

imPULSE

A Periodic Newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission ISSUE 17 • MARCH 2009

2008 in review: Advancing Carnegie's legacy of honoring heroes

FEELING 'BLESSED,' HERO DONATES AWARD

Officer DeWayne W. Griffin (see photo, this page) of the Amarillo, Texas, Police Department says he was only doing his job when he entered a burning house and rescued the elderly woman who was living there. The Hero Fund thought differently, concluding that he acted well above and beyond the call of duty, and gave him the Carnegie Medal for his actions, making him one of 92 medal awardees in 2008.

Griffin's selflessness did not stop with his rescue act. He donated the monetary award that accompanies the medal to two agencies in Amarillo that helped him and his family during a rough time in the early 1990s. Griffin divided the grant equally between Faith City Ministries' Family Lighthouse and the Downtown Women's Center, enabling each to further its mission.

Griffin, then 26, was on duty after midnight on June 26, 2007, when he responded to a call for prowlers in the neighborhood where Bobbie J. Miller, 70, lived in her one-story brick house. Upon his arrival, he didn't notice any prowlers but did find smoke issuing from Miller's house. He learned from Miller's son that the house was occupied, and the men gained access by opening the front door, which allowed thick smoke to pour out. Although he had never been in the house, Griffin knew then that he had to act. "I wanted to do my best to help her," he said.

The smoke, which precluded visibility, and heat thwarted Griffin's first attempt at entry, forcing him outside for air. Crawling, he re-entered the house and made his way toward Miller's bedroom, which was near the flames. He found Miller at her bedroom doorway and pulled her to the front door and outside,

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By Sybil P. Veeder • Chair, Executive Committee • Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

The Carnegie Hero Fund Commission continued in 2008—its 105th year—to advance Andrew Carnegie's legacy of recognizing civilian heroes. Two timely letters from the constituency we serve reflect our efforts:

Danielle Wright of Lorton, Va., lost her grandfather, Robert W. Wright, in 1955 when he attempted to save a woman from drowning (see page 2). He was awarded the Carnegie Medal posthumously, and his widow was given a monthly grant to help with living expenses, aid which she continues to receive at age 81. "Over the years the Carnegie Hero Fund has been the source of making the tough times a little more bearable," Danielle wrote recently. "Thank you for being a beacon of light to those who are in the midst of some of the darkest moments in their life."

James Schmitt of Philadelphia, Pa., was 19 in 1989 when he rescued a boy from a gang attack. Sustaining significant injuries to his head while acting, Schmitt was

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Amarillo, Texas, Police Officer DeWayne W. Griffin was one of 92 individuals awarded the Carnegie Medal in 2008. See accompanying article, this page. Photo, by Matt Strasen, courtesy of the Amarillo Globe-News.



A FAMILY'S LEGACY

I would like to thank you for the wonderful contribution that your organization has provided to my grandmother, Gladys R. Wright, and our family over the years. In 1955, my grandfather, Robert W. Wright, then a young, idealistic father of three, did an unselfish act and attempted to save the life of a woman. Although this action ended in the tragic demise of his life, his act of bravery yielded a unique legacy and blessing for our family.

Through your organization my grandmother was given monetary support that assisted her with raising her children. Because of your generous gift, my grandmother is proud to see all seven of her grown grandchildren and the current light of her life, her great-grandson, Zion, live well and happy. Over the years, Carnegie Hero Fund has been the source of making the tough times a little more bearable, and we, the Wright Family, are very grateful for your continued support.

As the historian in the family, I am very proudful to see my grandfather's name listed as a "hero" on your website. His grandchildren never met him, but his act of bravery is something we certainly admire. That part of his character of putting others first is the legacy we not only cherish but continually aspire to become.

Thank you again for being a beacon of light to those who are in the midst of some of the darkest moments in their life, for honoring those who provide the greatest sacrifice, and for taking care of the people they have left behind. The Carnegie Hero Fund continues to be a blessing unto my grandmother and our entire family!

Danielle M. Wright, Lorton, Va.



Mr. Wright at age 19 as a staff sergeant in the U.S. Army, 1945.

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Year in review

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hospitalized in critical condition and not only recovered to a great degree but went on to become a nurse. Also awarded the medal, he too received a monthly grant "during perhaps the darkest and most trying time of my life," he wrote. "With the exception of my parents, only the Hero Fund was there to lend financial assistance during my toughest times...I hope the Commission will continue to assist those considered 'heroes' for years to come."

These letters remind us that, in spite of the current economic situation, we need to keep this foundation viable. We attempted to do just that in 2008, despite a significant drop in the value of our investment portfolio. Losses of the type were not ours alone, however, and we have the strengths of both our heritage and the commitment of our people as support. Otherwise, it was a solid year:

In case awarding, the Hero Fund named 92 new heroes. The total number of awardees comprised 88 from 28 states and four from three Canadian provinces, with California (at 15 awardees) and Manitoba (two) being the most heavily represented from each country. By age, the awardees ranged from 15-year-old high-school student Samara Marie White of Davison, Mich., who died attempting to save her younger sister from a fire in their home, to 77-year-old retired policeman Philip Bevacqua of Totowa, N.J., who rescued a policeman from an armed assault taking place right outside Bevacqua's home. The nine women awarded during the year were 10% of the total, in keeping with the historical rate of 9%.

The year's 19 posthumous awards, or 21% of the total, reflect precisely the historical ratio. While every case touches on human mortality, the death cases are particularly poignant: Craig L. Wenner of Brookville, Ohio, died on a Christmas Day in an unsuccessful attempt to save his wife from drowning. Gregory J. Carson and his son Dominique Chatman, both of Louisiana, died together attempting to save others in their party from drowning. Although mortally wounded, high school principal John Klang of Cazenovia, Wis., disarmed a boy who was threatening the school with a shotgun. With his son a part of his work crew, Craig M. Gouker of Hanover, Pa., entered a belowground vault to rescue a coworker and did not return to safety.

By type of case, the usual classification prevailed, with 27 drowning rescues/attempts awarded, followed by burning buildings, 19; burning vehicles, 11; and rescues from human assault, 10. There were some unusual rescue acts, including the removal of two men from the bottom of a flooding shaft; the attempted rescue of victims overcome by natural gases in a snow cave; the saving of a coworker who would have been struck by a 14-ton mill roll at a steel plant, and the helicopter rescue of a couple from their flood-stranded pickup. One hero jumped aboard a runaway, horse-drawn carriage carrying tourists and took it to a stop.



Lindsey A. Witherspoon of Kingsport, Tenn., was one of the youngest medal awardees in 2008. At age 18, she pulled a woman from her submerging car, saving her from drowning. Ms. Witherspoon is pictured with Capt. Keith Elton of the Sullivan County, Tenn., Sheriff's Department, which aided the Hero Fund in investigating the incident.

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A HERO'S MEMORIAL

A roadside monument in Ellsworth, Kan., has been erected by friends and family to mark the scene of the Aug. 15, 2004, heroic actions of Kevin D. Shaw of Ellsworth. Shaw, 48, a corrections officer, witnessed an accident at the site in which a pickup truck left the highway, overturned, and came to rest upright and aflame. As its driver remained inside the cab, Shaw approached and pulled her through its rear window. He took her to safety but then collapsed to the ground and died of a heart attack. Shaw was posthumously awarded the Carnegie Medal a year later. "Kevin did what just came naturally to him," his widow Valerie said. "He was always there to lend a hand when needed. This is a memorial to Kevin so no one will ever forget his unselfish deed." *Photo courtesy of Ellsworth County Independent/Reporter.*



Year in review

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In beneficiary giving, the Hero Fund helped to support 73 individuals throughout the year with monthly grants totaling \$294,445, and in scholarship giving, grants totaling \$109,222 were made to 24 applicants. Six funeral grants were made, for a total of \$25,495, including \$10,000 to the family of two brothers who died together in a drowning-rescue attempt. The distribution of bronze grave markers saw its second year in 2008, with 62 given on request to families of awardees now deceased.

In outreach activities, the Hero Fund made six medal presentations during the year, including one at the Flagler Museum in Palm Beach, Fla., in which the organization's four officers—Mark Laskow, Priscilla J. McCrady, James M. Walton, and Walter F. Rutkowski—took part, along with Douglas R. Chambers, director of external affairs. Other medal presentations were in Kentucky, Wyoming, Ontario, Texas, and North Carolina, and Chambers addressed a high-school psychology class in Livingston, N.J. Under his supervision, the mass grave, in Springdale, Pa., of the victims of the 1904 Harwick mine disaster was cleaned up in time for a Memorial Day observance, and the Hero Fund's centennial book was offered free of charge over the website. Demand for the books has been fairly constant.



Dr. Veeder joined the Commission in 1992 and has served as chair of the Executive Committee since 2002.

The Hero Fund's activity extended internationally during the year. In February, board member Christopher R. McCrady represented the Commission at the dedication of "Carnegie House" in Dunfermline, Scotland, Carnegie's hometown. Princess Anne was also present at the event, which marked the official opening of the headquarters facility for Carnegie's four U.K.-based foundations, including the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust. Later in the year, the Commission passed a resolution marking the 100th anniversary of the Hero Fund Trust, and it was well received. In June, Laskow and board member Linda T. Hills attended a meeting in Stockholm of representatives of four of Carnegie's 11 hero funds. The meeting was felt to be valuable by its participants, who were with the U.S., U.K., Swedish, and German hero funds, and similar gatherings were proposed, particularly in concert with the biennial awarding of the Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy. 

FEELING 'BLESSED'

(continued from cover)

where they collapsed. Both required hospital treatment for smoke inhalation.

The Hero Fund's awarding requirements are stricter on those nominees whose vocations charge them with the safety of the public—such as firefighters, law enforcement officers, and lifeguards—but an award can be made if the Commission thinks the rescuer exceeded his or her duties. "Our officers are not equipped for fire suppression or rescue," Griffin's lieutenant wrote. "In this case, (he) went above and beyond what we expect."

When the award was announced in July, Griffin knew what he would do with the grant. "Before, I was never privileged enough to say thank you the way I wanted to," he said. "When the opportunity came to donate this gift, I didn't think twice. I felt blessed, and I wanted to bless others."

When Griffin was 12, Faith City Ministries welcomed him, his 3-year-old brother, and their mother with open arms to a safe haven from a troubled situation. They stayed there for several months and then at the Downtown Women's Center for a few years. Faith City Ministries used its donation from Griffin on a program that helps homeless men and women prepare for college. The Downtown Women's Center used its donation on operating expenses at one of its "Abba House" apartments. Abba House is a long-term center that helps homeless women and their children.

— *Melissa A. Spangler, Case Investigator*

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TO THE HERO FUND

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PROPERLY ELOQUENT

I wish to thank the Carnegie Hero Fund for selecting me to receive the Carnegie Medal. The medal is indeed beautiful in both its design and detail, and I am deeply humbled and greatly honored by receiving it. Also, I have been reading your book, A Century of Heroes. The accounts included in the book are quite remarkable, and I cannot express how humbled I feel to be a part of that distinguished group of individuals.

Ever since I was notified of the award in October, I have been laboring to write a proper letter of response to the Commission. I wanted to come up with something eloquent and befitting of this award. Alas, the only thing I can commit to this letter is to express gratitude in simple but heartfelt terms.

Steven J. Gies, Petaluma, Calif.

(Gies helped to rescue his neighbor from her burning apartment in 2007.)

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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 9,243 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. THE NEXT ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARDEES WILL BE MADE ON APRIL 2.

Joshua James Lapp, 16, a student from Sacramento, Calif., helped to rescue his neighbor, Gloria Collins, 57, from her burning apartment on July 14, 2007. At night, Collins was in the bedroom of her apartment after fire broke out in the adjoining living room. Joshua and his mother repeatedly leaned through the bedroom window for her, and then Joshua climbed through the window and found her in the blinding smoke. He took her to the window and handed her out to his mother before climbing through the window himself. Collins and Joshua required hospital treatment for smoke inhalation.

Brothers-in-law **Jason Christopher Byrnes** of North Syracuse, N.Y., and **Peter James Benedict** of Cicero, N.Y., saved Michael D. LaSala, 16; Josiah S. Thompson, 15; and Sheralyn J. Wellman, 13, from drowning in Lake Ontario at Ellisburg, N.Y., on July 15, 2007, and they attempted to save Anna E. Wright, 17. On a swimming outing, the youths were unable to return to shore against the strong current and six-foot waves. Byrnes, 33, an account executive, and Benedict, also 33, a manager, were on shore in the vicinity and set out in search of the teens in a 14-foot aluminum boat equipped with an outboard motor. Fighting the pounding waves, they located Michael about 750 feet from shore and pulled him aboard, and then they spotted Josiah and Sheralyn about 125 feet away. After they pulled Josiah aboard, Benedict entered the water to support Sheralyn as Byrnes took the others to shore. Byrnes returned, and they delivered Sheralyn to safety before attempting to search for Anna. Her body was found two days later.

Jeffrey S. Peters, Jr., 18, of Meadville, Pa., rescued his neighbor, Debra A. Knuth, 50, from her burning mobile home on Sept. 11, 2007. Knuth was pinned in her bedroom by fallen debris after a propane explosion in the structure that set it aflame. Peters responded to the scene after hearing the explosion. He entered the collapsing mobile home and in intense heat made his way to Knuth's bedroom. He lifted debris off her and carried her to an outside door, where he handed her to another responding neighbor. Peters exited the structure shortly before flames grew to engulf it.



Merlin Harn of Menasha, Wis., sprinted across the ballast of a rail bed to save a small boy as a 13,000-ton train bore down on them. Photo, by Kirk Wagner, courtesy of the Appleton, Wis., Post-Crescent.

James C. Carpenter of Gloversville, N.Y., saved Chelsea M. Palma, 5, from her grandmother's burning house on Nov. 8, 2007, and **Leanue Davis, Jr.**, 46, now of Fayetteville, N.C., rescued Chelsea's sister, Jocelyn L., 3. Visiting, the girls were on the second floor of the house after fire broke out in the kitchen. Carpenter, 28, a warehouse worker who lived next door, entered the house and in dense smoke went upstairs and found them. Chelsea grasped him, but Jocelyn retreated. As flames spread to the stairway, Carpenter returned downstairs and took Chelsea outside. Davis, a disabled construction worker who lived in the house, arrived home about then. He went upstairs for Jocelyn but then found his course blocked by deteriorating conditions. He retreated to a bedroom, where he lowered Jocelyn through a window to two men on the ground. Having sustained minor burns, Davis jumped to safety.

Clint J. Deniker, 35, a state conservation officer from Grove City, Pa., saved Thomas B. Stevenson, Sr., 52, from his overturned and burning car after an accident near Deniker's home on April 4 of last year. On leaving his house, Deniker saw the inverted vehicle and then found Stevenson unconscious inside, restrained by his safety belt. Deniker pulled on the wreckage to widen an opening in it and then extended his upper body through the opening. He cut Stevenson's safety belt with a knife and then, with difficulty, pulled him free of the vehicle. As he dragged Stevenson away, flames entered the car's interior and spread nearly to engulf it.

Walter Rosenthal, 58, a ski patroller from Tom's Place, Calif., died helping in the attempt to save two coworkers, James J. Juarez, 34, and John S. McAndrews, 37, from suffocating in a snow cave at a resort on Mammoth Mountain in Mammoth Lakes, Calif., on April 6, 2006. About 20 feet of snow lay on the ground as the men worked on a fence in the vicinity of a fumarole, or natural vent, which released gases. A cave had formed in the snow above the fumarole. Without warning, Juarez and McAndrews broke through the snow and fell to the floor of the cave. They lost consciousness in the cave's toxic atmosphere. Equipped with an oxygen mask, Rosenthal entered the cave and approached the men, but then he too lost consciousness and collapsed. Over the course of several minutes, other personnel dug a trench through the snow and recovered the three victims, but efforts to revive them were not successful.

Shann Deon Day, Sr., a 36-year-old handyman from Fontana, Calif., drowned Oct. 23, 2007, while attempting to save Melvin M. Rabb, 27, from drowning in the Pacific Ocean at Long Beach, Calif. Rabb jumped into the ocean from a pier at a point about 600 feet from shore and appeared to become fatigued in the 25-foot-deep water as he attempted to swim. Day, who was fishing from the pier, jumped fully attired into the water and swam to Rabb. He grasped Rabb and held to him briefly before they both submerged. Responding rescue divers later recovered the men's bodies.

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LATEST AWARDEES

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Carlton Green, 40, a billing employee from Milton-Freewater, Ore., saved Adam K. Catania, 1, from his family's burning apartment in Walla Walla, Wash., on July 16, 2007. Adam, 1, lay unconscious in the unit's second-floor hall after fire broke out on that floor. Driving by, Green saw smoke and stopped. He entered the apartment and learned that Adam was on the second floor. He attempted twice to climb the stairs but was repulsed by dense smoke and intense heat. Using a wet towel as a mask, he crawled up the stairs, started through the hall, and found Adam. Green carried the boy downstairs and outside to safety. Both required hospital treatment for smoke inhalation.

San Francisco, Calif., attorney **Kermit R. Kubitz**, 60, rescued Loren B. Schaller, 15, from a knife assault in a bakery in San Francisco on May 19, 2007. Loren was at the counter when a man approached her from behind and without provocation stabbed her repeatedly. Also in the store, Kubitz witnessed the attack. He immediately ran to the assailant and grabbed him, but the assailant then turned on Kubitz and attacked him. The men struggled, during which Kubitz was stabbed twice. After Kubitz threw the knife aside, the assailant fled, but he was apprehended shortly. Kubitz and Loren were hospitalized for treatment of their stab wounds, Kubitz missing a month's work. He recovered.

Claude Ancel Walker IV of Rocklin, Calif., saved John A. Crabtree from a burning tank truck after an accident on an interstate highway in Roseville, Calif., on Dec. 3, 2007. The truck was overturned and extended down an embankment with Crabtree, 51, remaining in the driver's seat. Flames issued from the truck's engine compartment and exposed underside. Arriving at the scene, Walker, 33, a carpenter,



Hoip D. Swaby of Brockton, Mass., in a transport cage of the type used in his rescue of coworkers from a deep shaft that was flooding. Photo, by Jack Foley, courtesy of The Herald News, Fall River, Mass.

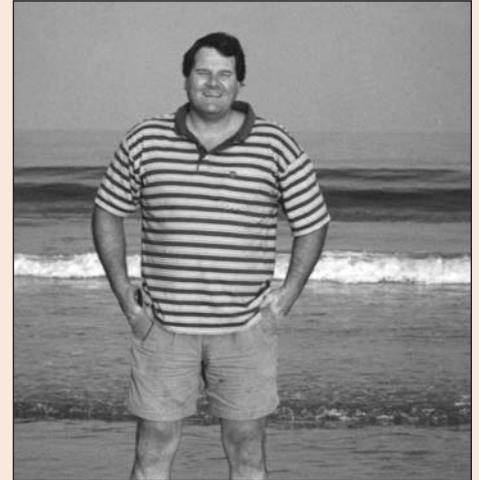
approached the vehicle and cleared the remaining glass from its windshield. He then extended his upper body into the cab, grasped Crabtree, and, freeing him, pulled him through the windshield opening. Flames soon engulfed the truck.

Richard Anthony Tower, 40, a truck driver from Yreka, Calif., saved Dorothy M. Knudsen from drowning in the Klamath River at Horse Creek, Calif., on Sept. 19, 2007. Knudsen, 82, was the driver of a car that left the roadway, entered the river, and began to submerge about 50 feet from the bank. Current in the river was swift, and its water cold. Tower witnessed the accident as he approached the scene. Despite being fully attired, including his boots, he entered the river and swam to the car. As it submerged completely, taking Knudsen with it, Tower pulled her from the driver's window and took her to the bank, en route grasping one end of a rope that was thrown to him from the bank.

Fred Hunt, Jr., 51, a senior buyer from Berwick, Maine, died helping to save Maureen A. Jennings from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean at Cocoa Beach, Fla., on Oct. 22, 2007, and **Oemal Agaj**, 65, a retired factory worker from Tampa, Fla., helped to save her. While swimming, Jennings, 68, was caught in a current while attempting to return to the beach. Hunt, Agaj, and others on shore were alerted to her situation. The two men waded and swam out to Jennings and pushed her a distance toward safety before succumbing to the current themselves. Jennings struggled through wadable water to reach shore safely. Responding members of a rescue team recovered Agaj from the water and then returned Hunt to the beach. Hunt could not be revived, but Agaj recovered from exhaustion and ingesting water. (See photo.)

Mark Andrew Sellers, 45, a sales representative from Lancaster, Pa., saved Jordan R. Sweigart, 17, from a burning car in Lancaster on Nov. 17, 2007. Jordan was trapped in the driver's seat after the car struck a utility pole. The pole broke, and its top, bearing electric lines and transformers, fell onto the vehicle. The lines arced. Sellers approached and told Jordan to wait for emergency personnel, but then he saw that fire had started in the car's engine compartment. To test if the vehicle were energized, Sellers struck a glancing blow against it. Despite the growing flames, he opened the rear door, entered the car, and reclined the back of the driver's seat. He grasped Jordan, pulled him free of the car, and dragged him to safety. Flames shortly engulfed the vehicle.

Tunnel worker **Hoip D. Swaby**, 41, of Brockton, Mass., helped to save two coworkers from drowning after the vertical shaft in which they were working started to flood on Oct. 19, 2007, in Fall River, Mass. John P. Kanash, 49, and Kenneth H. Schofield, 45, were working with Swaby at the bottom of the large, 105-foot-deep shaft when a nearby sewer line



According to his obituary, Fred Hunt, Jr., of Berwick, Maine, was a "warm and loving teddy bear, always ready with a smile and a big hug." Hunt, 51, died Oct. 22, 2007, after helping to save a woman from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean at Cocoa Beach, Fla. Photo courtesy of the family.

collapsed and began to empty into it. Swaby managed to board a transport cage and was lifted from the shaft, but the two other men could not reach it in time. At the surface, Swaby told other coworkers that he was returning to the bottom for the men. Despite massive amounts of water continuing into the shaft, he rode the cage toward the bottom. Seeing light from his flashlight, the two other men made their way to the cage and boarded it, and it was lifted to the surface. (See photo.)

Merlin Harn, 40, a facilities technician from Menasha, Wis., saved a 3-year-old boy from being struck by a train in Menasha on Sept. 1, 2007. Harn and his wife saw the unattended boy at the track as they drove by. As they waited for police to arrive, a train approached on the track. Harn ran to the boy, having to cover the 90-foot distance on the ballast of the track bed. When the 13,000-ton train, traveling at about 35 m.p.h., rounded a bend, its locomotive crew saw Harn and the boy, and the engineer immediately engaged the train's emergency brakes. Harn grasped the boy and lunged away from the track with him seconds before the front of the train passed them. (See photo.)

Michael J. Zimmerman, 53, a mason contractor, saved Paul A. McCollar from the cab of his burning tractor-trailer after an accident on an interstate highway in Williamsfield, Ill., on Aug. 16, 2007. McCollar, 43, was trapped inside the cab, which had turned onto its side. Traveling on the same highway, Zimmerman, of Morton, Ill., came upon the burning wreckage and stopped. He kicked a hole in the windshield and then entered the cab. Zimmerman freed McCollar from his safety belt and then pulled him from the cab, which was shortly engulfed by flames.

From actor to hero to adoption worker: All fell into line for 1995 B.C. awardee

Hearing from a past awardee is like hearing from an old friend, the Hero Fund has found. And all's the better when the news is good, such as recently reported by Brendan T. Elliott, of Victoria, B.C. Elliott was awarded the Carnegie Medal in 1995 for helping to save a man from a burning apartment.

Elliott, now 57, went on to attend the University of Victoria, and the Commission helped assume some of his tuition costs. In late November, he resumed contact with the Hero Fund by writing, "The Carnegie Hero Fund supplied major funding for my education, for which I am eternally grateful. I am presently employed by the British Columbia Ministry of Children and Families as an adoption social worker and have been in this position for over nine years. Without the Commission, I would not be where I am today."

Wanting to hear more, we asked Elliott to elaborate, and he did: "I graduated from the university in 1998 and was immediately hired by the provincial government as a child protection worker. A short time later, an advertising campaign was started by the province to raise awareness of children in care and, more specifically, to move those children into permanent homes. The children ranged from infancy to 19 years in age and came from chaotic and abusive backgrounds. The campaign used a variety of media, including television, and the response was overwhelming. I was immediately made adoption recruiter.

"Prior to attending college, I was involved in the theatre as an actor, but it would be fair to say that more often than not I was 'between jobs.' However, my training in this craft was to prove invaluable in dealing with the response to the adoption campaign. For one thing, I was accustomed to speaking in front of large crowds.

"In the first year of the campaign, the province placed more than 300 children with permanent loving families, and that figure has been maintained for seven years with very little fluctuation. To date, I am one of the most successful recruiters in the province, having recruited more than 250 families that have gone on to provide successful adoption homes.

"I have a fantastic job. I once met a child, about 8, who, upon meeting me for the first time said, 'You may not know this, but I can burp and talk like Donald Duck.' He then not only proceeded to talk like Donald Duck, but he did it in the language of burp! How could I not love a job that has that type of stimulating interaction?"



Carnegie Medal awardee and adoption recruiter Brendan T. Elliott bicycles: Two years ago, he covered 1,500 kilometers from Prince Rupert, B.C., to his home in Victoria.

TO THE HERO FUND

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STEEL TOWN HERO

Receiving a Carnegie Medal is extremely humbling and much appreciated by me. I was born and raised in Steelton, a small steel mill town in Central Pennsylvania. My father, grandfather, and many other members of my family worked their entire lives in the mill. It was a hard and honest life. The people of Steelton were always proud to be a "steel town." Mr. Carnegie was a regular part of our school curriculum. His impact on the steel industry in America was responsible for the success of our town and its people. I can't fully express my gratitude for receiving such a prestigious award founded by and in the name of Mr. Carnegie. I would also like to thank the Commission for all of their work in continuing to honor our citizens who perform extraordinary acts.

Timothy Foote, Harrisburg, Pa.

(Foote rescued his neighbor from a burning house in 2007.)

ACTING DESPITE FEAR

The medal it is the most precious thing I have—there is both glory and humility in being given the most prestigious civilian award presented to so few. I must confess that it has worried me for all of these years to be in such exalted company as those who actually did "lay down their own lives" for others. In the back of my mind, I feel like somewhat of a fraud! I am not courageous at all, and my worst fear in all of my worst nightmares is of fire. I didn't want to act—and I was certainly terrified—but if you can understand it, I just couldn't not do it. I couldn't stand there and watch as a 9-month-old baby boy burned to death. Don't tell anyone that I was scared out of my mind—that doesn't sound very "heroic."

God bless you, and please know that your foundation has been in my prayers every night since I was first contacted by it. You do a wonderful thing by recognizing the goodness in ordinary people who do extraordinary things.

Elinor L. Neel, Las Vegas, Nev.

(imPULSE is reminded of a quote by American essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson [1803-1882]: "A hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is braver for five minutes longer." Neel, who consented to our reprinting her letter, was recognized by the Hero Fund for saving an infant from his mother's

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'O' magazine features ocean rescue heroines

Two women awarded the Carnegie Medal in 2007 were featured in the February issue of *O, The Oprah Magazine*, in an article written by the woman they helped to save from drowning.

McKenzie Anne Perry of Mount Pleasant, S.C., and Kary L. Hodge of Willimantic, Conn., are "extraordinary, beautiful young women, and not a day goes by that I don't thank God for them," writes Betty R. Kindley of Asheville, N.C., in the article, "The Women in the Water." The piece is part of a larger spread, "Chance of a Lifetime," that presents 10 examples of "paths crossed and possibilities realized." A photo of all three women, taken at the scene of the rescue, accompanies the article.

On June 25, 2006, Kindley was with friends at an Atlantic Ocean beach on Sullivan's Island, S.C., when she and one of her friends were overtaken by a rip current and carried far out from shore. Although they could not see Kindley and her friend because of the distance and the rough surf, Perry, then 20, and Hodge, 28, made their way to them. "I never expected anyone to swim out," Kindley writes. "Ships, boats, yes. But not this. Adrift in a vast, merciless ocean, I was not alone." Perry and Hodge returned Kindley toward shore, where a firefighter on a personal watercraft took over. Kindley's friend died.

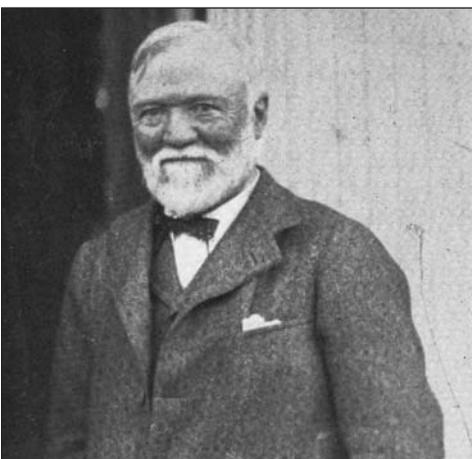
"I'm a substitute high school teacher in Asheville," Kindley says, "and I've shared our story with my students, especially the girls. 'Never give up,' I tell them. 'McKenzie and Kary didn't.'"

ALL'S WELL

When Lykesia Lilly, center, of Polkton, N.C., learned that her nephew, Adrian Clark, left, had fallen into an abandoned well on May 6, 2007, she lost no time in taking matters into her own hands. Adrian, then 6, was clinging to an outcropping of the well about 15 feet below its top. Water had filled the 50-foot-deep well to that level, and Adrian risked drowning. Lilly, then an 18-year-old high school student, lowered herself part way into the well through its 14-inch opening before dropping into the water. She tied an electrical cord around Adrian's waist, and he was lifted by others to safety. Lilly climbed out of the well on her own. For her actions, Lilly received the Carnegie Medal, which was presented in November by the Hero Fund's director of external affairs, Douglas R. Chambers, at a meeting of the Anson County, N.C., Commissioners in Wadesboro. Several proud family members were on hand, as was Rodney Diggs, right, director of the county's emergency medical services. Diggs was instrumental during the Hero Fund's investigation of the case.



✧ THE QUOTABLE A.C. ✧



*The whole world moves,
and moves in the right
direction—upward and
onward.*

— From *Round the World*, 1879

TO THE HERO FUND

(continued from page 6)

burning apartment in 1971. Then 28, she put a dampened blanket over her head and ducked under flames to reach the baby's bedroom. Both were burned, but they recovered.)

PRACTICE IN GOODWILL

Into my last semester of law school at the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, I thought this time the most appropriate to thank the Carnegie Hero Fund for the unbelievable generosity afforded me over these past two years.

While law school prepares you for a number of career paths, the economic reality of increasing tuition, higher loan interest rates, and an increasingly tight job market mean that only a few career options are truly viable for a student like me. The financial assistance provided by the Hero Fund has opened doors and presented opportunities for my future career that, when I started law school, were simply out of reach. Your help throughout the process has been invaluable.

Being awarded the Carnegie Medal was one of the proudest moments of my life, and receiving such generous financial assistance for my legal education has been one of the most fortunate things to happen to me. I intend to practice law in a way that reflects the goodwill that has been shown to me by the Hero Fund. Thank you again for all your assistance.

Kevin J. Mahoney, Columbus, Ohio

(Mahoney was cited in 2007 for helping to save Penn State University students from a burning house in State College, Pa.)

IN GOOD COMPANY

I'm writing to thank you for sending me *imPULSE*. I am sorry for the families who have lost loved ones, but at the same time I am very proud that my Ron is in such good company. The newsletter gives me comfort in a strange way.

Ron's grant was used to purchase a hyperbaric chamber for his namesake, our grandson, who has autism. 'Little Ron' is now 6 and speaks a few words. Like the nation today, we have much hope.

I want you to know how much you have meant and continue to mean by honoring my husband. It has been almost three years now and Ron's coworkers stop me at times to tell stories of how Ron impacted their lives at work. We aren't surprised, just amazed at how

(continued on page 8)



TO THE HERO FUND

(continued from page 7)

many people's lives he touched. Your kindness will remain in my heart.

Victoria Rowlett, Vacaville, Calif.

(While on vacation, Ronald D. Rowlett died Feb. 5, 2006, helping attempt to save a woman from drowning in the Pacific Ocean at Kilauea, Hawaii. He was awarded the medal posthumously in 2007. Mrs. Rowlett's son has agreed to answer any questions concerning the use of the hyperbaric chamber in treating autism. He can be reached at 707-235-2798.)



Ronald D. Rowlett III

OLD SOLDIER DONATES

Your check to me will be put to very good use. I'm going to make a \$1,000 donation to Any Soldier, Inc., because I've been shipping to a lot of great people whose names I got from the www.AnySoldier.com site. I regard them as real heroes, spending years of their lives protecting this country. Your grant was for my doing what comes naturally to any infantryman—protecting the weak from the aggressor.

This contribution is in honor of Jerry Almario and Kip Hunsinger and J. Coderellis and Roy Emerson and Kelly Varonfakis Barber and Capt. Walter Yee and Chaplain Maj. Quentin Collins and all the other heroes in Afghanistan and Iraq, from an old soldier.

Kermit R. Kubitz, San Francisco, Calif.

(Kubitz was awarded the medal in December [see p. 5] for saving a 15-year-old girl from a knife attack on May 19, 2007. Any Soldier, Inc., started in August 2003 as a simple family effort to help the soldiers in one Army unit, but due to overwhelming requests, the effort was expanded in 2004 to include any member of the armed forces in harm's way. In acknowledging his gift, Any Soldier told Kubitz, "Donations have been so very low for us, and, like everyone else, we are struggling. Thank you for your support." Kubitz is a Vietnam veteran.)

New book by network journalist looks at 'extraordinary choices by ordinary people'

The Hero Fund and a few of its recent awardees figure prominently in a new book, *Heroes Among Us* (HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 2008) by television network journalist John Quiñones. A coanchor of ABC's *Primetime*, Quiñones, 57, currently hosts *What Would You Do?*, another primetime show, which examines attitudes toward contemporary moral dilemmas.

In the book, Quiñones cites what he calls our culture's "bad case of hero confusion," where both the fatuous ("those who haven't done much with their lives besides make themselves famous or rich or both") and the mundane (ranging from "the person who picks up after his dog to the mail carrier who arrives on time") are labeled heroes. "The everyday heroes who take big risks get lost in the shuffle," Quiñones says.

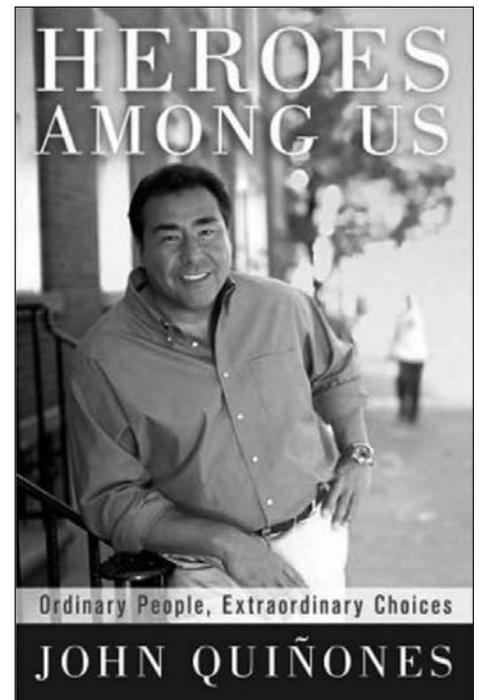
The Hero Fund is then introduced with a brief history of its founding by Andrew Carnegie following the 1904 Harwick, Pa., mine explosion. Although Quiñones refers to Carnegie as "the Scottish robber baron," he rightly defers to him as establishing "his bona fides as a hero" by building libraries in the English-speaking world and giving away \$350 million during his life.

Most of the book comprises anecdotal accounts of those acting from a strong moral sense, including those who figured in Quiñones's childhood, spent in San Antonio, Texas. His mother, Quiñones says, was his first hero: "She taught me to be open enough to believe in the world's goodness, to believe in people."

Those in whom Quiñones came to believe include Christa McAuliffe, the high school social studies teacher who was selected for a space shuttle flight; David Banks, who founded a charter school in the Bronx to help boys with learning disabilities, and three siblings from San Antonio who exhibited extraordinary forgiveness toward the murderer of their mother. "As strange as it may sound," one of the siblings said, "we saw our mother's death as an opportunity for goodness."

Carnegie Medal awardees listed in the book are Lykesia Lilly of Polkton, N.C., who saved her young nephew from drowning in an abandoned well (both are pictured on p. 7 of this issue of *imPULSE*); Philip Bevacqua of Totowa, N.J., who at 77 was the oldest awardee in 2008 (see p. 2); Curtis Dawson of Astoria, Ore., who jumped from a barge into the swift current of the Columbia River at night to save a coworker from drowning; and Wesley James Autrey, Sr., a New Yorker who threw himself over a man lying on a subway track, thereby shielding him from the train passing overhead. (Details of all of the cases are on the Hero Fund's website, www.carnegiehero.org.) Of Dawson, Quiñones says the award is a high honor, "but nothing compared to the satisfaction of successfully rescuing his captain."

—Walter F. Rutkowski, Executive Director



FROM THE ARCHIVES

COPPER MINE HEROISM

A blasting mishap at one of the largest copper mines in the U.S. in 1933 could have become a tragedy were it not for the actions of two heroic miners.

On May 4 of that year, at mid-day, David H. Jones, Benjamin F. Major, John H. Stout, and other employees of the United Verde Copper Co. were blasting boulders at the open-pit mine in Jerome, Ariz., to obtain copper ore. The procedure was to drill holes in the huge rocks for placement of sticks of dynamite, and after lighting the fuses, the miners were to leave the area to await the explosions. The men knew that, once a fuse was lit, they would have less than 2.5 minutes before the flame reached the blasting cap.

One of the fuses Stout lit caused the dynamite to explode prematurely. The blast knocked him to the ground, sending a three-foot chunk of boulder onto his legs, and shattered rock was propelled 50 feet. Another miner was struck by the debris, but he was carried to safety by his coworkers as they hurried from the scene.

(continued on back cover)



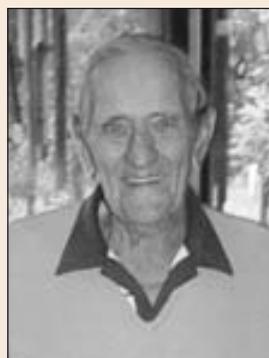
Mines in Jerome produced more than a billion dollars' worth of copper, gold, and silver in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

FRIENDS REMEMBERED

James R. S. Brennan, 43, of Annapolis County, N.S., died March 12, 2008. In the spring of 1996, Brennan saved a man from drowning after his canoe capsized in the frigid water of a lake. Brennan waded and swam 200 feet to the man and returned him to shore but then had to be hospitalized for treatment of hypothermia and other ill effects. Awarded the Carnegie Medal in 1998 and also Canada's Medal of Bravery, he went on to study graphic design with tuition aid provided by the Hero Fund.

John W. Leahy, 69, of Medford, Mass., died Jan. 18. Leahy was awarded the Carnegie Medal in 1969 for his actions of a year earlier, by which he saved a 7-year-old boy from drowning. The boy had broken through the ice on the Mystic River in Medford, and Leahy jumped in after him. Pulled out by others using a life preserver and line, they required hospital treatment, but they recovered. Leahy was a businessman and real estate professional.

Hugh James Preacher, 92, of Hollywood, Fla., died Nov. 29. At age 7 in 1924, Preacher fell from a rowboat into Staten Island Sound at Perth Amboy, N.J., and was rescued by a man who jumped from a passing ferry. The rescuer, Edward J. Ward, was given the Carnegie Medal, and 84 years later, the Ward and Preacher families were re-united as a result of legwork by Preacher's son, Hugh, Jr. An account of the meeting of the two families appeared in the June 2008 issue (No. 14) of *imPULSE*.



Mr. Preacher

CONTINUUM



GRAVE MARKERS Bronze grave markers (above), 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 Marcy (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).

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).

ANNUAL REPORTS Copies of the Hero Fund's 2007 annual report are available, as are those of the centennial report of 2004, which lists the names of all awardees from 1904 through 2004. Contact Gloria Barber (gloria@carnegiehero.org).

"A CENTURY OF HEROES" The centennial book describing the first 100 years of the Hero Fund is available by contacting carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org.

COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL A silver medal struck in the likeness of the Carnegie Medal to commemorate the 2004 centennial of the Hero Fund is available for purchase through the Commission's website.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

COPPER MINE HEROISM (continued from page 9)

Stout was trapped by the fallen rock. He yelled for help, and Jones, 39, ran to him. Unable to pull the rock off Stout, Jones called to Major, 45, but even the two men working together could not free him. From the hillside above them, a foreman urged Jones and Major to pull out the fuses that were near Stout. They did so, but some of them were clamped so tightly to the dynamite that the men pulled out the dynamite as well. They threw it from them as far as they could.

The two rescuers each pulled out about 10 fuses before determining that the remaining dynamite, all within 35 feet of Stout, was about to explode. To attempt to protect Stout, Major lay beside him, and Jones proceeded to get a bar to pry the rock off him. The men had run out of time: The dynamite, including three sticks just four feet from Stout and Major, exploded. In all, 15 explosions occurred over 30 seconds, propelling rock in all directions. Jones was knocked to the ground.

After the explosions ended, other miners returned and freed Stout. His injuries were, perhaps miraculously, limited to bruises, but Jones and Major suffered burns to their hands from removing the fuses. For their heroism, they were each awarded the Carnegie Medal and \$1,000.

Jerome, a boom town, lost most of its population after the mines closed in 1953 but regained some notoriety when it was named a National Historic Landmark in 1975. The town contains a state historical park, including a mansion with exhibits on the area's mining history. Included among the artifacts is Jones's medal, which was donated by his son. Jones died in 1980 at the age of 86.  — Marlin Ross, Case Investigator



Jones's Carnegie Medal is on display at the Jerome, Ariz., State Historical Park. Photo by Jennifer A. Earliwine.

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!

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