTED ATHLETE

He was 19 years old, a college student, and an accomplished athlete. On May 7, 1966, **Anthony—"Tony"—D. Quaglione** of Coffeyville, Kan., died attempting to save a friend from drowning. Both boys and two others had been swimming in the Verdigris River near Coffeyville when Tony's friend was washed over a dam and became caught in the turbulent water beneath it.



Tony jumped into the rough water from the bank and swam to his friend. He was able to grasp him by the hand but soon lost his hold, and the boys were separated. The friend was thrown by the current to safety, and he survived, but Tony submerged and drowned. That evening, a classmate penned these words in tribute:

*At these times, darkness surrounds us all.  
The sun sets much more slowly this night.  
Casting longer shadows upon the wall.  
But, in that darkness, there glows a golden light.  
That light is the memories of one so good.  
One so brave, one so dear to us, each one.  
The Lord gave him life, to serve, as Tony did.  
And he repossesses a Golden Knight, as Tony  
has become.*

Years after his death, another classmate wrote to the editor of the *Coffeyville Journal*, commenting on the award for sportsmanship that Tony's high school gave in tribute:

"Tony probably is best remembered in Coffeyville for his athletic achievements, which is fine, but only one small aspect of the young man I knew. Tony was compassionate, warm, and friendly, and never in the eight years I knew him had a bad thing to say about anyone. He was that rare individual who had God-given talents and realized who indeed had given him those talents. Never a hint of arrogance crept from his being, and he was always quick with wit as well as compliment.

"I don't expect the world to forever remember Tony; that would be naïve and unrealistic. But if every athlete given this award realizes what a quality person the award is named for, and tries in some way to emulate some of Tony's qualities, he will indeed continue to 'live' in Coffeyville and go on being the asset to this community that we were robbed of more than 20 years ago."

*(continued on page 7)*

## Commission's founding

*(continued from page 4)*

The Hero Fund was part of Carnegie's efforts to help those ordinary Americans whose altruistic courage had so frequently been ignored. The businessman-turned-philanthropist was a staunch pacifist and had long lamented the fact that only soldiers were commended for their heroic exploits. From his perspective, the "heroes of civilization"—ordinary people who risked their lives to rescue fellow citizens—were more praiseworthy than their military counterparts because they saved rather than destroyed human life. Until the founding of the Commission, white warrior heroes and heroic military or political leaders dominated people's thinking on heroism. Although a gradual democratization of heroism had taken place since the end of the Civil War, only the Hero Fund's widely publicized honorees led Americans to consider and to appreciate the heroic exploits of ordinary citizens.

What made the Hero Fund even more remarkable was the fact that it developed "scientific" methods to distinguish "true" from "false" heroes after its founding had been greeted with considerable skepticism. To silence these critics, the Commission established strict definitions and criteria that would guide its work. It defined heroism as an act in which a person voluntarily risked his or her life to save or attempt to save the life of a fellow being. In addition, it considered only those applicants whose occupations did "not require them to perform such act," which ruled out firemen, railway engineers, nurses, and others if their jobs entailed taking risks to save lives. To prevent fraudulent applications, the Commission rejected those from "self-dubbed heroes" and announced that it would employ physicians and investigators to certify any claims of death or disablement.

## The Hero Fund marked a watershed moment in the history of heroism in the United States

The Commission closely adhered to these criteria. By 1912, it employed 10 full-time investigators, whom the press quickly dubbed "hero hunters." These men, who tended to be experienced journalists, visited the scenes where deeds of heroism were said to have occurred. Once there, they photographed the locations, drew maps or sketches that visualized the heroic deeds, and interviewed the rescuer, the rescued, and other witnesses. This approach reflected the Progressive Movement's confidence in the power of scientific data gathering and rational analysis. If Progressive leaders believed that science would be the key to solving American society's most pressing social problems, the Commission was as optimistic that scientific methods would help its members to separate the heroic wheat from the un-heroic chaff. Sifting through the bulging files that the hero hunters submitted, Commission members debated about each case, sometimes vehemently, refusing the vast majority of them. By late 1918, the Commission had reviewed almost 20,000 cases, rejecting more than 17,000 and accepting merely 1,400, conferring medals and financial awards on working-class people.

The Hero Fund's rigid investigations, the small number of awards, and its dispassionate announcements of new honorees almost completely dispelled the skepticism that had initially greeted Carnegie's benefaction. The Carnegie Hero Fund Commission was not only regarded as a legitimate institution that could be entrusted

*(continued on page 7)*

## Commission's founding

(continued from page 6)

with distinguishing true from false heroism, but its work also convinced an increasing number of journalists of everyday heroism's beneficial impact on U.S. society. Many editors predicted that the example of the Carnegie awardees might help to undermine America's disquieting egotistical thrust in the early 20th century.

If the Hero Fund triggered new debates about the general meaning of civilian heroism, it also influenced the ways in which news media discussed heroic women. Prior to 1904, newspaper coverage of everyday heroines tended to confirm notions of male superiority by constructing a particular idea of female heroism that revolved around "female irrationality" or was used to denounce cowardice by men. The Hero Fund's work appeared to erode such tendencies among journalists and editors. In contrast to the late 19th century, newspaper reports about Carnegie heroines avoided the most blatant forms of stereotyping. Although they continued to comment on their looks, journalists' appraisals of women differed little from those of men. Yet, despite the prominence of Carnegie heroines in the mass media, females never exceeded 10 percent of the Hero Fund's total number of awardees.

The number of African Americans awardees—four percent—was even smaller than that of white women, but the fact that black everyday heroism was acknowledged at all constituted an unprecedented break with the past. Judging from the cases that resulted in awards for black rescuers, the Hero Fund appears to have followed its 1905 criteria in a color-blind fashion. For example, while previous black heroes had been acknowledged only if white eyewitnesses had confirmed their accounts or if white sponsors had supported their actions, the Hero Fund granted awards in cases where no one but the black rescuer could testify.

Similarly unprecedented, African Americans received awards not only for saving white people (such cases constituted the majority of cases that resulted in medals) but also for saving fellow black citizens. For black journalists, African American honorees became a powerful source of racial pride. Black newspapers and magazines regularly reported about the latest everyday heroes of color, providing detailed accounts of and profusely lauding their courageous exploits. The famous African American educator Booker T. Washington was similarly enthusiastic about the black Carnegie awardees, although he put less emphasis on the political implications of their heroism.

Andrew Carnegie was so encouraged by the praise that the Hero Fund received in the U.S. that he set up similar hero funds in Europe. Beginning with the United Kingdom in 1908, he offered generous endowments to several European nations to provide them with the means to organize commissions that would emulate the example of his Pittsburgh-based fund. European governments and rulers reacted enthusiastically to the proposition, and by the beginning of World War I, hero funds had been established in 10 European countries. Although its prominence somewhat receded after World War I, the Commission remained a respected institution that continues its work to the present day, using essentially the same criteria it established in 1905. ❧



*Dr. Wendt is an assistant professor in the Department of American Studies at Goethe-University of Frankfurt, Germany. His research interests include modern U.S. history, African-American history, gender history, history and memory, nationalism, and heroism and hero worship, and earlier this month he participated in a conference that he organized on everyday heroism in the U.S., Germany, and Britain from the 19th to the 21st centuries. Wendt earned his doctorate in modern history at the Free University of Berlin and a master's degree in Afro-American studies at the University of Wisconsin, where he lectured on the topic. The accompanying article is an extract from a major work, Self-Sacrifice and Civilization: Everyday Hero-*

*ism and the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission in the Progressive Era, for which Dr. Wendt conducted research at the Hero Fund's offices.*

15:13

(continued from page 6)

Tony was awarded the Carnegie Medal posthumously in 1968. He is survived by his mother, Jean Quaglione, 96, and sister, Jeanie Unruh, both still living in Coffeyville.

**15:13** calls to mind those in the Hero Fund's 111-year history whose lives were sacrificed in the performance of their heroic acts. The name identifies the chapter and verse of the Gospel of John that appears on every medal: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Of the 9,737 medal awardees to date, 2,000, or 21% of the total, were recognized posthumously. **They are not to be forgotten.**



OVERHEARD



In the chaos and confusion, all I remember is a big silver bat swinging through the air and my mind suddenly saying, "Now I don't have to die. I don't have to die."—The neighbor saved from a pit-bull attack by **Margaret Hanks**, Carnegie Medal awardee #8240.

Several Minnesota winners of the Carnegie hero medal confirmed that they're the type of person who gave their mother white hairs.—Richard Chin, writing in a series of articles in December for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* about the Hero Fund and its awardees.

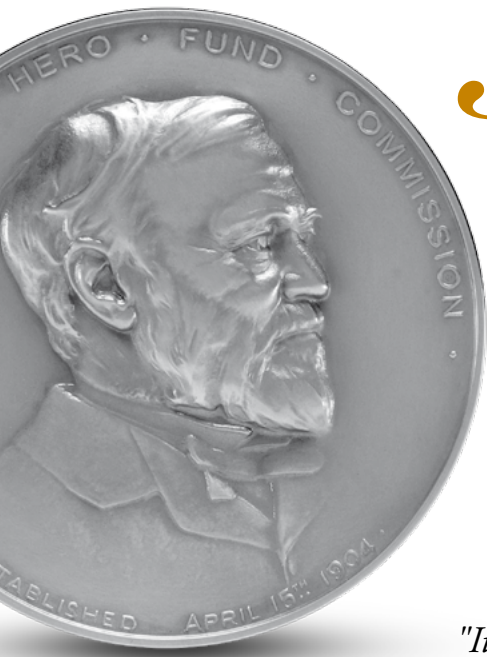
You get to the point where this is life or death. This is not a game.—**Michael Reed**, Carnegie Medal nominee #87114, who pulled a man from an overturned and burning Jeep.

A true hero does not ask for a reward for his heroism but deserves it nonetheless.—A witness to the actions of **Isaac Pinsonneault**, Carnegie Medal nominee #86802, who saved a man from drowning.

I'm going to go 'all religious' on you here—but that's my job—when I saw him coming over the top of the hill, I couldn't help thinking he looked like an angel coming for us.—The Rev. Daniel J.M. Overbo, speaking of **Jonathan A. Barthel**, Carnegie Medal awardee #9733, who saved Overbo and his son from drowning.

The water was coming down like a tsunami with doors in it and logs in it.—**Michael T. McDonnell**, Carnegie Medal awardee #9651, who helped to save victims of Hurricane Sandy.





# *A medal shall be given...*

*...which shall recite the heroic deed it commemorates, that  
descendants may know and be proud of their descent.*

*Andrew Carnegie*

*"It is an award that will be part of my legacy to my grandchildren for them  
to covet, provide as a guide, and, in turn, pass on to their children."*

—Paul W. Mongiello, 2014 awardee

Each medal is individually struck to cite a specific heroic deed and is therefore  
unique. The bronze medals, of 90% copper and 10% zinc, are produced in  
Philadelphia by Simons Bros. Co., which traces its history to 1839.

*"This phenomenal medal is an extremely unique piece of artwork.  
The craftsmanship...is just simply awesome."*

—Justin Lowell Hanley, 2014 awardee

Encircling the relief work is a verse from the New Testament (John 15:13):  
"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

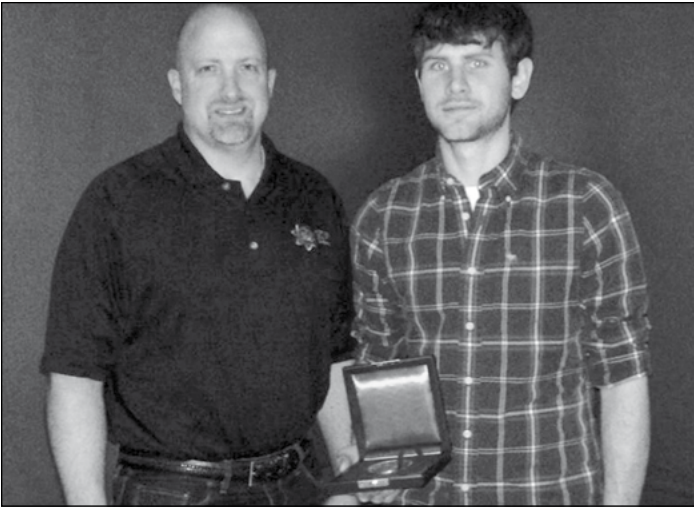
*"I like to lift the medal in my hand and feel its weight. It symbolizes the  
importance of support, care, and the love shown to me for doing what I think  
all of us are capable of, under the right circumstances."*

—Robert J. Sullivan, 2004 awardee

Relief work surrounding the inscription  
plate reveals a sprig of laurel, typifying glory,  
and sprigs of ivy, oak, and  
thistle, for friendship, strength,  
and persistence.







**Robert Wayne Knoll**, right, of Ripon, Wis., said he happened to be in the right place at the right time on July 20, 2013, when he pulled a man from the path of a train in Oshkosh, Wis. In an accident that Knoll witnessed from nearby, the man was thrown from his motorcycle and landed on the track. Knoll—wearing Crocs—sprinted to him and yanked him to safety just before the front of the train passed them. Knoll was given his medal by **John P. Williams** of La Crosse, Wis., who himself was awarded the medal, in 2012, for helping to save a man from drowning.



Sisters Chava L., left, and Shoshana L. Berry owe their lives to **Justin Lowell Hanley**, who saved them from drowning in the Yellowstone River at Miles City, Mont., on Aug. 4, 2013. The girls were pulled from the bank by a swift current and quickly carried downstream. Hanley, a firefighter with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, lived nearby and responded to the scene. After running several hundred feet along the bank, he swam about 250 feet out to reach the girls and then laboriously returned them to safety. The sisters presented Hanley his medal at an event in Miles City in December.



Elizabeth F. McLean, second from right, received the Carnegie Medal posthumously awarded to her husband, **Mitchell L. McLean**, in December from Ron Spivey, retired resident superior court judge of Forsyth County, N.C. With them are McLean's mother, Pauline McLean, and sons, Fin and Jackson. McLean, who was the chief court judge of the 23rd Judicial District of North Carolina, died July 3, 2013, in an Atlantic Ocean rescue attempt while on vacation at Sunset Beach, N.C. Photo by Heather Spivey.



Over the 111-year life of the Hero Fund, five individuals have been awarded the medal twice, including **Charles T. Carbonell, Sr.**, of Tampa, Fla. Carbonell was presented his second medal at a Hero Fund board meeting in December by Mark Laskow, Commission Chair. The medal was given to recognize his actions of Nov. 4, 2011, by which he saved a woman from an overturned and burning car after a highway accident in Lakeland, Fla. Carbonell was first cited in 2007 for rescuing a police officer from assault in Tampa that year. Witness to both acts of heroism was Carbonell's wife, Fonda, left.



**Shane M. Robinson** of Spencer, Ohio, was awarded the medal for pulling two people from a burning car after it left the roadway, struck a culvert, and broke into flame on Sept. 2, 2013. The medal was presented by Mike Wetherbee, right, chief of the Wellington, Ohio, Fire District. With Robinson are his wife, Brittney, and their daughter, Bailee. Brittney was present at the scene of the accident and helped with the victims. "This young couple enabled another young couple to have a second chance at life," Wetherbee said.



Laurie Jones of Ruskin, Fla., lost her only child, **Malo Enrique Paul**, 16, after he attempted to save a friend from drowning in the Gulf of Mexico at Fort Walton Beach, Fla., on June 8, 2013. In 2014 he was named a posthumous awardee of the medal, which was presented by **Julian W. Fant** of Treasure Island, Fla. Fant, one of the Hero Fund's volunteer presenters, was awarded the medal in 1960 for a water rescue in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Florida.



## LATEST AWARDEES OF THE CARNEGIE MEDAL

SINCE THE LAST ISSUE OF *imPULSE*, THE FOLLOWING 19 INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN AWARDED THE CARNEGIE MEDAL, BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS TO 9,737 SINCE THE HERO FUND'S INCEPTION IN 1904. THE LATEST AWARDS, WHICH WERE ANNOUNCED ON DEC. 22, ARE DETAILED ON THE COMMISSION'S WEBSITE AT [WWW.CARNEGIEHERO.ORG](http://WWW.CARNEGIEHERO.ORG). THE NEXT ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARDEES WILL BE MADE ON MARCH 31.

**Frederick J. Levesque, Jr.**, 52, a retired corrections administrator from Stafford Springs, Conn., rescued Kerra R. Colgan, 7, from her family's burning apartment in Somers, Conn., on Dec. 4, 2013. Driving by the building, Levesque saw flames and smoke issuing from a bedroom window of a unit on its second floor. He entered the building and went to the second floor, where he forced open the burning apartment's back door. After being forced out of the apartment twice by dense smoke, he entered a third time, but crawling. Despite limited visibility, he advanced through the smoke following Kerra's voice and found her on the floor. Grasping her, he backed to the door, pulling her, and then stood, picked Kerra up, and took her downstairs and outside to safety. Levesque inhaled smoke and was given oxygen at the scene, and he recovered. (See photo, page 2.)

Police officer **Brett Allen Thoele**, 36, of Shorewood, Ill., helped to save a man from drowning in Table Rock Lake in Branson, Mo., on June 28, 2013. The unidentified man was swimming in the designated area when he began to struggle and yell for help at a point about 220 feet from the bank. On vacation with his family at



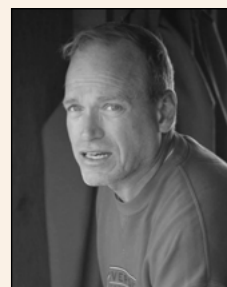
*Assigned to the bomb-squad unit of the Los Angeles Police Dept., Donald E. Thompson was on his way to work on Christmas Day, 2013, when he witnessed a fiery, one-vehicle accident. He responded to the scene and pulled the car's driver to safety. Awarded the Medal of Valor, his department's highest award for heroism, Thompson said the day of his rescue act "started off as the most uneventful and quiet Christmas and ended being the most memorable one I'll ever have in my life."*

the scene, Thoele swam to the victim, who then lunged at him and submerged him. Thoele surfaced, but the victim continued to struggle and submerged him twice more. Surfacing, Thoele struck the victim to subdue him. The victim then cooperative, Thoele towed him toward the bank. They were met by another man, who had an inflatable paddle board. The victim lay on the board as Thoele and the other man took him to the bank. Thoele had ingested water and was extremely fatigued but recovered that day.

**Pawel L. Kruszewski** of Auburn, Maine, saved David W. and Ronald R. Call and Robert Hack from an overturned and burning sport utility vehicle after an accident in Auburn on Sept. 10, 2013. David, 40, and Ronald, 48, were passengers in the vehicle, which was being driven by Hack, 43, when it left the roadway and came to rest on its roof. Kruszewski, 28, production supervisor, stopped at the scene. When flames then broke out on the exposed underside of the vehicle, he opened a rear door, leaned inside, and pulled David out. Kruszewski then fully entered the vehicle, grasped Ronald, and pulled him to safety. Despite flames spreading on the vehicle's underside, Kruszewski entered a third time, for Hack. He released Hack's safety belt, maneuvered him to the rear-seat area, and, with help from Ronald, pulled him from the vehicle, which was shortly engulfed by flames.

**Donald Schaus, Sr.**, 52, of Katonah, N.Y., rescued Richard J. Fitzgerald, 82, from his burning apartment in Bedford Hills, N.Y., on Feb. 27, 2013. Alerted to the fire, Schaus, the apartment facility's superintendent, kicked the door to the unit in, finding that smoke inside severely restricted visibility. On his second entry, crawling, he found Fitzgerald lying on a bed about 10 feet from the door. Schaus pulled Fitzgerald from the bed and started to drag him to the door, but an ottoman blocked his path. Releasing Fitzgerald, he picked up the ottoman and threw it from the apartment. He then returned to Fitzgerald and dragged him outside, where he used snow from the ground to extinguish flames on his clothing and body. Fitzgerald was taken to the hospital but died there the next day of his injuries. Schaus also required hospital treatment, for smoke inhalation, and he fully recovered.

Municipal park director **Bernard Kozen**, 56, of Tobyhanna, Pa., helped to rescue victims from an armed assault in Saylorsburg, Pa., on Aug. 5, 2013. Kozen and 20 others were at a meeting in a municipal building when a man fired several rounds from a semi-automatic rifle through a window and into the meeting room. The assailant struck six of the victims, mortally wounding three. He then went to a car parked nearby and obtained a revolver.



Mr. Blessen



Mr. Kocker



Mr. Schaus



Mr. Thoele

(continued on page 11)



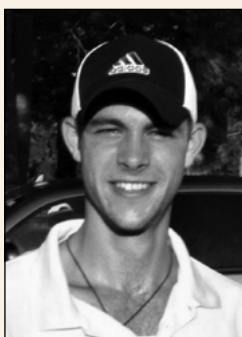
## LATEST AWARDEES

(continued from page 10)

Seeing him approach, Kozen sought refuge in an office near the meeting room. The assailant entered the building and, firing again, went into the meeting room. Kozen stepped from the office and, although a course to the building's front door was open to him, entered the meeting room and charged the assailant from behind. He struggled against the assailant for control of the gun, which fired. A man from the room joined him, and together they overpowered the assailant, disarming and holding him until police arrived and arrested him. (See page 13.)

**Gregory D. Plancich** and **Daniel C. Hardwick** of Vashon, Wash.; **Jim O. Fultz** of Siletz, Ore., and **Wayne Kitt** of Loon Lake, Wash., saved Steven W. Stark and four others from drowning in the Gulf of Alaska off Kodiak Island, Alaska, on Jan. 25, 2012. Stark, 40, was the captain of a fishing boat that became disabled while crossing Alitak Bay during a severe storm before dawn. The vessel capsized and sank, sending Stark and its six other occupants into the frigid water at a point about four miles from the nearer shore. Stark and four others of the crew were able to board a life raft. Alerted to the situation by radio, Plancich, 58, the captain of another commercial fishing vessel, the 101-foot *Tuxedni*, informed his crew, comprising Hardwick, 53, engineer; Fultz, 48, tenderman; and Kitt, 35, deckhand. Despite darkness, sustained winds of 66 m.p.h. gusting to 75 m.p.h. that engendered 25-foot seas, a sub-zero air temperature, and blowing snow, the four men immediately left safe mooring in a bay off the nearer shore. They took the *Tuxedni* about four miles over the course of an hour to the scene. Waves broke over the boat en route, and freezing spray impeded visibility and caused the boat to accumulate ice. After Fultz spotted a light from the life raft, Plancich positioned the *Tuxedni* close to it, using hand signals from Hardwick. Kitt then threw a line to the raft and with Fultz drew it next to the *Tuxedni*. One by one, the five men in the life raft jumped onto the side of the boat, Stark last, timing their jumps to the swells, and then were hauled aboard the *Tuxedni* by its crew. Learning by radio that a Coast Guard helicopter had rescued the two other victims, Plancich and his crew returned the *Tuxedni* through unabated conditions to safe mooring at the nearer shore.

**Samuel Irick**, 24, of Houston, Texas, died after rescuing Amberly A. Wait from an armed assault in Houston on Nov. 11,



Mr. Irick



*Clifford Faraci, right, sustained second-degree burns to his hands and arms in a rescue attempt for which he received the Carnegie Medal. In November, he was given the Arizona Burn Center Hero Award at Maricopa Medical Center, Phoenix, and on hand were doctors and nurses who treated him, including Dr. Kevin Foster, left, director of the burn center. Photo provided as a courtesy by Maricopa Integrated Health System.*

2010. At night, Wait, 44, was standing outside a convenience store, at its service window, when a man approached, laid a hand on her, and asked for her purse. He held what she concluded was a gun against her. Irick, a machinist and college student, had been nearby, pumping gasoline. Wait broke free of the assailant as Irick advanced. As she entered the store for refuge, she heard a confrontation between Irick and the assailant, and then gunfire. The assailant fled, and Irick was next seen by Wait in the store, lying mortally wounded on the floor, where he was being attended by another woman. Irick was taken to the hospital, but he could not be revived.

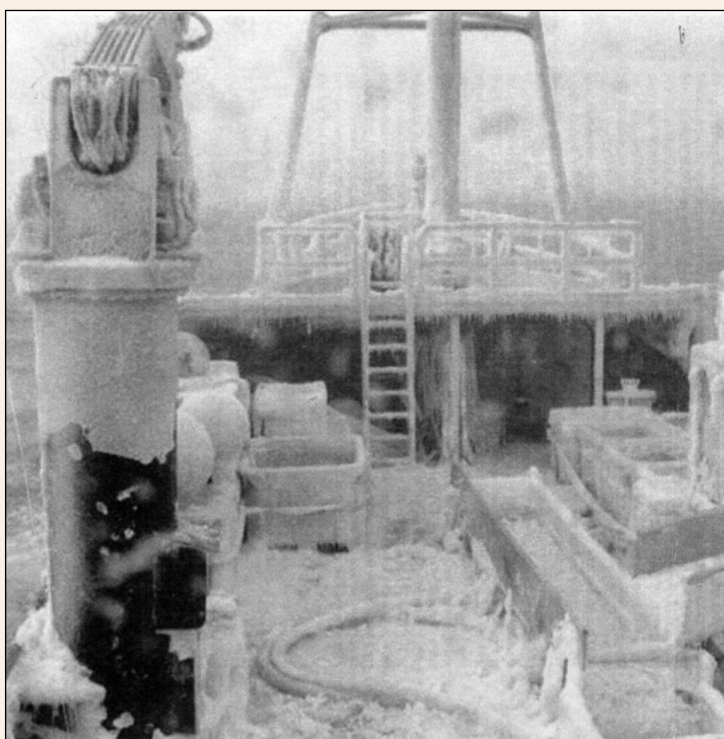
College administrator **Richard L. Blessen**, 45, of Crete, Neb., helped to save Seth Albert and Bryar Alvarado-Meyer from drowning in Duncan Lakes at Duncan, Neb., on Christmas Day, 2013. Seth and Bryar, both 14, broke through ice on the lake at points about 90 and 60 feet, respectively, from the nearer bank and could not extract themselves. Visiting at a home nearby, Blessen heard the boys shouting for help. He took a 17-foot aluminum canoe and flotation devices to the scene and pushed the canoe out onto the ice. Fearing that the ice would not hold, he entered the canoe and advanced across it by using his fingernails against the ice. When the canoe did break through, Blessen used his hands to make a path to Seth. He gave Seth a foam tube, secured a life vest around him, and guided him to an inner tube that was tied to the back of the canoe. Using a paddle, Blessen then broke a path to Bryar, whom he also secured with

a foam tube and life jacket. Neighbors and first responders threw lines to them, and Blessen tied one of the lines to the canoe, after which it was pulled to safety.

**James M. Kocker**, 53, a maintenance manager from Poulsbo, Wash., helped to save Anthony S. Johnson, 30, from drowning in a pond in Ellensburg, Wash., on Oct. 12, 2013. Johnson was the driver of a car that in an accident left the highway and entered a pond. Unconscious, he remained in the driver's seat as the car began to submerge in the six-foot-deep murky and cold water about 50 feet from the bank. Kocker stopped at the scene and swam to the car but was unable to open its doors. He returned to the bank for a tool. After a responding state trooper then swam to the car with Kocker and broke out a rear window, the car sank to its roof. Kocker opened the driver's door and, submerging, entered the car and freed Johnson of his safety belt. He pulled Johnson to the surface and with the trooper swam back to the bank with him. All three men were treated at the scene for exposure to cold water.

Off-duty Los Angeles police officer **Donald E. Thompson**, 54, of West Hills, Calif., rescued William F. McWhorter II, 72, from his burning car after a freeway accident in Los Angeles on Christmas Day, 2013. Unconscious, McWhorter remained in the driver's seat after the car burst into flames at its rear end. Driving to work on the same highway, Thompson witnessed the accident, stopped, and responded to the car's driver's side.

(continued on page 12)



*Four members of the commercial fishing vessel Tuxedni left safe harbor at night during a rough winter storm to effect the rescue of crewmembers of another vessel, which had capsized in the Gulf of Alaska four miles off the coast of Kodiak Island. From left, the rescuers are: Daniel C. Hardwick, Wayne Kitt, Jim O. Fultz, and Gregory C. Plancich, captain. Above, the iced-over deck of the Tuxedni after the rescue. Photo of the rescuers is by Nicole Klauss of the Kodiak Daily Mirror.*

12

## LATEST AWARDEES

(continued from page 11)

Despite significant flames issuing 15 feet from the back of the vehicle and spreading rapidly toward the front, Thompson opened the driver's door, extended his upper body into the car, and felt for McWhorter's safety belt. After sustaining a burn to his right hand and arm, he reached again and released the belt. He grasped McWhorter by the shirt and pulled him from the car. Two other men who responded moved McWhorter to safety. Thompson required medical treatment for burns, including second-degree, to his face, arms, and hand.

Insurance executive **Paul W. Mongiello**, 57, of Overland Park, Kan., rescued Lindsay Simmons and Patrick H. Woodward from a collapsing and burning building after a gas explosion in Kansas City, Mo., on Feb. 19, 2013. Simmons and Woodward were inside the one-story commercial building when natural gas that had leaked into it exploded. The massive explosion caused the building's roof and most of its walls to collapse, and the resulting debris caught fire. Mongiello was driving nearby, and the blast rocked his vehicle. He responded to the scene on foot, walked through the debris to Simmons, and carried her outside to safety. Returning, he learned that the building

was still occupied. Mongiello and another man entered the part of the structure that remained essentially intact and, despite growing flames feeding throughout the remains of the structure, made their way through debris to find Woodward, 33. Mongiello positioned Woodward on his back and carried him outside to safety moments before flames engulfed the wreckage and issued high over it.

**Jonathan A. Barthel**, 21, of Lake Norden, S.D., helped to save Kyan J. and Daniel J. M. Overbo from drowning in Lake Poinsett at Lake Norden on April 21, 2014. After falling into the lake when their canoe tipped, Kyan, 9, sat atop the submerged craft as his father, Overbo, 37, struggled to push it toward the bank. They shouted for help. Sleeping at his home nearby, Barthel, a deputy sheriff then off duty, was alerted and ran, barefoot, about 2,000 feet to the scene. Wearing only gym shorts, Barthel entered the 40-degree water and waded and swam about 150 feet to the canoe. He lifted Kyan from the canoe, swam and waded back toward the bank, and handed Kyan over to his mother. Barthel then returned to Overbo, who, nearly exhausted, had continued toward the bank. He aided Overbo from the lake and took him to his nearby home, where he and Kyan were warmed.

**Clifford Faraci**, 43, a mechanical contractor

from Desert Hills, Ariz., attempted to save Shelby N. Dwyer, 19, from burning after a highway accident in Phoenix, Ariz., on March 14, 2013. Dwyer was trapped in the front-seat area of her car after the multi-vehicle accident. Traveling on the same highway, Faraci stopped at the scene and attempted without success to open the car's driver's door. Then seeing smoke issuing from under the hood, he extended an arm through the window opening to turn the ignition off but could not reach it. As Faraci then extended his upper body into the car to gain access to the switch, the car burst into flames, which enveloped him. Withdrawing, he put out the flames that were on his pants and boots. Faraci turned to go back to the car, but it became engulfed by flames. Dwyer died at the scene, and Faraci required a week's hospitalization for treatment of second-degree burns to his hands and arms.

**Ronnie Lee Moore, Jr.**, of Hortense, Ga., and **John Shannon Gibson** of Woodbine, Ga., rescued Deborah A. Johns from her burning car after a nighttime accident in Waverly, Ga., on Oct. 10, 2013. Johns, 47, was trapped inside the car after it struck a tree and broke into flames at its front end. Moore, 42, a machinist, drove upon the scene and tried to open the car's doors but was not successful. He then flagged down Gibson, 45, a mechanic, who used a fire extinguisher against the flames. With flames persisting, and growing, the men worked to open the driver's door but could not. Although flames by then were spreading inside the car, Moore leaned through the window opening, grasped Johns, and began to pull her from the vehicle but found that her legs were trapped. Gibson extended his upper body through the window opening and freed her legs. The men then removed Johns completely from the car and carried her to safety as flames continued to grow, soon to engulf the vehicle.

**Jeffrey A. Johnson**, 48, a heating and cooling technician from North Freedom, Wis., helped to save Robert J. Schuster from drowning in Lake Mason

(continued on page 13)



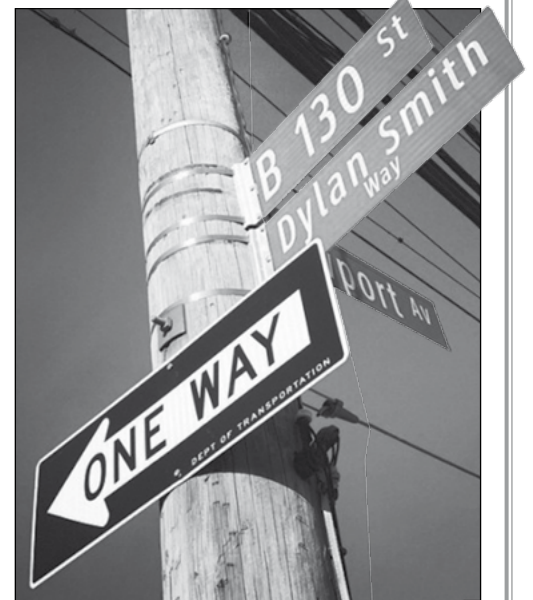
## CHARACTER, COURAGE, AND LOYALTY



Residents of Ross Township, in the Pocono Mountains of northeastern Pennsylvania, rallied last November to erect a playground at the township's Van Buskirk-Haney Community Park. The playground, equipment for which was donated by Playworld Systems, Inc., of Lewisburg, Pa., is dedicated to the victims of an assault that took place at the adjacent township offices on Aug. 5, 2013. Township supervisors were meeting that evening when an enraged man opened fire on them from outside the building. **Bernard Kozen** of Tobyhanna, Pa., a municipal park director, was one of 21 attending the meeting. He sought refuge during the gunfire, but then, after the gunman re-armed, entered

the building, and started to shoot again, he charged the assailant from behind and with another man took him to the floor and secured him until police arrived. Three people died in the assault.

For his heroic actions, Kozen was awarded the Carnegie Medal in December (see page 10), and last April he was presented the Little League International Character, Courage, and Loyalty award at the organization's 26th international congress in Minneapolis, Minn. (pictured). Then-Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett had this to say about Kozen, a Little League volunteer since 1984: "While we lost great Pennsylvanians in the tragedy....Mr. Kozen's bravery and action, in the face of such adversity, make me proud to congratulate him."



## DYLAN'S WAY

A street in the Rockaway Beach neighborhood of New York City has been renamed in honor of Carnegie Medal awardee **Dylan Patrick Smith**. As Hurricane Sandy was bearing down on the northeast coast on Oct. 29, 2012, Smith, 22, a university student, and a neighbor, **Michael T. McDonnell**, teamed up to help six people through floodwaters as they escaped their burning houses in Rockaway Beach. Both men were awarded the medal in late 2013, but the honor was posthumous in Smith's case, as he died after the rescue in a surfing accident. The community named the corner of Beach 130th Street and Newport Avenue "Dylan Smith Way." It's "way" instead of "street" joked Smith's mother during a ceremony, because Dylan had to have things his way.

13

## LATEST AWARDEES

(continued from page 12)

at Briggsville, Wis., on April 5, 2014. While ice fishing, Schuster, 80, broke through ice at a point about 300 feet from the closer bank. He shouted for help. Johnson, on the bank in that vicinity, saw him and called 911. He then pushed a 12-foot branch in front of him as he walked toward Schuster and slid the branch toward him, but it fell short. Johnson returned to the bank, found a nine-foot wooden frame, and advanced toward Schuster a second time, pushing on the frame to distribute his weight. Getting closer that time, Johnson extended the frame to Schuster, and Schuster grabbed it. As Johnson attempted to pull Schuster from the water, he too broke through. Firefighters arrived shortly and pulled Schuster, and then Johnson, from the water and returned them to the bank. Both required emergency-room treatment for hypothermia.



## Carnegie Hero rose above a poverty-stricken and lonely childhood

By Cynthia Soule  
Aiken, S.C.

As a young girl, I remember hearing my mother say that her father had rescued two girls from drowning when he was in high school. For this, he received the Carnegie Medal and a \$2,000 grant.

What I didn't realize was the impact that award had on my grandfather's life. I recently became interested in learning more about this man, who died more than 50 years ago, when I was only six. Ancestry searches and a box from my uncle yielded a glimpse into the life of a man I barely remember but now am proud to call my grandfather.

14

**August H. G. Hanson** was born to Swedish immigrants on Aug. 10, 1889, in Duluth, Minn. His parents came separately from Sweden and met and married the year before August was born. Hard times fell on the young family; August's mother died after the birth of a second child, and his father turned to alcohol, perhaps to deaden the pain of his wife's death and the overwhelming responsibility of caring for two little boys alone in a foreign country. As he did not or would not work, the boys survived by shining shoes, selling newspapers, and getting scraps of food from a nearby restaurant.

When a member of a local humane society became aware of their plight, the boys were placed in the Minnesota State Public School for Dependent and Neglected Children in Owatonna. Shortly after their arrival, the boys' father died. Hans Jager, a school employee, saw potential in young August and made him a part of his family. There, August received the nurture of a loving

### YOUNG HERO IS REWARDED

RECEIVES TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS IN CASH AND MEDAL FOR  
SAVING TWO LIVES.



High school graduation, 1909



Navy induction, 1917

home, where education was emphasized and sports, music, skating, and swimming were included.

On Nov. 30, 1907, August, then 18, was ice skating with other teens on the Straight River in Owatonna. Two girls, Bertie L. Borden, 17, and Hazel M. Shaw, 15, broke through the ice in separate places about 40 feet from the bank. Neither could swim.

They cried for help, and August responded by skating to them. He hooked his hockey stick onto Bertie's coat and pulled her close enough to draw her out. When someone then slid an eight-foot plank to him, he crawled out on it toward Hazel but broke through the ice himself. He managed to hold to both the plank and Hazel, who panicked and caused them to flounder. Calming and supporting her, August grasped a rope that was thrown to them, and both were pulled to safety.

The heroic act was reported to the Hero Fund by P. J. Kuntz, superintendent of Owatonna Public Schools, and August's award was made in 1908, the Commission stipulating that the grant was to be used for educational purpose before he reached 25. Using some of the Carnegie funds, August attended Carleton College, Northfield, Minn., his foster father's alma mater. He studied for three years but became dissatisfied and transferred to the University of Minnesota. He did not graduate and for the next few years raised flowers for a nursery and worked at an implement dealer.

By 1917, World War I was raging. August enlisted in the Navy and married within a month. He was assigned to travel with the Navy Band as a drummer until his discharge in 1919. During that time, his young wife succumbed to the 1918 influenza epidemic—August was not able to get home before she died. While in the Navy, he pondered his future and, realizing his love of plants and drawing, decided to pursue a degree in

University of Illinois band, 1920

YOUNG HERO WHO EARNED \$2,000 AND  
A CARNEGIE HERO MEDAL BY BRAVERY





FROM THE ARCHIVES

*to distinguished 30-year career in landscaping U.S. capital parks*



*Ms. Borden,  
spared from  
drowning*



*August H. G. Hanson, holding tree, at a "save-the-trees"  
dedication in Washington, D.C., October, 1951.*

landscape architecture. He hoped to use remaining funds from Carnegie but realized that he was past the stated age limit. On appeal to the Hero Fund, his request was granted. I am particularly grateful that the members of the Commission were not just about "rules" but about helping people who had earned opportunity. Such was my grandfather.

August entered the University of Illinois as a 30-year-old freshman and kept strict records of every penny given to him by the Commission. I am privileged to have those records, and as I read them, I am keenly aware of my grandfather's determination, integrity, and self-discipline. In addition to his studies and a part-time job, he played all four years in the university's concert band. He graduated in 1924 at almost 35 years old, married again, and had a son. He worked for a landscape firm and as a park superintendent before accepting a landscape architect position with National Capital Parks in Washington, D.C. It was there that my mother was born and where I grew up. August endured heartache once more when my grandmother passed away, but, not giving up on love, he married again, in 1954, and knew happiness with the third Mrs. Hanson until his death.

While with the Park Service, my grandfather had key roles in beautifying our nation's capital. He was primarily responsible for landscaping the Jefferson Memorial; my mother remembers going with him to choose the trees and shrubs which grace that lovely site. He designed landscaping for the Carter Barron Amphitheater,

Lafayette Park, and Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. He added the golden statues at the entrance to Memorial Avenue leading to Arlington Cemetery and helped bring additional cherry blossom trees to the tidal basin. He was a noted expert on roses, was active in the Potomac Rose Society, and worked to establish a National Rose Garden. He also served in several local garden clubs and loved being involved in growing all types of flora. August retired in 1959 after working for the Park Service for 30 years. Unfortunately, he did not enjoy retirement for long, dying of cancer in early 1961.

My grandfather persevered through a poverty-stricken and lonely childhood, choosing to rise above his circumstances. He learned to value life through the example of his loving foster family and risked his own life for that of others, setting in motion the process that enabled him to get an education and establish a career. That career continues to benefit all who visit Washington, D.C. today. One man's vision in 1904 to recognize acts of heroism has resulted in thousands of success stories like this one and serve to remind us of the impact our lives could have on present and future generations. ☒



*Ms. Soule, at the Jefferson Memorial,  
Washington, D.C., during the Cherry  
Blossom Festival.*

**Carnegie Hero Fund Commission**

436 Seventh Ave., Ste. 1101 • Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1841

412-281-1302 • 800-447-8900

www.carnegiehero.org

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Pittsburgh, PA  
Permit No. 2461

**Address Service Requested**

NOTICES: © Carnegie Hero Fund Commission and/or its suppliers, 2014, U.S.A. All rights reserved. This newsletter is governed by our terms & conditions (see <http://carnegiehero.org/terms-conditions/>), including our privacy notice (see <http://carnegiehero.org/privacy-policy/>) (or direct an inquiry to us directly by using the above contact information).

*imPULSE* is a periodic newsletter of the CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION, a private operating foundation established in 1904 by Andrew Carnegie. • The Hero Fund awards the CARNEGIE MEDAL to those throughout the United States and Canada who risk their lives to an extraordinary degree while saving or attempting to save the lives of others. • The Commission also provides financial assistance, which may include scholarship aid and continuing grants, to the heroes and to the dependents of those awardees who are disabled or die as the result of their heroic acts.

Further information is available on-line or by contacting the Commission.

**Any ideas?** *imPULSE* welcomes your submissions for publication, and your ideas for consideration. Be in touch!

**Address change?** Please keep us posted!

**Carnegie Hero Fund Commission**

436 Seventh Ave., Ste. 1101 • Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1841

Editor: Walter F. Rutkowski, President

Telephone: 412-281-1302 Toll-free: 800-447-8900

Fax: 412-281-5751

E-mail: [carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org](mailto:carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org)[impulse@carnegiehero.org](mailto:impulse@carnegiehero.org)Website: [www.carnegiehero.org](http://www.carnegiehero.org)**MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION**

A. H. Burchfield III

Robert J. Cindrich

David McL. Hillman

Linda T. Hills

*Of the Carnegie Family*

Peter J. Lambrou

Mark Laskow

*Chair*

Nathalie Lemieux

Christopher R. McCrady

Priscilla J. McCrady

*Vice Chair*

Ann M. McGuinn

Nancy L. Rackoff

Frank Brooks Robinson

Dan D. Sandman

*Treasurer*

Arthur M. Scully

Michael A. Thompson

Sybil P. Veeder

*Chair, Executive Committee*

Joseph C. Walton

Susanne C. Wean

Thomas L. Wentling, Jr.

*Chair, Finance Committee***HONORARY MEMBERS**

William P. Snyder III

James M. Walton

**THE QUOTABLE A.C.**

*No man becomes rich unless  
he enriches others.*

*Bust of Andrew Carnegie is displayed in the Great Hall of Skibo, the Carnegie Family's former summer home in the Highlands of Scotland.*

**CONTINUUM**

**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](mailto:susan@carnegiehero.org)) or write her at the address given below.

**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 Myrna Braun ([myrna@carnegiehero.org](mailto:myrna@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 Doug Chambers ([doug@carnegiehero.org](mailto:doug@carnegiehero.org)).

**ANNUAL REPORTS** Copies of the Hero Fund's most recent annual reports (2013-2014) are available by contacting Gloria Barber ([gloria@carnegiehero.org](mailto:gloria@carnegiehero.org)).

**A CENTURY OF HEROES** The centennial book describing the first 100 years of the Hero Fund is available through the Commission's website ([www.carnegiehero.org](http://www.carnegiehero.org)).

**imPULSE ON LINE?** Should you wish to receive imPULSE in PDF rather than in your mailbox, let us know: [impulse@carnegiehero.org](mailto:impulse@carnegiehero.org)

**CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION**

436 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1101, Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1841

Telephone: (412) 281-1302 Toll free: (800) 447-8900

Fax: (412)-281-5751

E-mail: [carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org](mailto:carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org)Website: [www.carnegiehero.org](http://www.carnegiehero.org)