

imPULSE

A Periodic Newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission ISSUE 19 • SEPTEMBER 2009



For those readers of *imPULSE* wishing to get their Hero Fund news online, we are offering the newsletter in Portable Document Format (PDF) on request. Corollary benefits would be cutting back on postage and paper costs, which are assumed by the Commission—the newsletter is sent without subscription fees.

Just drop us a line, and we'll make the switch:
impulse@carnegiehero.org

Circulation of the quarterly newsletter has been growing since its inception in 2005. It now goes to all U.S. states and Canadian provinces, the District of Columbia, and seven foreign countries. The 1,600 current “subscribers” are primarily awardees of the Carnegie Medal and their extended families.



ALBERTA HEROINE

Casey Marie Peirce of Calgary, Alta., got more exercise than she anticipated when she went bicycling along Spray Lakes Reservoir, near Canmore, Alta., one day last summer. She swam halfway across the cold mountain lake to save a couple whose canoe had capsized. Peirce, who is pictured at the scene about an hour before her heroic act, became the latest Canadian recipient of the Carnegie Medal when her award was announced in July. She is one of only seven women from the province of Alberta who have been awarded the medal over the Hero Fund's 105-year history. See page 5 for details of her actions and those of the 21 other new awardees. (Photo by sister Darcy Peirce.)



HERO'S HEIRLOOM

Having one Carnegie Medal and two children, awardee **Chris A. Cole** was thinking ahead about family heirlooms. He broached the idea of a commemorative knife to his employer, W. R. Case and Sons Cutlery of Bradford, Pa., and the result is pictured here. See page 2.

Historian says Hero Fund founding reflected 'new heroism' of the era

A German scholar from the University of Heidelberg says that the founding of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission in 1904 put into practice what many people had been calling for during that era, “to officially recognize heroic deeds by ordinary men and women.”

Simon Wendt, who holds a Ph.D. in modern history from the Free University of Berlin, is exploring how definitions of heroism “changed and multiplied” from the late 19th century through the first part of the 20th—the Gilded Age to the Jazz Age—and what role the mass media played in that process. He has found in the Hero Fund a

(continued on page 3)



Dept. Paul J. Archambault received his Carnegie Medal in Pittsburgh during the Hero Fund's centennial observance.

'04 AWARDEE AIDS FREEWAY SQUATTERS

Deputy **Paul J. Archambault** of the Los Angeles County, Calif., Sheriff's Department—named a Carnegie Medal awardee in 2004—informs of another significant job-related accomplishment, this time within the line of duty. Archambault first came to the Hero Fund's attention when he and another deputy, **John A. Rose II**, defied a fire department roadblock to rescue a woman from her remote home during a major forest fire near Azusa in 2002. They drove eight miles through a canyon to reach the woman, with conditions so bad that their vehicle sustained extensive fire- and debris-related damage. All were lucky to make it out alive.



Geared up...

Flames didn't figure in Archambault's latest mission, in mid-May, but a degree of risk did: Guns drawn, he and other deputies stepped into the darkness of a large, enclosed area under a section of Interstate 10 in Baldwin Park to clean out and seal the cave-like space that was used as a squatter's camp and shooting gallery for drug users. Archambault, 50, oversaw the operation, which was carried out with the state's department of transportation.



...for action

"I saw a large number of syringes, cotton balls, balloons, burnt spoons, and lighters inside the cave," Archambault reports. To say nothing of an M-16 ammo clip and a man who was sleeping near the rotting carcass of what appeared to be a cat.

Another occupant of the cave told a *Los Angeles Times* reporter that he had been living there for a decade, finding it "a reliable sanctuary against daylight, police, and other people."

Archambault estimated that about 30 squatters lived in what he called the "hidden city." He said he had

(continued on page 8)

One-of-a-kind hunting knife commemorates hero's award

Carnegie Medal awardee **Chris A. Cole** of Lewis Run, Pa., and his wife Nicole had one child, Hunter James, at the time of Cole's heroic act in 2002. In thinking that the medal would ultimately be Hunter's, Cole was reflecting the thoughts of Andrew Carnegie. In 1904, the Hero Fund's founder wrote:

A medal shall be given to the hero... (to) recite the heroic deed it commemorates, that descendants may know and be proud of their descent.



Mr. Cole

Then came a second child, Zachary Vincent. Wanting Zachary to have a representative token of the award, Cole turned to his employer, W. R. Case and Sons Cutlery, of Bradford, Pa., where Cole is employed as a completion craftsman. The company makes handcrafted pocket and hunting knives.

"I spoke with a coworker and good friend of mine, Mike, who designs most of our one-of-a-kind knives," Cole said. "Mike has made custom knives for superstars such as Brooks & Dunn, Ted Nugent, and Randy Travis."

After Cole obtained permission from his employer, Mike got right to it. The blade has the Carnegie Medal in gold etching on one side, and on the other side is the description and date of the heroic act. The handle is made out of stag horn, and the product "turned out beautifully," Cole said.

The company actually had more to do with the award than producing the knife. Cole was nominated for the medal by Harry Solarek of the human resources department. "Chris is a true, modern-day hero," Solarek wrote in securing the nomination in early 2003. "His selfless actions were exemplary. He is an honest, genuine person who is a dedicated father, husband, and worker."

It was on his way to work on March 12, 2002, that Cole witnessed an accident involving a tractor-trailer hauling 7,000 gallons of gasoline. Attempting a turn, the rig flipped onto its passenger side, puncturing its cargo tank, and a large quantity of gasoline spilled as the truck's engine kept running. Badly injured, the driver could not exit the cab.

Cole ran through the escaping gasoline, becoming wet to his knees, and mounted the guide rail to access the driver's door. He pulled the driver, 36, from the cab and walked him from the wreckage, suffering first-degree chemical burns to his feet that required medical attention. He later told a reporter, "I just want to make sure I thank God for watching over me that day and everyone involved...for letting us walk out alive." 



Hero Fund founding

(continued from cover)

valuable resource for his study of heroism and “hero worship” in the United States from the 1890s to the 1930s.

“Exploring the history of the Carnegie Hero Fund helps us better understand the emergence of what tends to be called ‘everyday heroism,’” Wendt said. “Prior to the 1880s, the term ‘hero’ was used primarily for soldiers who demonstrated particular valor on the battlefield. During the 1880s and 1890s, however, more and more newspapers and magazines reported about the courageous deeds of ordinary men and women, most of whom had risked their lives trying to save others. Long before the Hero Fund was founded in 1904, publicists and editors praised the courage of such ordinary citizens and called upon authorities and the public to acknowledge their heroism.”

Wendt is analyzing how the mass media reported on this new type of heroism and what it meant to a society that had previously recognized only courageous soldiers.

“There are several interrelated questions that my project will attempt to answer,” Wendt said. “The most important one is whether and how the Carnegie Hero Fund influenced general discussions about everyday heroes. For example, how did the mass media talk about the Carnegie Heroes? Did the work of the fund contribute to more media reports about ordinary citizens who saved the lives of others? And, did the fact that the Carnegie Fund recognized the courage of women, immigrants, and African Americans contribute to a ‘democratization’ of heroism in the eyes of the American public? Answering these questions will contribute to a more thorough understanding of the role of everyday heroes in the past as well as in the present.”

Given Wendt’s thesis, Andrew Carnegie was very much a product of his times, as his early sentiments on civilian heroism were expressed in 1886 and were followed 18 years later with a formal statement of them in the Hero Fund’s founding Deed of Trust. His autobiography (published in 1920, after his death) carries these further observations:

“The heroes of the barbarian past wounded or killed their fellows; the heroes of our civilized day serve or save theirs. Such the difference between physical and moral courage, between barbarism and civilization. Those who belong to the first class are soon to pass away, for we are finally to regard men who slay each other as we now do cannibals who eat each other; but those in the latter class will not die as long as man exists upon the earth, for such heroism as they display is god-like.”



Dr. Wendt, on site

The media may not have embraced Carnegie’s thinking immediately, however. In the *Autobiography*, Carnegie wrote, “Some of the newspapers in America were doubtful of the merits of the Hero Fund and the first annual report was criticized, but all this has passed away and the action of the fund is now warmly extolled. It has conquered, and long will it be before the trust is allowed to perish!”

Wendt, who also holds a master’s degree in Afro-American studies from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, visited the Hero Fund’s offices in May and was given access to most of the Commission’s archives. At the University of Heidelberg, he supervises several Ph.D.

students who study the history of nationalism

in the United States, Germany, and Japan. In addition to his work on heroism and nationalism, his research areas are African American history and gender and memory. Wendt is the author of *The Spirit and the Shotgun: Armed Resistance and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007), and he is currently working on a history of the Daughters of the American Revolution. ❏

TO THE HERO FUND

LIFE AFFIRMING

I am writing to express my continuing gratitude for the scholarship you have given me. In May, I completed my second year of law school, and I will graduate in May 2010. It has been a rewarding, life-changing education, and it was the Commission’s generosity that made it possible.

I very much admire and appreciate the Carnegie Hero Fund, on the part of myself and society in general. It is always life affirming to read the newsletter and hear about such selfless acts.

Thank you for everything the Commission has provided me. I will be eternally grateful.

Abraham John Hart, Oakland, Calif.

(Hart, who is attending James E. Rogers College of Law, University of Arizona, was awarded the Carnegie Medal for his 2002 rescue of a man from his burning car after an accident in Emeryville, Calif.)

COULDN’T SAIL BY

I am honored to receive the Carnegie Hero Medal and to be part of such a positive organization. After reading the stories of the heroic acts and individuals you honor, I am proud you considered me worthy for inclusion. I don’t feel like a “hero;” I just did what I needed to do. I could not sail by and watch people drown. The award is very generous, and I greatly appreciate it. Given that I have two years before entering college, I have started a college savings account. I am looking at a variety of schools with sailing teams and hope that my application will be well received. The recognition of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission will be a nice addition to my college application resume. That you for all you do to support good deeds.

Clerc Cooper, New Orleans, La.

(At age 14, Clerc helped to save three people from drowning in Lake Pontchartrain last year after their disabled boat swamped and spilled them into the water. Sailing nearby with friends, Clerc threw her lifejacket to one of the victims and then she entered the water to retrieve flotation devices for the others. She was awarded the medal in March.)

RIGHT REACTION

I am deeply honored to accept the Carnegie Medal and its accompanying award from the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission. Thank you for your recognition of my actions—I did what I hope that anyone in my position would have done, act to save the life of a young girl in need. It was only by the grace of God that I was there to help her. Had we decided not to go for a bicycle ride that morning, or not chosen to take that particular route, or chosen not to stop at that particular tag sale, or even not been looking in that direction at that precise time, the outcome might have been completely different. As it was, those things all did happen, and I was able to respond to get the girl out of harm’s way. My

(continued on page 7)



LATEST AWARDEES
OF THE CARNEGIE MEDAL

SINCE THE LAST ISSUE OF *imPULSE*, THE FOLLOWING 22 INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN AWARDED THE CARNEGIE MEDAL, BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS TO 9,284 SINCE THE HERO FUND'S INCEPTION IN 1904. THE LATEST AWARDS, WHICH WERE ANNOUNCED ON JULY 1, ARE DETAILED ON THE COMMISSION'S WEBSITE AT WWW.CARNEGIEHERO.ORG. THE NEXT ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARDEES WILL BE MADE ON SEPT. 29.

Naples, Fla., residents **Terry Ray Odom**, 49, a business operator, and **Richard S. Cameron**, 36, a construction worker, saved a man from drowning on July 3 last year when his sport utility vehicle left the roadway, entered a golf course lake in East Naples, and began to sink in 25-foot-deep water. Witnessing the accident, both Odom and Cameron left their vehicles, entered the lake, and swam 25 feet out to the vehicle. Arriving first, Odom tried unsuccessfully to pull Ray J. Davis, 55, through the window of the driver's door. He then climbed into the sinking vehicle. Cameron arrived, partially entered the window, and pulled on Davis as Odom pushed on him from inside. Davis became free as the vehicle submerged, and Cameron swam to the bank with him. Odom escaped the vehicle and also returned safely to the bank. Davis required hospitalization, and Odom sustained a laceration to his foot.

High school student **Thomas Eugene Foust**, 17, of Glenview, Ill., saved an 83-year-old woman from being struck by a train in Glenview on Sept. 8, 2007. The woman mistakenly drove her automobile onto a railroad track at a crossing as a passenger train approached at high speed. Driving nearby, Thomas

saw what was happening. He ran to the car and, as the train bore down, pulled open the driver's door, reached inside, and unfastened the woman's safety belt. He then pulled her from the car, took her 10 feet to a fence that bordered the track bed, and shielded her with his body. Within seconds, the train struck the car. The woman was shaken but uninjured. (See photo.)

Frederick L. Visconti, 65, a retired firefighter from Danbury, Conn., rescued his neighbor, Robert J. Mitchell, 18, from a burning house on May 24 last year. Mitchell was in his bedroom on the second floor of his family's two-story house after an accidental fire broke out in that room. Visconti smelled smoke, responded to the scene, and entered the structure. He went up the stairs and, in dense smoke that severely limited visibility, crawled into Mitchell's bedroom, in which flames were growing. Finding Mitchell in bed, he pulled him to the floor and then aided him downstairs and outside to safety.

Edwin Hernandez, 31, a general contractor from Reading, Pa., rescued a woman from being attacked in her home in Reading on April 18, 2008. The woman, 65, was being attacked by her son, who punched her and threw a wall unit at her, pinning her to the floor. Walking nearby, Hernandez was alerted to the assault. He entered the woman's home and found the assailant thrusting a shard of glass at her through the wall unit's openings. When Hernandez lifted the unit from her, the assailant threatened him with the shard. Hernandez blocked the assailant and then took the woman outside to safety. Police arrived soon and arrested the assailant.

Edward Bohan of Franklin Square, N.Y., rescued John H. Collymore from a burning sport utility vehicle after an accident in North Hempstead, N.Y., on July 1 last year. Collymore, 58, was trapped in his vehicle after it left the roadway and caught fire. Bohan, 31, an off-duty fire-

fighter, drove upon the scene and stopped. After using a metal signpost that was nearby to smash the driver's window, he opened the door, unfastened Collymore's safety belt, and pulled him out. Flames grew shortly to engulf the vehicle. Collymore sustained serious burns, and Bohan received hospital treatment for second-degree burns and cuts to his hands.

R. Jason Altman, 27, of Andrews, S.C., died helping to save Keith E. Gibson from suffocating inside a chemical dryer at a plant in Georgetown, S.C., on Nov. 4, 2006, and **Tommy Earl Barnhill**, 43, of Georgetown helped in the attempt to save Altman. Gibson, 39, lost consciousness in the oxygen-deficient atmosphere of the dryer as he was cleaning it. Altman, a plant operator, entered the dryer and lifted him toward its opening, where other workers pulled him to safety. After focusing on Gibson, the other workers, by then including Barnhill, 43, also an operator, realized that Altman was unaccounted for, and they found him lying unconscious in the dryer. Two men equipped with air supply entered the unit and lifted him toward the opening as Barnhill, unprotected, extended his upper body through the opening to grasp him. With others he pulled Altman out. Altman could not be revived. Gibson recovered, but Barnhill suffered severe respiratory distress.

Off-duty firefighter **Michael P. Schmidt**, 38, of Hickory Creek, Texas, helped to save Alexandra L. Stuart from drowning in Lake Lewisville in Lewisville, Texas, on June 6 last year. Stuart, 23, was the driver of a sport utility vehicle that accidentally entered the lake at a marina and began to sink in water 25 feet deep. Fishing nearby, Schmidt entered the lake and swam about 50 feet to the vehicle. He opened the driver's door and, submerging with the vehicle, reached inside, grasped Stuart, and pulled her out. They surfaced. Schmidt's friend took Stuart to a nearby pier, Schmidt following, and all left the lake safely.

Richard W. Meserve saved a 9-year-old girl from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean at Scarborough, Maine, on July 3 last year. While swimming with her short surfboard, the girl was carried farther from the beach and a few hundred feet along it, into an area of large rocks over which waves broke. From the beach, Meserve, 42, a teacher from Falmouth, Maine, saw her. He entered the ocean and swam out through rough water to the girl. Re-establishing her on her board, Meserve instructed her to kick strongly, and then he placed his hand on her back as he swam alongside her. They proceeded along the shore to get past the rocks and then headed directly in.

Dwight A. Moore, 33, a welder from Aliquippa, Pa., saved his neighbor Kara M. Freeman, 18, from her family's burning house on May 23, 2008. At night, Freeman was asleep on the top floor of the 2.5-story house after fire broke out in the kitchen and spread rapidly. Moore, who lived across the street, entered the house and proceeded through dense smoke up to the top level. He alerted Freeman, enabling her to flee to the first floor and safety. Moore followed but encountered



Dwight A. Moore of Aliquippa, Pa., is surrounded by neighborhood fans after the award of his Carnegie Medal was announced. Photo by Sally Maxson provided through the courtesy of The Beaver County, Pa., Times

difficulty breathing and returned to the attic for air. He then descended to the first floor and exited the structure. Flames spread to all floors of the house, destroying it. (See photo.)

Casey Marie Peirce, 30, of Calgary, Alta., saved a man and woman, 49, from drowning in Spray Lakes Reservoir at Canmore, Alta., on July 26, 2008. The couple called for help after their canoe capsized in the 50-degree water at a point about midway across the 2,460-foot-wide mountain lake. Peirce, a communications manager, was riding a bicycle on the bank in that vicinity and became aware of the situation. She entered the water and swam to the couple. Grasping a rope attached to the canoe and wrapping it around her wrist, Peirce swam toward the bank, towing the canoe and its victims. The cold sapped her strength in the arduous swim, which took about 45 minutes. (See photo, page 1.)

Biomedical engineer **George E. Gorton III** of Ware, Mass., attempted to rescue a 3-year-old girl from an out-of-control passenger van in East Longmeadow, Mass., on Aug. 2 last year. The girl was alone in the van, which was parked facing downhill along a residential street. The van began to coast, attracting the attention of Gorton, 45, who was nearby. Gorton ran to the vehicle, reached inside, and pulled on the steering wheel to keep the van from striking a parked car. He then steered the van toward the rise of a yard, but the van came too close to another parked car for Gorton to clear it. Caught between the two vehicles, he was thrown to the pavement, his leg broken. The van continued but came to a stop in the yard, and the girl was uninjured.

Susan M. Ricard, 37, a teacher, saved John Benoit, 58, from drowning in Webster Lake, Webster, Mass., on July 18, 2008. Benoit's sailboat capsized on the lake during a storm that approached suddenly, bringing thunder, lightning, and winds recorded as high as 33 m.p.h. From her nearby home on the bank, Ricard witnessed the accident. Taking two child's short surfboards, she entered the water from her dock. Clad in pajamas, she swam against the wind and white-capped waves to Benoit, who was about 150 feet out. Ricard placed one of the boards under him, and, using the second for herself, linked arms with Benoit and returned to the dock with him, aided by the waves.

Randall Scott Brewer of Lancaster, N.H., died helping to save an 11-year-old boy from drowning in the Israel River at Lancaster on April 19 last year. The boy jumped into the swift, cold river and had difficulty staying afloat. After a teenage girl in his party entered the river for him and also experienced difficulty, Brewer, 27, another member of the party, removed his outer attire and entered the 38-degree water. He made his way to the boy and pushed him toward safety. Then caught by the current, Brewer was carried downstream and submerged. The boy was not injured, but Brewer drowned.



Thomas Eugene Foust of Glenview, Ill., was a high school senior at the time of his heroic act, and upon graduation he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps, fulfilling a boyhood dream. He is now PFC Thomas Foust, 1st Battalion 2nd Marines, stationed at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Aaron D. Robinson died attempting to save his brother Jairus A. Robinson from drowning in a pond in Cambridge, Md., on Feb. 11, 2007. At a point about 20 feet from the bank, Jairus, 8, broke through ice partially covering a pond at the housing development where the boys and their family lived. Aaron, 12, student, was nearby on the bank when he saw him in the water. Aaron immediately ran to the pond and made his way out on the ice toward Jairus. As he reached for him, Aaron also broke through. Jairus submerged, as did Aaron, after a brief struggle. Police and rescue personnel responded shortly and removed the boys from the pond, but they could not be revived.

Paul Cossalter, 41, of Wrenshall, Minn., died attempting to save Joseph P. Kimmes III, Scott A. Kimmes, and Harold N. Olsen from suffocating in a landfill lift station in Superior, Wis., on Nov. 1, 2007. Joseph, 44, and his brother, Scott, 40, were replacing a pump inside the lift station, which was a 20-foot-deep, belowground chamber. Working with them was Olsen, 47. Joseph lost consciousness in the lift station, the atmosphere of which was found to contain lethal levels of hydrogen sulfide gas. Scott then climbed inside, followed by Olsen. Cossalter, a contractor, was also at the site. He told another man there to call for help, and then he too

climbed inside the chamber and was overcome. Rescue personnel removed the four men, all of whom had been asphyxiated.

Landscaper **Toby Ames**, 38, of Runnells, Iowa, saved Sarah M. Elrod from her burning automobile after a highway accident in Mitchellville, Iowa, on July 18, 2008. Elrod, 21, was unconscious inside the car following its collision with a cargo truck. Flames erupted at the back of the car, which, severely damaged, remained in contact with the front of the truck. Driving on the same highway, Ames witnessed the crash and stopped. Despite flames issuing from the rear half of the car, he opened its driver's door, reached inside, and unfastened Elrod's safety belt. He then lifted her from the vehicle and carried her to safety. Flames grew to engulf the car and spread to the truck.

On duty as a part-time police officer in Claysburg, Pa., on April 24 last year, **David Patrick Rosamilia**, 38, of Hollidaysburg, Pa., who was also a general contractor, removed Ronald L. Weamer, 61, from his burning car after an accident in Claysburg. Alerted to the accident, Rosamilia tried to open the driver's door of the car, but it was jammed. He opened the passenger door and entered the vehicle despite smoke and fumes inside and flames entering through a hole in the windshield. Weamer was caught in the wreckage, and Rosamilia worked to free him and then pulled him out of the car. Weamer was pronounced dead at the scene of his injuries, and Rosamilia sustained smoke inhalation, which required hospital treatment.

High school student **Chloe C. Van Alstine**, 17, of Wells, N.Y., helped to save William T. Trainor, 48, from drowning in Lake Algonquin, Wells, on Nov. 1, 2008. Trainor was the driver of a vehicle that left the roadway, entered the lake, and began to sink in water 10 feet deep. He escaped the vehicle through a window and struggled to stay afloat in the 45-degree water at a point about 90 feet from the bank. Chloe, who had been jogging nearby, witnessed the accident and then entered the water, its coldness startling her. She swam to Trainor and started to the bank with him. They were met by a man responding in a boat and were towed the rest of the way in.

Middletown, R.I., residents **Henry W. Mott IV**, 42, an illustrator, and **Francis J. Gutierrez**, 51, a marine electronics technician, rescued Keith T. Ulich, 38, from the burning wreckage of a light airplane after it crashed in their neighborhood on July 3 last year. Mott approached the airplane and called out to see if there were survivors. Ulich responded, extending an arm through the cockpit doorway. Despite intense heat and growing flames, Mott went up to the airplane, receiving a burn to his forehead, grasped Ulich by the arm, and pulled him partway onto the wing. Gutierrez joined him there, and the two men pulled Ulich the remaining distance out of the airplane and to the ground. They then removed their shirts to extinguish flames on him. Severely burned, Ulich died 10 weeks later. Mott required hospital treatment for the burn to his forehead.

Charles Ponzi nominated for medal after successful lifesaving “scheme”

The infamous Charles Ponzi—the archetypical larcenist whose very name became synonymous with a fraudulent investment scheme—was once nominated for the Carnegie Medal. The Hero Fund was contacted in June by Jef Sewell of Despair, Inc., to confirm the nomination, as Sewell is publishing a book on Ponzi that is to be released this fall.

Hero Fund archives indicate the claim is correct. A three-by-five index card bearing the name of Charles Ponzi is one of thousands in the files that record nominees’ names in the pre-computer era, and his case number—9511—approximates the time in which his heroic act took place, the fall of 1912. However, no award was made in the case, and the files are mute as to the reason for the Commission rejecting it. Historically, only 11% of nominated cases are awarded the medal.

Details of Ponzi’s heroic actions are contained in a 2005 book, *Ponzi’s Scheme* (Random House, New York), by Mitchell Zukoff, a professor of journalism at Boston University. Zukoff



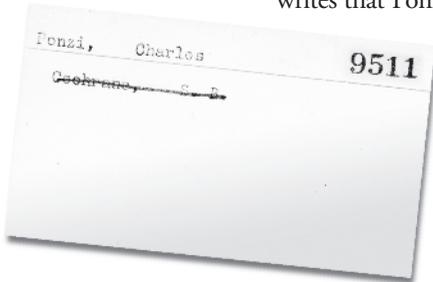
Mr. Ponzi

writes that Ponzi, fresh out of federal prison in Atlanta, resumed life in Blocton, Ala., a coal-mining town that supported a camp of Italian immigrants. Ponzi, who was born in Italy in 1882, felt at home in Blocton, where he worked as a translator, book-keeper, and nurse to injured miners.

During this time, eight years before his lucrative “career in finance,” Ponzi learned of a terrible accident at the mining company hospital. A gasoline stove exploded while a nurse was using it to cook a patient’s meal. She was severely burned on her upper body, and her situation was declared desperate, as she faced gangrene setting in. Her doctor wanted to try skin grafting but couldn’t find a donor.

After telling the doctor, “I will give you all the skin you need,” Ponzi donated more than 70 square inches of skin from his thighs. During his recovery, he learned that more skin was needed, and he volunteered 50 inches from his back. The nurse survived, and Ponzi required almost three months’ hospitalization, with the account of his gesture making the news. According to Sewell, the *Atlanta Constitution* carried references to Ponzi’s award nomination: “The citizens of Blocton endeavored to bring the matter before the Carnegie Hero Fund...” (August 12, 1920).

Ponzi died at age 66 in a hospital charity ward in Rio de Janeiro in 1949. He was almost penniless. Many newspapers editorialized what a fitting end it was, yet Alabama newspapers told a different story, quoting a man who had known him during his time in Blocton. T.C. Tuggle called Ponzi “the smartest man I ever met” and one who “made friends awfully easy.” Tuggle said that Ponzi was remembered favorably by many for helping to save the nurse’s life. (With thanks to Jef Sewell and Mitchell Zukoff.)

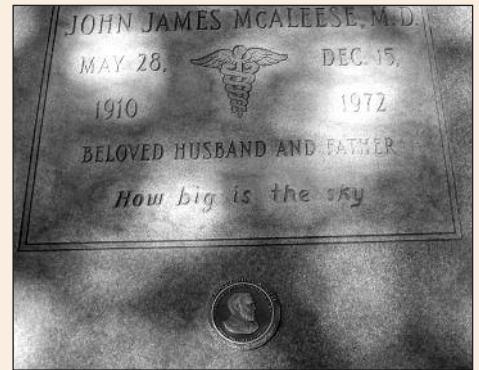


The Hero Fund’s 97-year-old file card recording the nomination of Charles Ponzi

SERVICE APPRECIATED

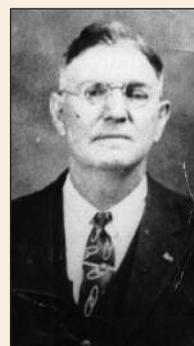


At a Hero Fund committee meeting in June, board member Alfred W. (“Burr”) Wishart, Jr., right, was thanked for his service of more than 30 years to the Commission. Elected to the board in 1976 and serving ever since on its Executive Committee, Wishart is one of six current Commission members who have tenure of at least three decades. A Presbyterian minister, Wishart also served 31 years as president and chief executive officer of The Pittsburgh Foundation, taking its endowment from \$17 million to \$548 million during his association. He is shown here with Mark Laskow, Commission president.



HEROES REMEMBERED

Bronze markers for the graves of deceased Carnegie Medal awardees are available to the heroes’ families (see “Continuum,” page 9), and in recent months two installations of the marker were made. Above, the grave of **Dr. John James McAleese**, on Hilton Head Island, S.C., bears the medallion, which was placed by his family. “The marker is very impressive,” writes Charles B. Hartmann of Vero Beach, Fla., representing the family, “and we thank the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission for initiating such a wonderful commemoration.” Dr. McAleese, who died Dec. 15, 1972, was awarded the Carnegie Medal in 1958 for saving two women from drowning in Verona, Pa.



The Whitesboro, Texas, grave of awardee **George W. Cowgur** was also designated with a marker. Granddaughter Melva Cowgur of Denton, Texas, writes, “It is wonderful to have the marker where it belongs.” Cowgur, left, who died March 20, 1951, was awarded the medal for his

actions of Aug. 4, 1914, by which he saved a man from suffocating in a 30-foot-deep well in Theodore, Texas. A 40-year-old farmer at the time, he climbed to the bottom of the well and affixed a line to the victim so that he could be raised to the surface.

FRIENDS REMEMBERED

Mildred D. Mason Caton, 69, of Andalusia, Ala., died July 3. Caton received the Carnegie Medal for her actions of Aug. 14, 1954, by which she helped to save an 11-year-old girl and a 36-year-old man from drowning after a boating accident on Blue Lake, Falco, Ala. Caton was 14 at the time. She went on to attend Auburn University with scholarship aid from the Hero Fund and then taught physical education and science.

Thomas A. Grant, 60, of Boquet, Pa., died in a bicycling accident on May 28. Grant was a Carnegie Medal awardee at age 16 for having helped to save a boy from drowning in a reservoir in 1965 in Manor, Pa. An Eagle Scout, he went on to attend the University of Pittsburgh with scholarship assistance from the Hero Fund. Grant was an avid cook and gardener, and he enjoyed playing the guitar.

Verrill D. Stalberg, 72, of Bellingham, Wash., died July 2. Stalberg was a faithful correspondent over the years, having made nominations of numerous candidates for the award. His grandfather, Randolph Osborn, received the Carnegie Medal for his actions of Sept. 12, 1905, by which he attempted to save a small boy from a runaway, horse-drawn buggy. In a final act of devotion to the Hero Fund's mission, Stalberg named the Commission as a beneficiary of his military insurance.

Allan Thaler, 77, of West Haven, Conn., died April 27. Thaler was awarded a medal from Carnegie's French hero fund—Fondation Carnegie—for rescuing a man drowning in the Seine River in Paris in 1962. Thaler, an architect, was a tourist at the time. Earlier this year he appealed to the Hero Fund for help in getting the French fund to re-issue his medal, and the request was being processed at the time of his death.



Mr. Grant



Mr. Stalberg

RESCUERS AND FRIENDS



William G. Wynne, 10, of Stone Mountain, Ga., found friends in his rescuers, Chase Dopson, left, of Yulee, Fla., and **John A. Lloyd** of Fernandina Beach, Fla. William was saved from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean at Fernandina Beach on May 25, 2007, after a strong current prevented him and his father, Brian Wynne, from returning to shore. Lloyd, then 63, a retired teacher, was walking along the beach in the vicinity. He swam out to them and kept William afloat until Dopson

and another lifeguard responded. William and Lloyd were returned to shore by the lifeguards, but William's father drowned. Lloyd, who required hospital treatment for nearly drowning, was awarded the Carnegie Medal for his efforts, and William and his mother, Kimberly, were on hand when the medal was presented last month in Fernandina Beach. Dopson, now a city firefighter, also attended the event, which was arranged by Daniel Hanes, chief of the Fernandina Beach Fire-Rescue Department. Douglas R. Chambers, the Hero Fund's director of external affairs, represented the Commission. Photo by Sara Franklin-Wilson.

TO THE HERO FUND

(continued from page 3)

injuries were worth every moment since I knew she was okay. In that situation, people will either act, or will watch. I am deeply honored to know what my reaction was, and hopefully will be, if ever confronted by a situation such as this again.

So many times our society focuses on the tragedies that occur. It is wonderful to be a part of a story that highlights the positive aspects of humanity. Thank you for the work that you do to ensure that these positive stories are told and recognized.

George Gorton, Ware, Mass.

(Gorton was awarded the medal in June—see page 5 for a description of his heroic act. His injuries included an open fracture of his left leg that required surgery for placement of a rod. He was disabled almost two months.)

WORKPLACE HEROISM

Thank you for sending the grave marker for my father's headstone. It is really beautiful.

Because of the cash award that he received with the medal, my father was able to purchase a home for his family. The house was one of many built by the Endicott-Johnson Shoe Company that were then sold to their employees so that they would have a decent place to live and raise their families. The house he bought was one of the larger ones and sold for the princely sum of \$3,000. A small fortune for a workingman in the 1930s.

My father was working for Endicott-Johnson in the steam-fitting department when the blast occurred. It resulted in his sustaining severe burns in attempting to rescue his friend and fellow worker, who unfortunately died of his injuries. I don't think my father ever really considered himself a hero, despite having done something that few would. Nor do I believe he ever came to terms that despite his efforts that he lost his friend, as he would only talk about how he received such an honor (the medal) when pressed.

Ruth Cordick, Watkins Glen, N.Y.

(Henry C. Jones, 36, pulled his coworker from a burning room in the basement of a factory building on Nov. 3, 1933, and was awarded the Carnegie Medal and an accompanying financial grant of \$1,000. A 40-year employee of Endicott-Johnson, Jones died at age 91 in 1989.)

CARNegie 'FOUNDATIONS FAMILY' TO GATHER IN NYC NEXT MONTH

Representatives of the 22 trusts and institutions established worldwide by Andrew Carnegie will be gathering in New York City next month to award the 2009 Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy. Established in 2001 under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the medal is awarded biennially to acknowledge

(continued on page 8)



'04 AWARDEE

(continued from page 2)

not seen anything like it in 27 years with the sheriff's department, according to the *Times*. The story was televised nationally on Anderson Cooper's 360^o, a CNN show.

The cleanup also included providing human services for those displaced. The entire operation serviced 180 people, Archambault said, including 40 children. "Dentists did tooth extractions for 100 people, others participated in research for finding a cure for bipolar and schizophrenia disorders, 150 got immunizations, and some were treated for high blood pressure, diabetes, and sexually transmitted disease. Fifty-four homeless persons were placed into housing."



MRS. MISSY

Melissa A. Spangler, one of the Commission's three case investigators, became the bride of Jonathan A. McLaughlin on May 23, her coworkers in attendance. Preferring

to be known as "Missy," the new Mrs. McLaughlin joined the Hero Fund in 2005. All the best.

CARNEGIE 'FOUNDATIONS FAMILY'

(continued from page 7)

those who have impressive histories of personal giving in the areas of art, culture, health, education, science, and the environment.

The presentation will take place on Thursday, Oct. 15, in the Celeste Bartos Room of the New York Public Library. Previous presentations were held in Edinburgh, Scotland (2005), near Carnegie's birthplace in Dunfermline, and in Pittsburgh (2007), where the Scottish immigrant launched his steelmaking business, enabling him to amass a fortune. That Carnegie gave most of his fortune away is at the heart of the award, which was begun to commemorate the centennial of his systematic philanthropy.

The Carnegie Hero Fund Commission will be represented at the event, as will Carnegie's hero funds operating in Western Europe. Hero funds' representatives take advantage of being together and this year will meet at Carnegie Corporation headquarters on Tuesday, Oct. 13, to discuss areas of shared interest and concern.

UPSTATE HERO



James C. Carpenter of Gloversville, N.Y. holds his Carnegie Medal following a private presentation in mid-May by Douglas R. Chambers, the Hero Fund's director of external affairs. Also present were Carpenter's wife, daughter, and mother. Carpenter was cited for his actions of Nov. 8, 2007, by which he rescued a 5-year-old girl from the second floor of a burning house next door to his own house. A warehouse worker, Carpenter, then 28, reached out for the girl's sister, 3, but she retreated. Flames spread to the stairway as Carpenter left the house with the older girl. Her sister was rescued by **Leanne Davis, Jr.**, now of Fayetteville, N.C., and he too received a medal. For the record, Gloversville was once the hub of America's glove making industry with more than 200 manufacturers located there and in nearby Johnstown.

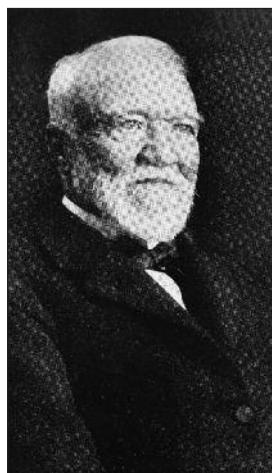
FIRST LADY

Twenty years on the job as one of the Hero Fund's case investigators was marked Aug. 14 by Susan L. Marcy of Pittsburgh. She joined the organization in 1989 as its first-ever female investigator—previously, the job of "special agent" (as the position was historically called) favored men because of the rigors of on-site fieldwork throughout the United States and Canada.

Advances in communications over the years have now allowed most casework to be done from the office, at considerable cost savings. A native of Cheswick, Pa., and a graduate of Mercyhurst College, Erie, Pa., Marcy joins two others from the Hero Fund's four-person investigative unit with 20 years under their belts, coworker Marlin Ross (hired in 1983) and investigations manager Jeffrey A. Dooley (1985).



✦ THE QUOTABLE A.C. ✦



In bestowing charity, the main consideration should be to help those who will help themselves; to provide part of the means by which those who desire to improve may do so; to give to those who desire to rise the aids by which they may rise; to assist, but rarely or never to do all. Neither the individual nor the race is improved by almsgiving.

— From *The Gospel of Wealth*, 1889

Brothers-in-law team up to save four teens from rough lake waters

Brothers-in-law **Jason Christopher Byrnes** of North Syracuse, N.Y., and **Peter James Benedict** of Cicero, N.Y., didn't plan to take their families to a beach on Lake Ontario that July day two years ago. They intended to remain at a family camp along a creek that flowed into the lake, but one of the children insisted on going to the beach. For three teenagers in another party at the scene, the change in plan saved their lives.



Jason Christopher Byrnes, center left, and Peter James Benedict were presented the Carnegie Medal at a private dinner with wives Betsy and Amy in attendance.

Soon after reaching the beach, in upstate New York near Ellisburg, the men, both 33, were alerted to a group of teenagers who had been pulled farther into the lake while swimming. It was windy that day, and waves estimated from five to eight feet high were in the lake, as were strong currents. Officials later described the water as "extremely violent due to wind-generated current."

Byrnes, an account executive, and Benedict, a manager, boarded a small boat and located one of the teenagers about 750 feet from shore. Pulling him aboard, they then spotted two heads between the waves about 125 feet away. On reaching those teens, they pulled one of them aboard but realized that the now-flooding boat couldn't take on another person. Benedict jumped into the water and stayed with the remaining teen, a 13-year-old girl, while Byrnes went to shore. Fifteen minutes later he returned, got both Benedict and the girl aboard, and went to safety.

The men returned to the lake a final time to search for a fourth teen but were unsuccessful. Her body was found two days later, almost a mile from shore. She had drowned.

Last December Byrnes and Benedict were each awarded the Carnegie Medal for their actions, and they were presented the medals at a private dinner in May that was attended by their families. Douglas R. Chambers, the Hero Fund's director of external affairs, represented the Commission. ☒



CHARACTER EDUCATION

Students at the Montefiore Special School in downtown Chicago had the opportunity to learn of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission and the civilian heroes it recognizes during an assembly in May on character education. The middle school students, all of whom are at Montefiore for various behavioral disorders, heard Douglas R. Chambers, the Commission's director of external affairs, describe several heroic acts performed in the Chicago area. The assembly was a joint venture with the Heartwood Institute, a Pittsburgh-based provider of character education programs for schools throughout the country.



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 most recent annual report (2007) 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 through the Commission's website (www.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.

CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION

436 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1101
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1841
Telephone: (412) 281-1302
Toll free: (800) 447-8900
Fax: (412)-281-5751
E-mail: carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org
Website: www.carnegiehero.org

**Carnegie Hero Fund Commission**

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

412-281-1302 • 800-447-8900

www.carnegiehero.org

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

Address Service Requested

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

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

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

Address change? Please keep us posted!

Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

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

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

Fax: 412-281-5751

E-mail: carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org

impulse@carnegiehero.org

Website: www.carnegiehero.org

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

A. H. Burchfield III

Elizabeth H. Genter

Thomas J. Hilliard, Jr.

David McL. Hillman

Linda T. Hills

Peter J. Lambrou

Mark Laskow

President

Christopher R. McCrady

Priscilla J. McCrady

Vice President

Ann M. McGuinn

Nancy L. Rackoff

Frank Brooks Robinson

Dan D. Sandman

Kenneth G. Sawyer

Arthur M. Scully, Jr.

William P. Snyder III

Sybil P. Veeder

James M. Walton

Treasurer

Thomas L. Wentling, Jr.

Alfred W. Wishart, Jr.

Carol A. Word

FROM THE ARCHIVES**A BOAT CAPTAIN'S SACRIFICE**

McClellanville, S.C., is a town of about 500 near the Atlantic coast, sandwiched between the Francis Marion National Forest and the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge. The latter is a labyrinth of creeks and bays that destined McClellanville to become known for its seafood industries. In earlier times, before the intracoastal waterway was constructed, the creeks served as primary transportation routes between McClellanville and the Atlantic.

On May 24, 1911, a hot Wednesday evening with little breeze, 27-year-old **William F. Leland** of McClellanville was piloting his gasoline-powered boat, the *Rufus Gibbs*, amidst the

maze of waterways. Leland and his crew of three were returning to McClellanville from Georgetown, about 25 miles northeast. At about 6 p.m., when the *Rufus Gibbs* was east of Oyster Bay, its engine quit, and it drifted in the 2.5-m.p.h. current. A short time later, another riverboat came up the same creek, and Leland asked its captain if he would tow the *Rufus Gibbs* back to McClellanville. Tied to each other, the two boats proceeded farther up the creek.

Leland was in the pilothouse of the *Rufus Gibbs* when his deckhand, David Simpson,

*The Rufus Gibbs*

slipped off the deck of that boat and into the creek. He drifted with the current away from the boats before submerging and disappearing from view. Leland, a good swimmer, dived overboard and swam to him, reaching him about 70 feet from the boats. He grasped Simpson's hands, but both men submerged and did not resurface. They drowned, their bodies later recovered.

The following year Leland's sacrifice was recognized by the Commission when it awarded a Carnegie Medal and death benefits of \$250 to Leland's father. Leland's brother, R. B. Leland, had a son in 1914 and named him William after the deceased hero.

When Leland's father died, the medal was given to William, who donated it to the Village Museum in McClellanville, where it remains a part of the exhibits on the town. William's son, William Baker Leland, Jr., and the latter's cousin, Rutledge B. Leland III, the current mayor of McClellanville, heard of their ancestor's heroic actions when they were children. The mayor, as a boy, would navigate the creeks of the area, and older family members would point out the spot where the act took place.  —Marlin Ross, *Case Investigator*