One of the first things Daniel E. Stockwell remembers about splashing into the water off Maine’s Fox Island decades ago was how cold it was. Just earlier, the huge waves had pulled two fellow Bates College students into the undertow, one of whom had been swept away trying to save the other. Standing in a crowd of spectators, Stockwell, then in his junior year, jumped in after them—managing to bring one safely to shore.

As principal of Monadnock High School, East Swanzey, N.H., he also walked into a classroom where, in 1991, a teenager held roughly 15 children hostage with a rifle. And, in 2005, when a recurrence of cancer handed him a death’s sentence, he did exactly what he had done before. He dove into battle.

Stockwell, 64, of Roxbury, speaks of his heroic deeds simply, in a voice that can be hard to hear. But according to family members, it is this quality of calm and focus—rather than

(continued on page 2)
Mr. Stitch, with family

later when in 1991 Stockwell freed 15 seventh-grade students who were being held at gunpoint in a classroom of the school where Stockwell was principal.

The other double awardees:

• Rudell Stitch, a professional boxer from Prospect, Ky., who helped to save a man from drowning in the Ohio River at Louisville, Ky., on Sept. 16, 1958. Less than two years later, on June 5, 1960, Stitch, 27, died attempting to save another man from drowning at the same spot. Stitch left a widow and six small children, and they became beneficiaries of Hero Fund assistance for a time.

• John J. O’Neill, Sr., of Yonkers, N.Y., a highway maintenance employee, who twice rescued women who had fallen into the Hudson River from the Yonkers City Pier. The rescues occurred on May 5, 1954, and Dec. 29, 1956.

• Henry Naumann, a railroad crossing watchman from Hammond, Ind., who was struck by a train each time he acted to rescue women attempting to cross the tracks in Hammond. The first heroic act, on June 16, 1924, was successful, but Naumann lost his right leg in the second incident, on March 30, 1927, in which the victim died of her injuries.

Twice a hero

(continued from cover)

any superhuman prowess—that makes him capable of great deeds. “I think he has an inordinate ability to focus and draw from his inner strength,” said his wife, Merry, 63, who was at his side for the Maine rescue. Son Michael R. Stockwell, 27, described him in similar terms, “He’s able to keep his head under pressure.”

This was certainly evident that morning in 1991 after a former student fired shots in the Monadnock High School cafeteria, and Stockwell—the school principal—made a series of quick decisions that prevented probable disaster. He had the foresight to advise a coworker against pulling the fire alarm because it might put children in the gunman’s path. And after voluntarily entering the classroom, he managed to calmly convince the teenage gunman to release the children while he remained hostage.

“I didn’t know how the hell I was going to get out of there,” said Stockwell, who remembers having to force the belief that he was about to die from his mind. Still, when the gunman told him his “demands”—a stereo and his friend—Stockwell was clear-headed enough to relay the message through an open window instead of over the public address system. By moving to the window, he realized, the boy would have to turn his back to the police officer Stockwell had spotted outside the classroom. Moments later, the crisis was averted.

But fighting cancer was different, as a course of action wasn’t as clear as jumping in the ocean or opening a door. And, as Merry said, with cancer, her husband had more time to think about the danger. “He’s always felt some measure of control when things have happened to him in the past,” Michael said. “He could always see what had to be done … and with cancer, there really wasn’t any clear path.”

In 2005, after Stockwell had undergone surgery and chemotherapy for lung cancer, doctors discovered cancer in the spine. Not shying away from grim reality, Stockwell pressed a doctor to tell him “how it was going to happen.” His answer was that the disease would likely spread through his body, “like grass seeds” in wind.

But what the lack of medical cure told them, Stockwell said, was that they had to explore alternatives. Again, Stockwell looked inward—only this time in a more formalized process, through meditation. “For me to tell you what I’ve done and that meditation is a cure, I can’t say that,” Stockwell said. But he does know how certain he felt one day last year when he was struck by an overwhelming sense that his cancer was gone.

In May 2006, he asked for another scan, and it showed no detectable sign of the disease. Another test revealed the same result last October—about a month after Stockwell started feeling the pains that would lead to yet another daunting diagnosis: coronary disease. But today, after receiving a stent, a small tube that helps to keep an artery open, and graduating from a rehabilitation program at a wellness center, Stockwell is doing great, Merry said.

Since last summer, the couple has shared its story to New Hampshire Unitarian congregations—although, Merry said, they would be happy to speak to anyone who would invite them, in an effort to give hope to others. “We don’t do this to say, ‘we found the answer to cancer,’” Merry said. “We just try to share how we, as one couple, chose to meet the challenge.”

And although Stockwell is the first to admit that he has no idea exactly what caused the apparent change in his health, he does believe that people have an internal force—and when he tapped into that force, he said, good things started to happen.

But still, neither Stockwell nor his wife is counting their chickens. “No one has said that he is cancer-free… It just has not done what they said it was going to do,” said Merry, who nevertheless plans to keep her husband around for another 30 years. “I don’t call myself a survivor. I say I’m surviving,” Stockwell said. And, in the meantime, he remains the only living man to have won the Carnegie Medal of Heroism twice. 

(Reprinted with permission.)
Construction is underway on a new headquarters facility that will house Andrew Carnegie’s four United Kingdom-based trusts under one roof in Dunfermline, Scotland. The construction site is in Pittencreiff Park—itself a gift from Carnegie to the city—and is not far from the weaver’s cottage in which Carnegie, in his time the richest man in the world, was born to humble circumstance in 1835.

“Cutting the first sod”—groundbreaking—for the project was held in December, with Carnegie’s great-grandson, William Thomson, and his wife Tina, taking part. Thomson is the honorary president of Carnegie’s United Kingdom and Ireland Trust, one of the building’s future occupants, and is overseeing the trusts’ relocation, hoped for in November of this year. The four trusts are now housed in three separate locations in Dunfermline.

In a nod to historical significance, Thomson used the spade that Carnegie used in 1904 to plant trees in the park. The spade was last used, also to plant a tree, in 1934 by Barbara Miller, one of Carnegie’s four grandchildren and the mother of Linda T. Hills, of the Hero Fund board. Hills and her family and Thomson’s children represented the Carnegie Family at the building’s site dedication in October 2005.

To cost $4 million, the new structure will be pavilion-like in design, owing to its park location, according to the Glasgow-based architects. It will feature curved timber and glass elevations (continued on page 4)

Designed by architects Page/Park of Glasgow, the Andrew Carnegie House will be an environmentally friendly building nestled in a park setting in Dunfermline, Carnegie’s hometown.

William Thomson and his wife Tina “cut the first sod” in the groundbreaking of a new building in Scotland to house Andrew Carnegie’s four U.K.-based trusts. Thomson is Carnegie’s great-grandson.
CARNEGIE GREAT-GRANDDAUGHTER
NEWEST MEMBER OF COMMISSION
(continued from cover)
undertakes in life,” Thomson said. “She will become a very valuable addition to your board.

“I have known Linda since she was 5 and my memory of her is that she was already pretty good at organizing! Over the years we have all been aware of Linda’s loving concern for our rather large extended family both in the U.S. and here in G.B.”

Hills, 59, says she is eager to serve on the Hero Fund board. “It is truly an honor to be able to read about individuals who living their daily life are really the unsung heroes of our society,” she said. “Through their character and moral fortitude, they sacrifice or show they are willing to sacrifice all for another human being. I can see it will be a really rewarding and profoundly meaningful experience to be part of what my great-grandfather so long ago understood was worthy of recognition. It is very exciting to share in this.”

One of the 15 Carnegie great-grandchildren (13 of whom survive), Hills joins a few of her cousins who are also board members of some of the 24 trusts and institutions established by Grandpa ‘Naigie a century ago. She first met Hero Fund representa-
tives during the dedication of a Carnegie site in Dunfermline, Scotland, two years ago (see related story, page 3), and she displayed great interest in learning more of the Commission’s work on a subsequent visit to Pittsburgh.

Born in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., raised in Summit, N.J., and formerly of Granby, Colo., Hills is a graduate of The Orme School, Mayer, Ariz., where she was valedictorian of the 1965 class. She is also a gradu-
ate of Pomona College, Claremont, Calif., where she received a bachelor’s degree in botany. A horti-
culturalist for more than 35 years, Hills worked in the floral industry and is a “passionate gardener.” Inspired at an early age by her father, Lemert G. Thorell, a native of Sweden who was a captain for Pan American Airways, she is a world traveler, most recently having returned from her second trip to Southeast Asia.

Hills and her husband of 35 years, Harold, are the parents of three: Scott Roswell, 26; Louise Margaret, 24; and James Whitfield, 19. The children’s names reflect their heritage: “Roswell” was the name of Carnegie’s son-in-law; “Louise” and “Margaret” were the names of his wife and daughter, respectively; and “Whitfield” was his wife’s maiden name.

The link to Carnegie for Hills is through her mother, Barbara Miller Lawson, who was one of four children of Carnegie’s daughter, an only child. In 1961, Lawson and her husband Bill settled on a working cattle ranch in Granby that remains in the family.

NEW HOME IN SCOTLAND
(continued from page 3)
in a spiral-and-circle design that will have a natural bond with its setting to form an “organic” installation. The building will also employ the latest in environmentally friendly green technology, with the use of sustainable timber throughout, a geo-

thermal heat pump to reduce energy costs, and a physical orientation to capture maximum solar gain. Local craftsmen and labor will be used.

Incorporated with the design is a Tiffany window that was commissioned by Carnegie in 1913 as a memorial to his parents, William and Margaret Morrison Carnegie, who are buried in Pittsburgh. The four trusts, of the 24 established by Carnegie in Europe and the U.S., that are to set into the new ‘Andrew Carnegie House’ are:

• The Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland, established in 1901. The trust supports the improvement and expansion of the 13 universities in Scotland as well as the education of Scottish students attending them.

• The Carnegie Dunfermline Trust, established in 1903 to benefit the inhabitants of the city through the support of education, sports, arts, heritage, culture, welfare, and recreation. The trust also oversees the Carnegie Birthplace Museum, located in the family cottage.

• The Hero Fund Trust for the U.K., Ireland, and the Channel Islands, established in 1908 to recognize those ill-affected by the performance of heroic lifesaving acts.

• The Carnegie U.K. Trust, established in 1913 to address the changing needs of the people of Great Britain and Ireland through the support of educational, arts, and social development programs.

Abby Park House, Dunfermline, is current home to Carnegie’s Dunfermline and Hero Fund trusts.

BURNING ENERGY TO CONSERVE IT
Benjamin Saks, Carnegie Medal awardee and an architecture major at Carnegie Mellon University (founded by Andrew Carnegie as Carnegie Technical Schools in 1900), Pittsburgh, is playing a key role in the university’s participation in a national competition to design, build, and operate the most attractive and energy-efficient solar-powered home. His team is one of 20 selected by the U.S. Department of Energy to compete in the 2007 Solar Decathlon.

The project takes a lot of Saks’s own energy and, along with his regular course work, keeps him so busy that the Hero Fund had a tough time scheduling him for the presentation of his medal, the awarding of which was announced in September. Late in the afternoon of Feb. 20, of course after classes, Saks was joined by his proud family, a few of his professors, and several classmates for the presentation. The Commission was represented by Douglas R. Chambers, director of external affairs, and Susan L. Marcy, who investigated the case.

Saks, originally from the Cleveland, Ohio, area, was recognized for going to the aid of a Pittsburgh police officer a year earlier, on Feb. 25, 2006. Attempting to apprehend a suspect, the officer pursued and tack-
led him to the pavement outside Saks’s residence. Saks, then 21, witnessed a fair amount of this action, and as the officer struggled with the suspect, Saks asked if he needed help. He then approached and lay across the suspect’s legs to hold him down. The man grasped the officer’s gun and fired it, the bullet striking Saks in the left hand. Realizing he had been shot, Saks stood and backed away as other officers arrived to subdue the suspect. Saks’s wound required 20 stitches, but he is now fully recovered.

The house that Saks’s team is building will be showcased and judged along with the others on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in October. The house will then be moved to a nature reserve near Pittsburgh to become a permanent installation. (Lower photo courtesy of ThePittsburghChannel.com)
Palm Beach museum lecture honors three medal awardees

Dr. L. Rodger Currie, a winter resident of Palm Beach, Fla., was presented his Carnegie Medal this spring for a summertime act of heroism, by which he helped to save six persons from a burning yacht in Nantucket Sound. The award was announced last fall (see the December 2006 issue of imPULSE).

At age 81, Currie, a retired dentist, teamed up with a friend, Richard J. Gallagher, then 54, the fire commissioner of Hyannis Port, Mass., to effect the July 2005 rescue. Gallagher was also awarded the medal.

The presentation ceremony was held at Whitehall, the mansion of Henry M. Flagler, who was the “Gilded Age” developer of the Florida East Coast Railway. Two blocks from Currie’s home, Whitehall now houses the Flagler Museum, a new program of which is an annual lecture by a representative of the Hero Fund. Museum executive director John M. Blades conceived the program, recognizing that Hero Fund founder Andrew Carnegie and Flagler were contemporaries in the era between the Civil War and the Great Depression.

This year’s lecture was by Douglas R. Chambers, the Commission’s director of external affairs, who gave the history of the Hero Fund, citing specific cases. Alluding to the rescue act of Floridian Kerry D. Reardon, who jumped from a bridge to rescue a boy from a submerged vehicle in Tampa Bay in 2005, Chambers surprised the crowd by introducing the hero. The 2006 medal awardee and his family were attending the lecture from their home, in St. Petersburg, as was awardee Joseph Anthony Alaimo of West Palm Beach.

Alaimo had been cited for his role in saving a girl from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean at Palm Beach, and his medal was also presented at Whitehall, in 2005. That gave Blades the idea for an annual event.

Others who represented the Commission at this year’s lecture were its vice president, Priscilla J. McCrady, and retired board member S. Richard Brand, of Key Largo, Fla. Last year’s inaugural presentation was given by Commission president Mark Laskow and executive director Walter F. Rutkowski.

The right thing

My father passed away on May 2, 2006. I have his medal now and have always thought it illustrated the kind of man he was. He did not have a lot to say. He always let his life and the work that you do. The Hero Fund is not widely known but is undoubtedly treasured by every recipient. I don’t know that I would have known about the award were it not for my great-grandfather, who was a recipient. The award resulted in my grandmother attending college, meeting my grandfather...you can figure out the rest!

As I read about the many acts of courage among our “ordinary people” [in the Commission’s annual report], I am always overwhelmed with a sense of pride and hope for our future. Once read, I leave the report in a public area where it can be reviewed by others. I know that my small token of appreciation is minuscule given the totality of the fund; however, I feel it is necessary to at least cover the cost of my copy of the report. Please know that your efforts are appreciated!

Karen Albert • Vienna, Va.

(Note: The writer’s great-grandfather, Earl R. Albert, was awarded the medal for attempting to save a woman from drowning in the Delaware River at Camden, N.J., in 1927. The woman was saved by others, but Albert, 29, drowned.)

Community encouragement

Your recognition of heroes is admirable, and I would like to share your stories with my community.

We have had a lot of crime in our neighborhood. The police do all they can to help, but their territory is large and they are rarely in the neighborhood except to take reports after crimes occur.

I believed we could do better, so I started looking into what is working elsewhere to implement it here. As I was learning about new crimes, I realized many of them could have been prevented if only my neighbors knew exactly what was occurring. I started a community email distribution, but my news, while intending to help prevent future crimes, is not uplifting. I’ve seen neighbors being held up with a gun, beaten, robbed, pistol-whipped, and tied up.

To balance my news to the community, I would like to end each report with an inspiring story of ordinary people who did extraordinary things for others. Since you are reporting and recognizing people that have courage and put the good of others above their own safety, I would like to share these stories—it will allow me to report the dangers in my neighborhood but always end on a positive note.

To the Hero Fund

I am writing to let you know how much I appreciate the work that you do. The Hero Fund is not widely known but is undoubtedly treasured by every recipient. I don’t know that I would have known about the award were it not for my great-grandfather, who was a recipient. The award resulted in my grandmother attending college, meeting my grandfather...you can figure out the rest!

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Karen Albert • Vienna, Va.

(continued on page 7)
The quandary of naming heroes

By Thomas L. Wentling, Jr., Board Member • Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

Who am I to decide who is a hero and who is not?

After 16 years on the Commission, I think about that at least once during each of the five annual Executive Committee meetings, at which we review the 20-or-so cases the staff has presented for consideration. By the time a case gets to the committee, generally one or two years have passed since “the event”—enough time for our investigators to interview participants, witnesses, law enforcement, and anyone else who can substantiate, corroborate, or lend perspective to the heroic act. That the case has survived to this point is not taken lightly by the trustees, as we have great respect for the skills and judgment of our investigators.

But neither does the case get a rubber stamp. The trustees bring a wide variety of perspectives and life experiences to bear upon the fact set. We have read the abstracts of the cases prior to the meeting, and our role is to probe and discuss them before making a decision. We have the raw case data at hand to answer any question that arises, at least insofar as any event shrouded in chaos and fear allows for accurate reconstruction.

There are 21 committee members, 14 male and seven female, of whom 12 on average attend any given meeting and vet the cases. While certainly larger-than-life heroes to our spouses, children, and household pets, Carnegie heroes we are not, and therein lies my quandary. Who am I to vote against someone whose actions I don’t think measure up? Insufficient life risk…but he didn’t go back in…she couldn’t have known the dangers…anyone in a similar situation would have done the same thing…and so on.

How could we know what it must have been like? Obviously we can’t, but the twin crucibles—one investigative, relentless, and at ground level (the factual report), the other a step removed and with a different perspective, adding insight, experience, and impression (the analysis)—form a rigorous and, we hope, nearly foolproof gauntlet, so that when you read that someone has received a Carnegie Medal, you know that anyone in a similar situation would have done the same thing…and so on.

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TO THE HERO FUND (continued from page 5)

way he lived it speak for itself. He kept his medal in his dresser drawer, not out of false humility but because what he did was what he expected of himself (and me and my brothers as well). Do the right thing because it is the right thing, not for any reward that might come from it. I am proud to be his son.

Gary E. Davis • Springville, Ala.

(Note: Horace A. Davis, crane operator, was 33 in 1981 when he helped to save a workman who was pinned at the bottom of a 60-foot-deep well in Chalkville, Ala.)

CHARGE A FEE

I must say that there are publications “out there” that are certainly not as noteworthy OR as newsworthy as imPULSE and that charge a bundle for a subscription. The latest issue was simply excellent, encouraging, and inescapably thought provoking. I realize that the Commission is non-profit…and perhaps is so well funded that it doesn’t NEED this, but I would suggest a campaign of sorts to promote the newsletter for a small subscription fee with exceptions to the immediate surviving heirs of Carnegie Medal recipients. (Regardless, I would be thrilled to pay a modest sum to help fund something like I have suggested.) Every elementary school in America should be provided with copies of this newsletter and a Carnegie-sponsored program such as Mrs. Miller initiated in her school [see March 2007 issue]. We have become a nation faced with few heroes rising from the public forum. It is the quiet men and women who are the true heroes. The school character program is an outstanding idea, particularly since the times have brought our nation to a virtual standstill for the lack of character except in the case of “everyman.” It is the day-to-day struggling people simply seeking to live and let live where we find true heroes.

Stella Taylor • Cypress, Texas

(Note: Ms. Taylor’s grandfather, Forest W. McNei, was awarded the medal for helping to save a firefighter who was stranded on a ladder outside a burning building in Houston in 1910. The rescue was described in the September 2006 issue of imPULSE.)

ACADEMIC REVENGE

I’m a professor at Moorpark College, a community college in California, where I teach a social psychology class. We have a unit on prosocial behavior, looking at the steps people go through before they decide to help others. Last year, after asking the class about their heroes, I was frustrated to hear that they all named sports and entertainment figures who hadn’t done anything that could be considered heroic. In plotting “academic revenge,” I decided to go to your Website for assistance. I found it!

I printed off the names and stories of each of the heroes, then divided the class into small groups and gave each group a hero or set of heroes. The group had to summarize the heroic action and relate it to the concepts in the chapter about the decision process.

(continued on page 11)
LATEST AWARDEES
OF THE CARNEGIE MEDAL

Since the last issue of imPULSE, the following 39 individuals have been awarded the Carnegie Medal, bringing the total number of recipients to 9,092 since the Hero Fund’s inception in 1904. The latest awards, which were announced on March 15 and May 3, are detailed on the Commission’s Website at www.carnegiehero.org.

Francisco Santiago, 30, a wire technician, rescued his neighbor Teresa A. Scortino, 52, from an attacking dog in Waterbury, Conn., on March 6 of last year. A 100-pound male pit bull attacked Scortino in her backyard, biting her severely about the legs. Santiago witnessed the attack and, armed with only a three-foot piece of wood, began to strike the dog. The dog turned on Santiago, darting at his legs and snapping. When the dog finally fled the yard, Santiago aided Scortino into his house, where they awaited an ambulance and police.

Retiree Thurston Duke, 74, rescued Clint A. Folgate from a burning pickup truck after a nighttime highway accident outside Duke’s house in Muncie, Ind., on Nov. 30, 2005. Severely injured and semiconscious, Folgate, 49, remained in the cab after the accident. Despite high flames issuing from the rear of the pickup and along its driver’s side, Duke leaned through the window of the passenger door, grasped Folgate, who was aflame, and dragged him to safety. Duke suffered minor burns to his hands.

Alarie Ronald Davis died a day after saving his wife Victoria from an armed assailant in Detroit, Mich., on Feb. 26 last year. Ms. Davis, 53, was sitting in the couple’s car, waiting for her husband, when a man armed with a shotgun opened the driver’s door and got inside. He told her he was taking the car. Davis, 54, disabled maintenance worker, responded from across the street and struggled with the assailant. The assailant, who had just killed a woman in a church during services, shot Davis, mortally wounding him, and left the scene.

Jay P. Johansen of Cranston, R.I., saved Sandra A. Stephenson from a burning apartment house in Cranston on Jan. 4, 2006. Stephenson, 57, was trying to escape from the third floor of the building but was nearly overcome on the second floor by dense smoke. Driving by, Johansen, 35, correctional officer, discovered the fire and learned that Stephenson was unaccounted for. He entered the building, crawled up to the stairs, and found her. With Stephenson clinging to his neck, Johansen returned downstairs and outside to safety.

Towboat captain Charles Lee Montgomery and his crew of Donald LeRoy Brown, Robert F. M. Cormann, and Thomas W. Siegler saved two men from drowning in the Ohio River at Industry, Pa., on Jan. 9, 2005. George A. Zappone, 44, and John A. Thomas, Sr., 35, were crewmembers of a towboat that was swept by the extremely swift current through an open gate of a dam at night. The boat came to rest upright in very turbulent water below the dam, at a point about 30 feet from the structure, and the men held to a ladder affixed to its pilothouse for more than an hour as they shouted for help. Montgomery, 41, of East Liverpool, Ohio, was the pilot of a towboat that was moored downstream. Learning of the accident, he took his boat to the scene, accompanied by Brown, 24, lead deckhand, of Aliquippa, Pa.; Cormann, 36, deckhand, of East Liverpool; and Siegler, 47, lead deckhand, of Washington, Pa. Montgomery positioned his vessel in the turbulent water in close proximity to the submerged one and worked to hold it from being drawn to the dam by a strong back flow. From the swamped lower deck, the other crewmen threw life rings to Zappone and Thomas and pulled them aboard. Montgomery then rode his boat with the downstream current and took it to the safety of a nearby power plant. Four other men aboard the stricken vessel died in the accident.

Neighbors Henry H. Garvey III and Gregory Deighan helped to save a workman from suffocating in a below-ground cistern in Newburyport, Mass., on Aug. 20, 2005. Ezekiel T. Wentworth, 24, was working with a sealant in the eight-foot-deep concrete cistern, which was located under the utility room of a house. Sealant vapors ignited, causing an explosion that rendered him unconscious and severely burned him. Garvey, 42, manager, and Deighan, 43, data sales manager, responded. Garvey entered the cistern three times before he was able to drag Wentworth to a ladder at the cistern hatch. Deighan then entered the cistern, and he and Garvey hoisted Wentworth up to others. Both rescuers required hospital treatment for smoke inhalation.

Patrick Shane Pace of Lago Vista, Texas, saved Barbara C. Vidlund, 52, from her burning house in Leander, Texas, on April 15 last year. Pace, 31, a police officer, was dispatched to the fire, which was outside his jurisdiction. Despite 20-foot flames issuing from the rear of the doublewide mobile home, he entered three times before finding Vidlund semiconscious and sitting on the living room floor. Grabbing her by her clothing, Pace dragged her to the door, then removed her from the house with help from another man.

Retired coach Duane Damron, 71, of Bakersfield, Calif., saved a man from being struck by a shifting mobile home while on a mission trip in Gulfport, Miss., on Dec. 12, 2005. Damron and Curtis A. Nemetz, 26, were installing a mobile home for victims of Hurricane Katrina when the structure shifted toward Nemetz. Damron lunged at him from a kneeling position and pulled him away. That end of the unit dropped to the ground, pinning Damron by the hand. He required two months’ hospitalization for treatment of severe injury to that hand.

Off-duty firefighter Brian D. Rothell, 42, of Richmond, Va., helped to keep a man from falling 50 feet from a bridge into the shallow James River in Richmond on March 25, 2006. Rothell and others held the suicidal man against the bridge railing but could not lift him to the deck. Rothell then climbed over the railing and secured himself to the bridge by hooking one leg through the railing. He reached toward the man and, although the man outweighed him by 55 pounds, helped lift him up to the top of the railing, where the others pulled him to safety. (See photo.)

Keith R. Miller of Ocean, N.J., helped to save Carlos Hernandez, 21, from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean at Avon by the Sea, N.J., on Feb. 11 of last year. Fully attired, Hernandez, 21, was yelling and struggling at a point about 300 feet from shore. Miller, 64, marketing consultant, saw him while jogging nearby. He stripped down to his running tights, entered the 40-degree water, and swam to Hernandez, who outweighed him. Miller towed him toward shore, en route being met by a police officer. All made it to safety.

Racecar driver Stephen David Sliva, 33, of Daytona Beach, Fla., saved a 92-year-old woman from her crashed and burning automobile in Daytona Beach on May 10, 2006. Merry C. Banks was trapped in the car after it struck an electrical ground station and caught fire at its front end. Sliva responded by bicycle. He got Banks to unlock the front passenger door, then he kneled on the seat, released her safety belt, and pulled her from the car. He ran with her to safety, an explosive rush of flame shortly filling the car’s interior.

James P. Daigle, Jr., sustained second-degree burns saving his grandmother, Ruby H. LeCompte, 89, from her burning house in Houma, La., on Feb. 12 last year. Daigle, 37, a police detective, was alerted to the night-time fire next door and responded immediately. As he ushered LeCompte from her bedroom and through a hall, they fell amidst flaming debris, and Daigle’s shirt caught fire. Regaining his footing, Daigle took LeCompte outside to safety before the house was engulfed by flames. Daigle was hospitalized overnight for treatment of burns to his back.
John C. Springer, 62, a legal administrator from Alexandria, Va., rescued Jeanne Hobbs, 37, from a man who was attacking her with a knife in her office at a retirement home in Alexandria. Springer was visiting at the facility when he heard Hobbs scream. He approached the office, grabbed the assailant by an arm, and struggled with him, Hobbs fleeing to safety. The man cut Springer about the head extensively before going to another wing on that floor. He similarly attacked four elderly patients before he was subdued by Amadu Jalloh, 39, of Alexandria, and Jane Margaret Dow, 59, of Arlington, Va., both of whom also were visiting. Dow, an editor, produced a canister of pepper spray, which she and Jalloh, a home health aide, used against the assailant. The assailant struck Dow, sending her to the floor, before he was disarmed by Jalloh. Police arrived shortly and arrested him. Springer required 48 sutures to close his wounds.

Justin Frederick Zurilla of Baltimore, Md., saved a 2-year-old boy from an overturned and burning sport utility vehicle after an accident in Rossville, Md., on May 19, 2005. Jayden M. Shird remained strapped in his car seat as flames began to enter the passenger compartment. Zurilla, 34, a mortgage broker, entered the vehicle on his back through its broken-out rear window. He positioned himself underneath Jayden and worked to free him from his seat. He then handed the boy through the window and left the vehicle for safety.

Atty. W. John Funk, 59, of Gilmanton, N.H., saved Jason M. Young, 16, and Samantha L. Redman, 15, from a burning pickup truck on June 30, 2005, after a nighttime accident not far from Funk’s home. After the pickup struck a tree and caught fire, Funk ran to the scene, entered the bed of the vehicle, and pulled Jason through the rear window of the cab. He then partially entered the truck through the window of the driver’s door, grasped Samantha, who was unconscious, and pulled her out. The teens were injured in the accident but not burned.

Michael Sanchez, 33, a mechanic from Homestead, Fla., died attempting to save four children from drowning in a man-made lake at a condominium complex in Sterling Heights, Mich., on July 20, 2006. Mattic was in his car as it began to submerge about 125 feet from the bank. Other men attempting a rescue submerged together. The trio was drowned. The children were found and rescued.

Matthew J. Emmerling, 21, a student at Pennsylvania State University, and Kevin J. Mahoney, 22, a university lifeguard, saved Seth L. Mattleman, 20, and other students from their burning house in State College on April 2, 2006. Fire broke out before dawn on the back porch of the house and, spreading rapidly, entered the structure, including into Mattleman’s bedroom. Emmerling, of State College, and Mahoney, now of Columbus, Ohio, entered the house through the front door, shouting to alert its occupants, some of whom fled. They then went to Mattleman’s room. Emmerling grasped Mattleman about the arms and pulled him out the front door, then he and Mahoney re-entered the house and went upstairs. Finding a disoriented man in a bathroom, Mahoney pulled him to the stairs, and they stumbled part way down before exiting the structure along with Emmerling. Flames destroyed the building. (See photo.)

Obed M. Petties, Jr., an 18-year-old construction worker from Detroit, Mich., died attempting to help save Petter Matic, 64, from drowning in a retention pond in Sterling Heights, Mich., on July 20, 2006. Matic was in his car as it began to submerge about 125 feet from the bank. Other men attempting a rescue submerged together. The trio was drowned. The children were found and rescued.

Oscar A. Leiva, now of Reno, Nev., saved two neighbors from a burning house in Tracy, Calif., on Nov. 29, 2005. Lynn Bloom and Mary M. Rocha, 92, were inside a one-story house after fire broke out in a front room. Working outside, Leiva, 34, a forklift operator, responded to the house and kicked in the front door. He found Bloom in dense smoke in the living room and walked her outside. Re-entering, he found Rocha in a rear bedroom. He picked her up and carried her out the back door to safety. Leiva was treated for smoke inhalation. (continued on page 10)
James J. Blount III of Chesapeake, Va., may be a volunteer and a professional firefighter, but he was off duty on July 19, 2006, when he witnessed a major highway accident on a bridge in Suffolk, Va. He saved the lives of both drivers involved. Photo courtesy of Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue.

Richard Stauffeneker, a mason from New Ipswich, N.H., pulled a man from a burning truck after a highway accident in New Ipswich on May 4 of last year. Joseph P. Gruda, 26, was the driver of the truck, which carried at least 130 gallons of fuel. It overturned onto a pickup, and the wreckage caught fire. Stauffeneker, 36, witnessed the accident. He pulled the truck's windshield away, partially entered the cab, and freed Gruda's legs, which were pinned. He worked to dislodge Gruda while the flames grew, then guided him to safety. (See photo.)

Sales representative David R. Sauter, 50, of Canandaigua, N.Y., helped to save a woman from drowning after her car entered the Erie Canal in Pittsford, N.Y., last May 25. Ethel Hannah, 60, tried to escape the car, but it submerged 52 feet from the bank in water about 12 feet deep. Sauter witnessed the accident. He swam to the car, reached down, and, grasping Hannah by the collar, pulled her to the surface. En route to the bank, he had difficulty in the cold water. Two other men entered the canal and took Hannah to safety, Sauter following.

Christopher Alan Duggan, 31, of Prospect, N.S., saved Darian S. H. Mansfield, 8, from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean on Sept. 2, 2005, at Lawrencetown, N.S., and he died attempting to save her brother Adam R., 12. The children were carried away from shore by a very strong current. Duggan, a family friend, swam to them and toved Darian to safety on a nearby point of land, then he turned back for Adam. A man who was kite-boarding took Adam to safety, but Duggan submerged and drowned.

An off-duty firefighter and medic, James J. Blount III, 32, of Chesapeake, Va., rescued the drivers of two trucks that collided and caught fire on an interstate highway bridge over the James River at Suffolk, Va., on July 19, 2006. Sigmund Molis, Jr., 52, was driving a tractor.

What makes a hero?

By Nick Werner • The Star Press, Muncie, Ind.

News stories about heroes often end with the hero declaring with modesty that he just did what most people would do. But is the cliché true?

No, according to those who study altruism, a form of behavior in which individuals act to benefit someone else at a cost to themselves. “It’s not usual for people to intervene in other people’s tragedies,” said Samuel P. Oliner, an emeritus professor of sociology at Humboldt State University in California.

Oliner has interviewed 216 recipients of the Carnegie Medal for civilian heroism and studied heroes from Sept. 11, 2001, and people who rescued Jews in Nazi Europe. Through his studies of Jew rescuers, Oliner said he found most people are bystanders, willing to ignore human suffering with the hope that somebody else will intervene.

Academia, he said, has yet to explain why some humans rush into burning buildings or jump into icy waters to save strangers from death.

Lee Dugatkin, an evolutionary biologist with the University of Louisville, agreed. “If we could understand why that behavior evolved, we would make huge leaps forward,” Dugatkin said.

Less dangerous acts of altruism within a group of organisms or a single society are easier for science to explain. Dugatkin said. The professor pointed out that some group animals survive in part because they share food or have sentries to watch for predators. “It’s what’s behind sports psychology,” Dugatkin said. “You give up something so your group can outperform other groups.”

That group mentality is why people are more likely to act heroically for their family members. But it can be expanded in humans through socialization and training, resulting in people who are more predisposed toward heroism than others, according to David Sloan Wilson, an evolutionary biologist with Binghamton University in New York. Sloan pointed to Marine training, in which young men are socialized to take extreme risks for the benefit of their group or unit in combat.

“We are instinctively set to fight for the death of our group,” Sloan said. It is possible that some people with military training expand their “group” to include all humans in civilian life, Sloan said.

In his studies, Oliner said he has found that many heroes have role models who have taught them empathy and social responsibility. He also said many heroes are religious. “It’s the right thing to do to help others,” he said. “It says in the New Testament, ‘No greater love has a man than to give his life for another.’”

What makes a hero?

(Reprinted with permission.)

COLLEGE OR ELSE

Carnegie Medal awardee Miranda A. Elkins, 25, of Gainesville, Texas, is getting a bachelor’s degree from Texas Women’s University this spring, but she had little choice in the matter. According to her mother, “It was either ‘go to college’ or ‘go to college,’” Elkins says. Read more on the Commission’s Website at www.carnegiehero.org. Elkins was awarded the medal for saving a man from drowning in the Gulf of Mexico in 2005.
TO THE HERO FUND (continued from page 7)

At the end of the class, I had all the students stand in a circle that I called a “Court of Honor.” Each student read off the names of their assigned heroes. And we stood silently for a minute, saluting these heroes and their truly heroic acts.

At the end of the semester, several of the students commented that this was the most meaningful moment of the entire class. I now do this exercise every semester. In fact, I’ll do it tomorrow.

I thought you’d like to know that we may have touched the lives of some of our young people—at least, shown them that there are genuine heroes today who continue to provide selfless aid to others in urgent need. Thanks for a great Website!

Deena Case-Pall, Ph.D. • Moorpark, Calif, College

OFF THE ISLAND

Receiving the award changed our mother’s life completely. Had she not been a part of this event, she would probably have attended teacher’s college and taught elementary school on Manitoulin Island or close by. This scholarship broadened her horizons enabling her to leave Manitoulin Island to complete her high school years and attend the University of Toronto. There she met a young bright man headed for medicine and statistics whom she later married. After university, she taught high school physics and English. (Note: Mitchell’s mother was Phyllis A. Tilston, who was awarded the medal at age 13 for her actions of August 13, 1920, by which she saved a woman from drowning at Sandfield Bay off Lake Huron. The award included $2,800 in scholarship funds over the following 10 years.)

LATEST Awardees (continued from page 10)

trailer that struck a utility truck driven by James Tatem, 54. After Blount witnessed the accident, he helped Molis, who was severely injured, from the cab of the tractor. He then broke out a window of Tatem’s truck with his helmet, maneuvered partially into the cab, and, grasping Tatem, pulled him to safety. (See photo.)

Three men teamed up to pull Timothy C. Baptiste from the wreckage of his automobile after it was struck from behind by a truck and burst into flames, in Butler, Pa., on June 21 of last year. Frank Oesterling, 50, a sales engineer, and Richard M. Gigliotti, 20, a university student, both from Butler, witnessed the accident. They ran to the car and had started to pull Baptiste through the window of the driver’s door when one of his relatives, Dennis Mark Baptiste, 45, a construction worker from Fenelton, Pa., happened upon the scene. Dennis freed Timothy’s legs, and the three rescuers removed him to safety. The car was destroyed in the accident and fire.
As is often the case when tragedies occur, the stage is set for heroic acts. By 8 a.m. on the 12th, word of the Larchmont’s sinking was received by the eight crewmembers of a Block Island fishing schooner, the Elsie. The men boarded their 60-foot, two-masted vessel—equipped also with an 18-horsepower engine “for auxiliary power”—and, despite the adverse conditions, set out to search for survivors. Around 10 a.m. they spotted a 20-square-foot raft of the wreckage of the steamer’s hurricane deck, finding that it carried eight survivors and several bodies. According to the Hero Fund’s report, the “the bodies formed a bulwark around the almost lifeless” survivors.

The Elsie crew launched two 12-foot dories in a rescue attempt. After one female and three male survivors were taken aboard each dory, both smaller vessels drifted back to the schooner, and all hands assisted in transferring the survivors. The Elsie returned to harbor by noon. One of the eight persons rescued died of exposure.

Each of the Elsie crewmembers was awarded a gold Carnegie Medal in May of that year. John W. Smith was the captain of the crew, which included his brothers, G. Elwood and Albert W. Smith, and three nephews, Harry L., Earl A., and Louis E. Smith. John’s brother-in-law, Jeremiah M. Littlefield, and Littlefield’s brother Edgar completed the crew. Accompanying financial grants helped some of the men’s children attend college.

The residents of Block Island continue to mark the anniversary of the tragedy, and on its centennial in February the New Shoreham Town Council of Block Island decreed a resolution to honor the heroes, some of whose descendants still live on the 10-square-mile island. The resolution concludes, “Lest we forget angels do walk among us, ordinary folk found out only when they are called to duty.”

By Susan L. Marcy, Case Investigator. With thanks to Block Island contacts Robert M. Downie (who provided the photos), Helen Farrell Allen, Ben Hruska, Edith Littlefield Blane (awardee descendant), Peter Voskamp, and Martha Ball.