



imPULSE

A Periodic Newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission ISSUE 1 • 2005

WHAT A GOLDEN IMPULSE

That's how Historian David McCullough described the immediate response of those who voluntarily take on great risk of life to save the lives others.

It's also a thought first expressed by Andrew Carnegie, who knew well that "heroic action is impulsive," a quote carried on the first pages of the Hero Fund's annual report over the years.

Impulse naturally suggested itself for the name of this new publication, a periodic newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission. By it we hope to stay in touch with awardees of the Carnegie Medal but moreso to report on the actions of those who put the well-being of others above that of themselves.

The name also suggests a rhythm of vibrancy, which is exactly how we'd like the newsletter—and for that matter, the Commission's work—to be known.

Welcome to imPULSE! Your feedback is solicited and will be quite welcome. Be in touch:

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2004 ANNUAL REPORT

The Commission's 2004 Annual Report is due off the presses any day now and is available for your review.

Featured in the report are the case resumes of the 105 persons from throughout the United States and Canada who were awarded the Carnegie Medal last year. A special feature of the book is the listing of all 8,869 persons who have been cited over the life of the Fund.

Copies of the report will be sent automatically to the 2004 awardees. Others wishing to have a copy may contact the office or direct an email to impulse@carnegiehero.org.

A Century of Heroes, An Evening of Celebration

More than 800 people filed into Carnegie Music Hall in Pittsburgh early in the evening of October 16, 2004, to be a part of the signature event, A Century of Heroes, marking the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission by Andrew Carnegie.

The evening, which was the culmination of several years of planning by members of the Commission's Centenary Committee and its staff, maintained as its goal the sentiment expressed by Carnegie himself: "...watching, applauding, and supporting heroic action wherever displayed and (by) whomever displayed..." The evening served also to reaffirm the Commission's commitment to honoring those whom Carnegie called "heroes of peace."

The major attraction of the evening was a talk—Heroes Among Us—by Pulitzer Prize-winning author and historian David McCullough, a Pittsburgh native and friend to many of those in attendance. Introduced by Commission President Mark Laskow, McCullough, known as the nation's "historian laureate," prefaced his remarks by acknowledging the presence of his two older brothers in the audience, Hax and George, calling them his "first two heroes."

"Big brothers are important for the lessons they teach," he said. "They teach you to fetch...to sit...to stay...to mind your manners."

On a more serious note, McCullough told the gathering, "We celebrate heroes because we like to think that we too, given the chance if the moment would come, would be equally courageous and selfless. We celebrate heroes because we need them. A nation without heroes would be a nation in very deep trouble. But we must make no mistake about what a hero is. A hero is not a celebrity—the term is misused constantly. A hero does what he or she does at great risk. (continued on page 2)



Alfred W. "Burr" Wishart, left, chair of the Commission's Centenary Committee, and Mark Laskow, right, Commission President, with Historian David McCullough, featured speaker.

Photo courtesy of Pittsburgh Tribune-Review.



A Century of Heroes, An Evening of Celebration

(continued)



2

FROM TOP:

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputies John Augustus Rose II, left, and Paul J. Archambault receive their Carnegie Medals from Mark Laskow, Commission President.

Sculptor Luigi Badia of Somers, N.Y., designed the centennial issue of the Carnegie Medal.

Enrico D. Davanzati of Butler, Pa., received a Carnegie Medal for saving a friend from a fatal fall in 1968.

Melvin E. Windsor was one of four men to be awarded the medal for their role in saving victims of the Air Florida jet crash in Washington, D.C., in 1982. With him is wife Maureen.

RIGHT:

The majestic Hall of Architecture in the Carnegie Museum of Pittsburgh was the setting for the Commission's formal 100th anniversary observance. The 250 guests included recipients of the Carnegie Medal and family members of deceased awardees.

"We are here to honor people who are willing to sacrifice everything, on impulse perhaps, but what a golden impulse, to preserve the individual life that's threatened."

Near the end of his hour-long address, McCullough asked, "Why do people do these things at the moment that they do? Why would someone try to pull a person out of a burning automobile at risk at his or her own life? Why would someone jump into a raging river to save someone else from drowning?"

"I think it has something to do with how they were raised. I often think long and hard of the fact that some children grow up and some children are raised—we need more raising of children. We need more attention to what children are learning beside athletics or the names of the states and their capitals. We hear arguments and read discussions about whether we should be teaching values in schools. Of course we should be teaching values in the schools, and certainly that's what the Founding Fathers had in mind."

Following McCullough's presentation, Alfred W. "Burr" Wishart, Jr., chair of the Centenary Committee, introduced the film, *A Century Of Heroes*, which was produced to debut at the observance. He thanked the family of the late Benjamin R. Fisher, Jr., for its generous gift that made the film possible. Fisher was a member of the Commission at the time of his death in 2002 and served as the original Centenary Committee chair. He was preceded on the board by his father, Benjamin R. Fisher, Sr., and uncle, Aiken W. Fisher.

Following the film, Laskow introduced 36 awardees of the medal and family members of deceased awardees who were present. As each stood, from seats throughout the hall, heads of those assembled turned and craned, most unaware until then that sitting inconspicuously nearby were individuals who, at some point in their lives, had voluntarily assumed extraordinary life risk in behalf of others.

When the last awardee was named, the audience, seemingly awed by the moment, rose spontaneously and applauded for several minutes to acknowledge those who had been honored.

The Commission then hosted a private dinner for 250 guests in the adjoining Hall of Architecture. A highlight of the program that followed was the presentation of Carnegie Medals to Paul J. Archambault of Corona, Calif., and John Augustus Rose II of Upland, Calif., both deputies with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. The men had effected the dramatic rescue of a suicidal woman from a major forest fire in the Angeles National Forest on September 1, 2002.

If reaction to the evening indicated it was successful (see "To the Hero Fund," this issue), it was due in no small part to the dedication of the Centenary Committee and the skills of staffers Douglas R. Chambers and Eileen J. Locasale-White. In addition to Wishart and Laskow, Committee members were Elizabeth H. Genter, Ann M. McGuinn, Nancy L. Rackoff, and Thomas L. Wentling, Jr.



David McCullough, standing left, is shown with his "first two heroes," his older brothers Hax, seated, and George.



Acknowledging the success of the event, Laskow concluded that "Something good is happening here." He took the opportunity to frame an expansion of the Commission's scope, whereby the organization would seek ways "to tell the stories of our heroes as real-life illustrations of the best we have within us as human beings." Not a bad start, in other words, for our second hundred years. ☐

The Carnegie Medal: A new look to celebrate the centennial

MUCH REMAINED UNCHANGED AT THE CARNEGIE HERO FUND OVER ITS FIRST CENTURY. ONE SUCH CONSTANT WAS THE DESIGN OF THE CARNEGIE MEDAL.

The Commission viewed 2004, its centennial year, as the appropriate time to update the appearance of the medal. Many of the medal's elements were left intact—the bust of Andrew Carnegie, the cartouche (inscription plate) on the reverse of the medal, and the Biblical inscription that circles the medal's edge. A few changes were introduced in the 2004 issue: A banner—1904 One Hundred Years 2004—was placed on the front of the medal, and the seal of Newfoundland on the medal's obverse was removed, Newfoundland having become a province of Canada since the inception of the Hero Fund. Now, only the seals of the U.S. and Canada, the Hero Fund's field of operation, are shown.

The new look of medal led to another idea—the striking of a limited edition medal to commemorate the centennial. “We wanted to have a permanently circulating cultural artifact,” said Commission President Mark Laskow in proposing the project. He felt that a commemorative medal could continue to draw attention to the organization, the Carnegie Medal, and the awardees.

To preserve the uniqueness of the Carnegie Medal, the commemorative medal was struck in a smaller size, 2.5 inches in diameter, as compared with the three-inch size of the awardees' medal. The commemorative also has a bright, silver proof finish, in contrast to the burnished bronze finish of the Carnegie Medal. On the cartouche are embossed these words:

**Commemorative Medal • Celebrating A Century of Heroes
1904-2004 • Carnegie Hero Fund Commission**

In all other respects, the commemorative medal matches the awardees' medal. Just 500 commemorative medals were struck, and each one has been numbered on its rim (1 to 500). Each handsomely displayed in a blue velvet box, the medals were first made available to the public at the August 2004 show of the American Numismatic Association held in Pittsburgh. The medals have become popular with collectors and especially with awardees and their family members.

“Medal No.1” was to be reserved for a special person. The Commission decided that it should be presented to an awardee as representative of all those who have been recognized by the Hero Fund, but it also sought to draw attention to one aspect of the work as envisioned by Andrew Carnegie. In writing the founding Deed of Trust, Carnegie said that he wished “to place those following peaceful vocations, who have been injured in heroic effort to save human life, in somewhat better positions pecuniarily than before, until able to work again.”

George D. Hemphill of Union Mills, N.C., was severely injured, to the point of disability, in his rescue attempt of 1954. In addition to being awarded the Carnegie Medal, he became eligible for ongoing financial assistance from the Hero Fund, and it was partially with this help that Hemphill was able to keep the family farm in western North Carolina. The farm had been operating for nearly 100 years, and Hemphill was able to keep it going for another 50. Both the farm and he are still running strong.

At the Commission's formal centennial observance in October, Laskow presented Hemphill with the first commemorative medal. Joining Hemphill that evening were his wife Athala and daughter Donna. Donna later wrote of the family's gratitude for the honor, and in describing her father she said that “He would, today, jump into the unknown for someone else again. It is who he is.”

Carnegie once said he delighted in hearing about such heroes. We know he would be most pleased to see that his benevolence is still benefiting such wonderful people like George and his family. ☒



Mark Laskow (left) presents the first Carnegie Hero Fund Commission Centennial Commemorative Medal to 1955 Carnegie Medal Awardee George D. Hemphill of Union Mills, N.C.



FROM TOP:

The Carnegie Hero Fund Commission Centennial Commemorative Medal

Original look of the Carnegie Medal through 2003

Centennial version of the Carnegie Medal, given to 2004 awardees

The commemorative medal may be purchased by visiting our website (www.carnegiehero.org) and clicking on the “100th Anniversary Commemorative Medal” icon. The site links to Cybercoins.net, the Commission's exclusive sales agent.



IN OTHER WORKS

BOARD NOTES

WHY INDEED

By Mark Laskow, President
Carnegie Hero Fund Commission



Recently I received a call from a writer for *Good Housekeeping* magazine. She was writing an article on “everyday heroes” and wanted to spend a minute getting a short quote—just one or two sentences. That sounded easy, until she asked her question: “Why do heroes do it?”

Why indeed? Andrew Carnegie and his first Hero Fund Commissioners crafted an elegant but tough test for their hero medal: A rescuer must leave a place of safety and knowingly risk death in an attempt to save the life of another, all without any obligation to act. We are not talking about sports heroes here. We are talking about people who make both a mortal and a moral choice.

It is a mortal choice because it may cost the rescuers their lives, and often it does. About 20 percent of our awardees died in their rescue attempt. It is a moral choice because the rescuer is not obligated to act. For example, we do not make awards to professional rescuers acting in the course of their duties. We do not make awards where the rescuer is saving his or her own life in the process.

This makes the question, “Why do heroes do it?” even more difficult.

I believe that the potential for heroism is a critical component of man’s spiritual nature, a capacity that sets him apart from the other species of God’s creation. The “Carnegie definition” of a hero has a tough requirement of informed, conscious choice.

Mr. Carnegie suggested that our social evolution—our culture, religion, and civilization—has made it more possible for individuals to act heroically. In the Deed of Trust establishing the Hero Fund, he wrote, *We live in a heroic age. Not seldom are we thrilled by deeds of heroism where men or women are injured or lose their lives in attempting to preserve or rescue their fellows; such the heroes of civilization. The heroes of barbarism maimed or killed theirs.*

So then, what about us? Could any of us be such a hero? Why do some act, while others watch? That is a question that can be answered only by the actual circumstances, but we can thank our heroes for the inspiration that they provide.

The patron saint of libraries

Although he called the Hero Fund “my pet,” Founder Andrew Carnegie was the benefactor of a wide range of philanthropic institutions, including one that mirrored his love of reading: The libraries.

“The taste for reading is one of the most precious possessions of life,” he said, and in keeping with that belief, he established more than 2,500 libraries in the United States and abroad. Carnegie’s first library was built in the place of his birth, Dunfermline, Scotland, in 1881. In the United States, he established more than 1,600 libraries, locating them in all states except Rhode Island.

Carnegie’s love of books was enhanced when he worked as a messenger boy in Pittsburgh after he and his family emigrated from Scotland in 1848.

Messengers worked hard and there was little time or money for what Carnegie called “self-improvement.” When a local man, Col. James Anderson, announced that he would open his library of 400 books to the neighborhood boys, Carnegie was overjoyed.

“In this way the windows were opened in the walls of my dungeon,” Carnegie wrote in his autobiography, and “the light of knowledge streamed in. Every day’s toil and even the long hours of night service were lightened by the book which I carried about with me and read in the intervals that could be snatched from duty. And the future was made bright by the thought that when Saturday came a new volume could be obtained.”

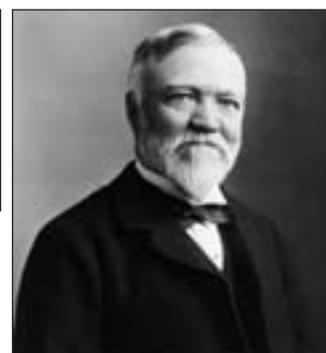
All told, Carnegie donated more than \$56 million for the libraries. Each was a collaborative effort—prospective communities had to demonstrate a need for a public library, provide the building site, and promise to support library services and maintenance with tax funds equal to 10 percent of the grant annually. For good reason Carnegie became known as the “patron saint” of libraries.

Theodore Jones writes in *Carnegie Libraries Across America: A Public Legacy*: “In many towns, Carnegie libraries were the only large public buildings, and they became hubs of social activities like concerts, lectures, and meetings and did double duty as museums and community storehouses.” The Carnegie Library of Homestead, Pa., built in 1898, includes a library, athletic club, music hall, and even an indoor heated pool. Housed in a stately French Renaissance building, the library has as its mission to “inspire the mind, enhance the body and bring delight to the spirit of our community.” BOOK ROOM Susan L. Marcy, Case Investigator



TOP: Statue honoring Col. Anderson is in Pittsburgh’s North Side, outside that neighborhood’s Carnegie Library. Formerly the city of Allegheny, the neighborhood is where the Carnegie family settled after emigrating from Scotland.

The Carnegie Library of Homestead, Pa., overlooks the site of one of Carnegie’s steel plants along the Monongahela River just outside of Pittsburgh.



Andrew Carnegie, “patron saint” of libraries.

A Century of Heroes

IT WAS IN AUGUST OF 2000 AT THE FIRST MEETING OF THE COMMISSION'S CENTENARY COMMITTEE THAT THE IDEA FOR A BOOK TO COMMEMORATE THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HERO FUND SURFACED.

But "a book" remained only an idea for nearly two years before more serious thought was given to it. Even then, what form it might take, its length, production values, and many other issues were largely undecided. Quickly, though, the idea took on meaningful shape when Douglas R. Chambers joined the Commission's staff to spearhead the project and other centennial-related initiatives.

The book was seen to feature a brief biography of Andrew Carnegie; the early history of the Commission, including the disaster at the Harwick Mine, which was the catalyst for the benefaction that Carnegie would call his "ain bairn" (own child), and of course it would share accounts of heroic acts and the unique relationships formed by the Commission with its beneficiaries. A total of 100 pages should be enough, it was reasoned.

More than two years later, in mid-September of 2004, a 240-page tome—heavily illustrated with photos and drawings and including many extra chapters—rolled off the presses. As is probably common when an organization rich in history such as the Hero Fund is thoroughly researched, discoveries were made of unknown or forgotten documents and other writings, leading to their inevitable inclusion. A major article in *The New Yorker* in 1970 by Calvin Trillin, on legendary case investigator Herb Eyman, for example, was reprinted on permission granted by Trillin.

New resources were also discovered. Peter Krass, author of *Carnegie*, a large, detailed biography, became a friend of the Commission and agreed to write the book's foreword. Dr. Samuel P. Oliner, emeritus professor of sociology at Humboldt State University, Arcata, Calif., and an expert on altruistic behavior, contributed a chapter exploring the reasons heroes risk their lives. Maj. Gen. Perry Smith (USAF, ret.), son-in-law of Jimmie Dyess, the only person to be awarded both the Carnegie Medal and the Medal of Honor, wrote about this World War II hero. And family members of other deceased heroes offered old photos and memorabilia.

Most significantly, the focus remained on the heroes and their extraordinary acts of courage. "We realized that we could not feature all 8,764 cases recognized by the Commission in its first 100 years," Chambers said. "But how do you choose when all awardees have met the same requirements for the medal? Choose we did, however.

"In one section, 70 cases involving more than 100 heroes are profiled, representative, we believe, of the entire group of awardees." Several other cases are written about more extensively throughout the book, which, in all, carries the names of 184 heroes.

Chambers said also that no thought was given early on that the book might have commercial appeal. But the University of Pittsburgh Press became keenly interested when it learned of the book's development. The Press eventually featured the book in its major 2004 sales catalog.

A Century Of Heroes is a fitting tribute to the 8,764 individuals awarded the Carnegie Medal in the Commission's first century, and to those who will be so honored in the years to come.

Copies may be purchased through the Commission's website, www.carnegiehero.org.



TO THE HERO FUND

The centennial was a moving and memorable occasion. Thank you for your kindness and hospitality. On our tour of the Allegheny area, it was fascinating to visit the cemeteries and to see the memorials of the people who have shaped Pittsburgh. (We) didn't know the whereabouts of William and Margaret Carnegie's graves and it seems there was no record of it in Andrew Carnegie's Birthplace Museum. There is now, thanks to you.

I gave a report to the trustees at our meeting last week. Their sights are now firmly fixed on the Medals of Philanthropy ceremony to be held in Edinburgh next year and the special meeting for representatives of the Hero Funds to be held here in Dunfermline on 5th October.

Jessie T. R. Spittal • Life Trustee, Carnegie Dunfermline and Hero Fund Trusts, Dunfermline, Scotland

To be in a room with so many individuals who have been awarded the Carnegie Medal, and to learn of those who have passed on attempting to save a life, was a very humbling experience. You should take great pride in your work, as you have made a difference in the lives of many through your charitable contributions.

My wife Paula, a teacher, intends to use the film as part of a teaching block for her sixth-grade students. Character development, by teaching values and morals, needs to be taught in every school, as it is too often not taught at home. The goal is to emphasize the importance of selflessness and helping others. The centennial book and video will provide a history of examples. Continue to acknowledge heroes and their fine works as your award is the most respected and treasured.

Jeffrey D. Miller • Lockport, N.Y.

People have told me from time to time that my mother [Katherine Mansfield Hoopes, 1932 awardee] was a special person, but I don't remember much as she was an invalid off and on with a very weak heart much of the time until she died in 1943 when I was 10. I knew about the medal of course and it has been one of my most prized possessions since it was given to me by my father some years ago. But the event happened in 1931 before I was born and all I know about the rescue is what is on the medal and in a few newspaper clips.

The 100-year celebration was memorable. My wife Susan and my daughters Katie and Pamela and I thank you so much for the invitation and in particular I thank you for honoring me as a surviving relative of an awardee. We were all very proud to be included.

Ted Hoopes • Fox Chapel, Pa.

(continued on page 6)



What happened?

By Jeffrey A. Dooley, Investigations Manager
Carnegie Hero Fund Commission



Having a keen interest in science and being curious by nature, I need to know “what happened.”

Those qualities come in handy in my job as the Commission’s investigations manager, a post I’ve held for 14 years, having first been a case investigator for six years. I’ve seen a lot, but I never cease to be amazed by the quantity of good deeds that take place in the U. S. and Canada.

The Commission’s four-person investigative unit processes and researches about 800 nominations each year. In doing so, we find it vital to maintain the standards of excellence that have evolved and been refined over the past 101 years. Those standards compose the bedrock of the investigative process and serve to maintain the integrity of the award.

The nuts and bolts of the job are pretty straightforward. Packets of news clippings describing acts of heroism from throughout the United States and Canada arrive on my desk twice a week—in a typical year we may get about 4,000 articles. After selecting those accounts that appear to be awardable, we begin the case-research process.

We attempt to get as much documentation of the case as we can—police and fire department reports, witness statements (sometimes as transcribed from trial proceedings), maps, photographs—in order to determine not only “what happened” but to see if the incident meets awarding requirements. To do so, we generate thousands of letters and make hundreds of telephone calls annually. Once a “critical mass” of data is compiled, the case is reviewed for in-house decision. If consensus is that the case is still awardable, the file is handed over to one of the investigators for a more intensive scrutiny, which includes telephone interviews, Internet searches, further correspondence—almost any means to get just the facts.

The investigators’ finished product is a report—the case minute—that is submitted to the Commission’s awarding body, its Executive Committee. The final decision is made there; over the life of the Fund, about 11 percent of the nominated cases have gone on to receive recognition.

The work is challenging but enjoyable. Too, it is gratifying to have reinforced that whenever a person is in trouble and desperately needs assistance, another person, most likely a stranger, will probably step forward and give of themselves fully. That altruistic quality, that sense of kinship, is what I have found to endure, and it is what Carnegie sought to recognize. I’m proud to play a part in that legacy. ☞

LET ME TESTIFY THAT IF THERE BE, IN THIS WORLD OF FORMS,
DOCUMENTS AND FILING CABINETS, ANY SORT OF OFFICIAL REPORT WORTHY
OF REGARD AS A LITERARY FORM UNTO ITSELF, IT MUST BE A CARNEGIE HERO FUND
FIELD REPORT. SOME I HAVE CONSULTED RUN TO A DOZEN OR MORE LEGAL-SIZED,
SINGLE-SPACED PAGES: GREAT, GRAY REGIONS OF TIGHTLY PACKED WORDS, NAMES,
AND NUMBERS—BUT HOW THE SUSPENSE BUILDS AND THE DRAMA LEAPS
FROM THOSE HEAVILY-LADEN PAGES OF FACT AFTER FACT AFTER FACT!

Jack Markowitz, A Walk of the Crust of Hell, 1973, Stephen Greene Press

TO THE HERO FUND (continued)

The most unexpected and poignant part of the gathering was the feelings we had at being in the company of other Carnegie heroes and their spouses, widows, and children. We had never met another Carnegie hero before. I have been told of the bond that soldiers have after fighting together; I did not realize that bond would exist between the heroes and spouses. However, it did. We could feel it.

The caring of the Commission is such a huge part of what makes it so special. Years ago you made a big difference in our lives by paying college loans and giving money for Dan’s master’s degree [Daniel E. Stockwell, awarded in both 1964 and 1992]. Next June he will retire after using that degree to be a school administrator for 36 years. He has been an outstanding one—and you helped him get his start.

Merry Stockwell • Roxbury, N.H.

It was great to hear about the centennial events. We thought the DVD was an excellent production in every way—the Commission came over as a very friendly and sympathetic organization, and you did a good job in recalling, finding, and interviewing so many interesting and articulate and interesting heroes and heroines. We thought it was quite the best—and admirably judged for length—of the Carnegie programmes we’ve seen.

*Fred Mann • Formerly of Carnegie Hero Fund Trust
Dunfermline, Scotland*

In every aspect, (the Commission’s centennial celebration) was appropriate, humble, dignified, oriented toward honoring heroes, not self-congratulatory. Both the book and the film will make a fine contribution to civic awareness.

Bill and Peggy Blackburn • Naples, Fla.

Momma [Carolyn M. Kelly, 2003 awardee] had a marvelous time in Pittsburgh. Perhaps the best part of the weekend was for “our heroes” to just have time to visit amongst themselves. One daughter told me that her father never liked to discuss his event...these people needed to be together this once in their lifetimes.

Caroline Kelly Tait • Shreveport, La.

We have returned hale and hearty to Berne, having liked very much our sojourn to Pittsburgh—the town, the hotel, the official celebration, the impressive scenery. We will keep you in memory.

*Hans-Ruedi Hübscher • Carnegie Hero Foundation
Berne, Switzerland*

What a lovely, perfect anniversary. I’m sure “Mr. Andrew” would not have changed anything. Thank you for including us. We just arrived home, and I couldn’t wait to tell you how grateful we are. We will cherish the award of the Carnegie Medal forever. It is so special.

Athala [Mrs. George D.] Hemphill • Union Mills, N.C.

A hands-on Florida natural

Jimmie Michael Acreman—“Mike” to everyone who knows him—is a powerfully built, 240-pound man with strong and toughened hands that serve him well as a mechanic at a large citrus processing plant operated by a cooperative, Florida’s Natural Growers, in Lake Wales, Fla.

Acreman was taking a break from that job just before midnight on November 15, 2002, when he heard an explosion, which came from a house across the street from the plant. He responded to the scene and found about 20 people watching the fire that resulted from the ignition of propane gas that had leaked into the structure. Acreman quickly learned an 84-year-old man was trapped on the side porch.

Without hesitation, Acreman approached the house, scaled a piece of roof debris, and then dropped through a hole in the debris to the porch. He found the man, whose upper body was seriously burned. Acreman beat at flames on the man’s waist with his cap, but the cap’s plastic bill started to melt and blister his hands. Continuing to beat at the flames, Acreman called several times for help, then he lifted the 189-pound man through the opening in the roof. Having to bend back some nails in the timber with his hands, he passed the elderly victim to two men on the other side of the debris. They took him to safety as Acreman clambered from the burning structure himself. Sadly, the man died of his injuries the following day. Acreman escaped with only minor burns to his hands.

Acreman was awarded the Carnegie Medal on March 11, 2004, and last November the Commission personally presented it to him at a ceremony in the Grove House, his employer’s visitor center. A reserved man and unaccustomed to being singled out, he was more than a little self-conscious when the medal was given to him in front of 50 family members, friends, coworkers, the plant’s senior management, local and state government officials, and firefighters who had responded to the fire.

Acreman’s wife Susie related to the group that she and Acreman have become friends of the victim’s children, who repeatedly express their gratitude for Acreman’s life-risking actions. As with many awardees, Acreman does not consider what he did to be all that special. The Commission and those gathered for the ceremony—especially his wife and five children—obviously know different. Acreman is one of only 306 Floridians to be awarded the medal over the past 100 years, and the first from Lake Wales. ❏



Jimmie Michael Acreman, center, receives his Carnegie Medal from, at left, Stephen Caruso, chief executive officer of Florida’s Natural Growers, and Douglas R. Chambers of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission.

LISTEN NOW

The Armed Forces Radio Network (AFRN) reaches a worldwide audience of some five million service men and women and civilian listeners each week.

What does that have to do with the Carnegie Hero Fund? Every day AFRN listeners are hearing a different 90-second broadcast recounting a heroic act by one of the awardees of the Carnegie Medal. U.S. and Canada-based listeners are not being left out—nearly 100 public radio stations in these countries are or will be carrying the programs. The flagship station for the broadcasts is the National Public Radio station in Pittsburgh, WDUQ 90.5 FM.

David Bear, the voice of *The Traveler’s Journal*, a show that aired daily for many years on NPR stations and the AFRN, produced the series as part of the Hero Fund’s centennial observance. The accounts, 100 in all, are narrated by Bear, along with Barbara Sieck-Taylor, a Pittsburgh actor. Each station in the network will air the programs on a schedule of its choosing.

Readers of *imPULSE* can hear the accounts at any time by visiting the Hero Fund’s website (www.carnegiehero.org) and clicking on the “Listen Now” icon on the homepage.

The Commission is most grateful to MSA Company for a generous grant that underwrote a major portion of the program’s cost. Pittsburgh-based MSA is the largest company in the world dedicated solely to producing a complete range of equipment and systems for worker and plant protection.

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 persons 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:

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

On the morning of August 9, 1910, New York City Mayor William J. Gaynor was on the deck of a German steamship docked at Hoboken, N.J., exchanging goodbyes with some members of his cabinet about 15 minutes before the ship was to depart for Europe. In his first year as mayor, Gaynor was planning to spend a month-long vacation abroad.

Among those city officials was the "commissioner of street cleaning," William H. Edwards. Known as "Big Bill," Edwards, 33, stood six feet tall and weighed 300 pounds. As an All-American football guard at Princeton 10 years earlier, his name was known throughout the nation even before he assumed a position of prominence with the city.

Gaynor and Edwards were conversing when a 57-year-old man, a discharged New York City employee, approached Gaynor from behind and fired a .38-caliber revolver, striking him in the right side of his neck. The mayor managed not to fall.

The crowd of passengers and last-minute well-wishers went temporarily silent, but Edwards saw the assailant with his gun hand still raised. Edwards lunged at him

and wrapped his arms around the man's torso moments before two other city officials grasped him. The four men struggled, and the assailant fell onto his back with Edwards atop him. The gun discharged a second time, and that bullet grazed Edwards's left arm. Before the men managed to remove the assailant's revolver, he fired a third time, but the bullet struck no one.

The assailant was finally subdued, but by then the crowd aboard ship became combative and called for immediate justice—someone even yelled that the assailant be thrown overboard. Edwards, having overpowered the assailant, now sought to control the crowd. At last police officers reached the scene and apprehended the assailant, and within months a court would convict him of assault charges.

Gaynor was treated at a hospital, but the bullet was not removed from his neck. He appeared to recover, but three years later died suddenly from what were believed to be effects of the shooting. Edwards was awarded a silver Carnegie Medal. He held public office at both city and federal levels before his death in 1943 at age 66.

 *Martin E. Ross, Case Investigator*



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