



imPULSE

A Periodic Newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission ISSUE 3 • AUGUST 2005

Scholarship awardee senses father's help 'every step of the way'

UNCOMMON EFFORTS OF A COMMON MAN

Jackie L. Hennessee of Decatur, Tenn., was an avid fisherman, and he knew the waters of the Tennessee River at Watts Bar Dam well. The dam, one of the nine erected on the river by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), was completed in 1942, three weeks after the Pearl Harbor invasion, and provided urgently needed electricity for the war effort.

Employed himself by the TVA as a quality assurance inspector, Hennessee was 43 on July 12, 1989, the day he died during the rescue attempt of three fishermen in a boat below the dam.

Hennessee was fishing with his brother Jerry and Jerry's son, Chris, 15, in Hennessee's 16-foot aluminum boat. All wore life jackets. At about 8:50 p.m., they saw the three other fishermen in a powerless boat that was being drawn toward the face of the dam, where water was made turbulent by the dam's open spillways. The men were waving their arms for help.

Hennessee immediately took his boat to the disabled one, and his brother caught a line that was thrown by one of the stranded men. When Hennessee tried to turn his boat around to tow the disabled one from the turbulence, his boat also lost power. Both craft capsized. Jerry, his son, and two of the other men surfaced downstream and were picked up by boaters. They survived. Hennessee and the other original victim both drowned.

For his efforts, Hennessee, who left a wife and two children, was posthumously awarded the Carnegie Medal in 1991.

In further recognition of his actions, a park was built at the Decatur Elementary School "as a memorial to the uncommon efforts of a common man." The park includes playing fields, as Hennessee had been a Little League baseball coach.

By Laura Hennessee Smith
Daughter of Awardee Jackie L. Hennessee

As I write, it has been almost 16 years to the day since my father passed away, but I still remember it like it was yesterday.

It was a hot July day and my father had gone fishing in his boat on the Tennessee River, along with my uncle and cousin. The next thing I knew was a call to our house informing that there had been an accident. My father had died while rescuing other fishermen, whose boat was being drawn toward the spillway of a dam.

That was the summer I graduated from high school and had already begun my first semester of college at Tennessee Technological University. My mother and father had always been very loving and caring parents, but I was a "daddy's girl" and after his accident I just couldn't hold it together enough to finish school.

Fast forward several years. Lots of things have changed. I now have a very loving husband, John, and two children, Taylor, 5, and Madison, 3. After many years of prodding and begging from my husband and mother, I decided to finish my degree. As John and I planned the family budget, I just didn't see how it would be possible to attend school full time, and I really didn't want to take night classes after working all day and be away from my husband and children.

I remembered that the Hero Fund had given me a grant the semester after my father passed away since I was the child of posthumous awardee of the Carnegie Medal. I contacted the Commission, and it was more than willing to help me by awarding another grant. With Carnegie's help I was able to attend school full time and finish my accounting degree at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga this past May.

Graduation was a bittersweet day. My mother, younger brother, grandparents, husband, and children were all there to see me walk across the stage and receive my diploma.
(continued on page 2)



Laura Hennessee Smith and her brother Jeffrey L. Hennessee, children of 1991 Carnegie Medal awardee Jackie L. Hennessee. They are posed in Jack Hennessee Memorial Park, Decatur, Tenn., their hometown.



BOARD NOTES

A COMMUNITY OF HEROES

By Mark Laskow, President
Carnegie Hero Fund Commission



The Hero Fund's centennial celebration in 2004, with its first-ever gathering of Carnegie Medal recipients, has changed the Commission in ways that are subtle but important.

For the first 80 years or so, the Commission's investigators lived

and worked in the field, interviewing witnesses, meeting candidates, and visiting beneficiaries. By the mid-'80s, societal and technological changes brought an end to most field investigations, and the Commission's face-to-face contact with medal nominees and beneficiaries dropped off considerably. While the changes were necessary, we lost something in that process.

In connection with our centennial celebration we tried some new ideas. Commission members and staff, including the case investigators, have begun to travel to present some awards in person. By including the investigators in the award ceremony, we enriched their work lives and improved their understanding of their work.

These contacts are powerful experiences. In November 2003, we traveled to Montgomery, Ala., to present the medal posthumously to the wives, parents, and children of 12 miners killed in the Brookwood Mine disaster of 2001. It was moving beyond words, literally, but how worthwhile it is that those children carry with them for life the knowledge that the world said "thank you" for what their fathers had given.

We are also making more beneficiary visits. I don't expect that we will ever again ask our investigators to live perpetually "on the road," but this renewed contact with medal recipients and beneficiaries will certainly benefit the Commission.

We hope that recipients of the medal will benefit as well. They are modest about the significance of their heroic actions, but from what we saw at the centennial dinner, they seemed to enjoy meeting other recipients and learning about each other's experiences. We think that meeting other heroes or reading about their experiences can help medal recipients deal with the strong emotional response many of them experience after a rescue.

Scholarship awardee senses father's help 'every step of the way' (continued)

There was one very special person missing though. But I truly believe that even though my father wasn't there physically, he had been helping me every step of the way though his courageous act!

Now I am starting work on a master's degree at Tennessee Technological University, my father's alma mater, and, with the help of Carnegie, my brother Jeff has also started going back to college, also at Tennessee Technological University. He has even joined the fraternity, Phi Delta Theta, that my father helped found many years ago. My father may not be with us, but through the Hero Fund he is helping us just as much as ever. Thank you Carnegie Hero Fund Commission for all of your help over the years!

Ms. Smith and her family live in Dalton, Ga., where she is an industrial engineer.



The park at the Decatur Elementary School dedicated to the memory of Hennessee.

SOME MEDAL RECIPIENTS ALSO SPONSOR SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships from the Hero Fund to the awardees of the medal—and to their dependents in cases of disability or death to the hero—have long been a part of the Commission's giving tradition.

In the same spirit, awardees of the medal on occasion become scholarship grantors, as well, donating some or all of their Hero Fund award monies for educational purposes.

After the July 21, 2004, death of her husband, **Domenic G. Giunta**, 55, who drowned while helping to save an 8-year-old boy from drowning in the Gulf of Mexico at Dunedin, Fla., Peggy G. Giunta established the Don G. Giunta Endowed Memorial Scholarship at the University of South Florida. Giunta and his wife both graduated from the university, as did two of their three children, and the third is close to graduating. Scholarships from the fund will be given to high school seniors who have performed extraordinarily heroic or selfless acts.

Belinda Lee Rose, of Pass Lake, Ont., was an officer for the Fergus detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police on April 11, 2001, when she kept a man from committing suicide by preventing his jumping from an overlook near the Village of Elora (see page 6). Rose is using her award money to set up a scholarship fund for youth in Elora who have made a difference in their school, community, or home. The recipients will receive a certificate and a gift specific to his or her needs or wishes, and an engraved trophy will be displayed in the recipient's school for a year. Representatives of the community, police, and schools will choose the awardees, and Rose will present the award at a school assembly.

Close friends **Robert K. Barth** of Pardeeville, Wis., and **Terry R. Pease** of Cambria, Wis., were not content simply to save the lives of a three-year-old girl and her mother from a burning car on August 25, 2003, in Cambria. Each was awarded the Carnegie Medal, and of their accompanying financial grants, each committed to donating \$250 toward the girl's post-secondary education. Unknown to them at the time, Barth and Pease saved a third life that day: The mother gave birth to another daughter eight months after the rescue, and Barth and Pease plan to donate \$250 each toward her education, too.

Glenn S. Bingham took an interest in the future education of the 10-year-old boy he saved from drowning in College Creek, near Jamestown, Va., on June 25, 2001. Despite being a poor swimmer, Bingham did not hesitate to enter the creek when he learned that the boy was unable to swim back to the bank. When Bingham pulled the boy to the surface, he struggled, and Bingham quickly tired. Both reached safety with the help of another man. With his grant funds, Bingham opened a savings account for the boy's higher education.

Stanton Thompson's generosity with his award funds extended beyond the two, 10-year-old boys he saved from drowning in a storm sewer in Concordia, Mo., on September 13, 1998. Thompson donated half of his grant in equal parts to the boys as well as to the brother of one of them who managed to escape the sewer on his own. Thompson's intention was to contribute to the boys' higher education.

Marlin E. Ross and Susan L. Marcy, Case Investigators



IN OTHER WORKS

Public life, private aid

Andrew Carnegie's generosity is well known—the funding of the construction of thousands of libraries and the founding of several prominent institutions (Carnegie Hall, Carnegie Institute, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York among others) — and for it he happily accepted credit. In a few instances, however, Carnegie insisted that his philanthropy be kept quiet, such as with the personal pensions he provided to both old friends and the famous, Rudyard Kipling and Booker T. Washington being from both camps.

Not all beneficiaries of Carnegie's personal grants were known personally by him. One such was Allan H. Warnock, a young laborer who worked on and off for the Carnegie Steel Company from 1892 through 1899. Warnock's intermittent work schedule was caused by his suffering tuberculosis, for which he went West periodically for treatment. He made three such trips between 1895 and 1903.

After learning of Warnock's plight in 1905 in a letter from the Rev. H. J. Giles, pastor of the Arch Street M.E. Church, Pittsburgh, Carnegie asked F. M. Wilmot, manager of the Carnegie Relief Fund, to investigate. Carnegie had created the Relief Fund in 1901 to aid workers injured in "his" mills and provide small pensions for needy, aged employees. Warnock, 36, was not aged but was certainly needy, as he was unable to work and was living with his mother, who existed on a small amount of savings and an \$8 monthly pension.

The Commission's files contain numerous and lengthy letters among Wilmot, Warnock, Warnock's mother and sister, Carnegie, Carnegie's secretary, and various doctors as Warnock's situation and possible treatment were discussed. One doctor was the head of the Agnes Memorial Sanatorium in Denver, Colo.

The connection of the sanatorium with Pittsburgh and Carnegie can be traced to the Carnegie family's arrival in America in 1848. Soon thereafter, Carnegie befriended Henry Phipps, whose father's cobbler shop provided Carnegie's mother with shoes to sew. Phipps became a partner of Carnegie and then a very wealthy man when the Carnegie Steel Company was sold in 1901. His nephew Lawrence founded the sanatorium, which he named in honor of his mother. Admissions to the sanatorium were limited, but preference was given to residents of Western Pennsylvania.

Warnock entered the facility in January of 1906, but his condition was such that he was beyond help. He returned to Pittsburgh in March and died at home in August.

Carnegie paid all of Warnock's expenses: clothes, train fare, food, and other incidentals for traveling to the sanatorium, plus the costs of his brief stay. An additional \$200 was given to Warnock's mother to liquidate debts incurred on the death of her son. ❏

Douglas R. Chambers, Director of External Affairs

Clothing for A. H. Warnock	
Overcoat	\$ 20.50
Suit	10.00
Underwear	6.00
Night Shirts	2.00
Neckties	.50
Handkerchiefs	.75
Shirts	3.00
Trunk	5.00
Hosiery	1.35
Suspenders	.50
Supporters	.25
Collars	.75
Gloves	1.50
	<hr/> 54.10
Complete List	
Clothing	\$ 54.10
Tickets	110.70
Moving baggage in Allegheny	1.00
Meals on way to Denver	6.25
Hotel expenses in Denver	4.20
Meals boarding for mother	6.00
Sleeping fare on way home	8.50
Food on " "	3.00
Baggage	2.00
	<hr/> 195.75
Total	141.65

HOME OF CARNEGIE'S BIRTH TO HOST PHILANTHROPY EVENT

The third presentation of the Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy, which was inaugurated in 2001 to commemorate Andrew Carnegie's personal vision of philanthropy, is coming to the country of his birth in October. Carnegie was born in Dunfermline, Scotland, 170 years ago.

The three-day program will not only celebrate the medal recipients, who are being recognized as major personal philanthropists (awardees to be announced in August), but will include a full complement of related events.

On Monday, Oct. 3, representatives of all the Carnegie foundations worldwide will be welcomed to a civic reception in Dunfermline, followed by a visit to the Birthplace Museum, a seminar on the future of foundation working relationships, a celebration of achievement in Lauder College, and a dinner at which David Nasaw will speak about his research for his forthcoming biography on Carnegie.

The next day will see the medal award ceremony in the magnificent setting of the new Scottish Parliament building in Edinburgh, a major international symposium on modern philanthropy, and a gala dinner in the National Museum of Scotland.

Finally, on Wednesday, Oct. 4, there will be a meeting of the representatives of the eight Hero Funds to discuss areas of common interest and concern, criteria, and operational issues.

The two previous ceremonies of this bi-annual event were held in New York and Washington, D.C., and this first Scottish program is being coordinated by the four U.K.-based trusts—the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland, the United Kingdom Trust, the Dunfermline Trust, and the Hero Fund.

The medal-presentation events will be an exciting and unique occasion in Scotland, but the opportunity for representatives of all the Carnegie foundations to meet and pay homage to Carnegie's memory in the place of his birth is also a tremendous honour for those of us based in Scotland. We look forward to welcoming you in October. ❏ *Nora Rundell, Chief Executive, Carnegie Hero Fund Trust, Dunfermline, Scotland*



Birthplace of Andrew Carnegie in Dunfermline, Scotland. The cottage was described by him as "the humble home of honest poverty."



Help for heroes who suffer from the stresses of their actions

Recognizing that awardees of the Carnegie Medal are exposed to intense life-or-death situations during the performance of their heroic acts, the Hero Fund has launched a new initiative by which it can provide assistance to awardees who suffer lasting emotional difficulties stemming from their actions.

“Heroes respond in different ways to the traumatic experiences they encounter,” Commission President Mark Laskow said in announcing the new program. “Many have

at least transient experiences of nightmares or unsettling recollections of the event. Sometimes these kinds of distressing experiences prove to be lasting and detrimental to the hero’s routine functioning. When this happens, there is the possibility that she or he may be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder” (PTSD).

PTSD is a psychiatric disorder that can occur following the experience or witnessing of life-threatening events such as military combat, natural disasters, terrorist incidents, serious accidents, or violent personal assaults. People who suffer from PTSD find themselves feeling as though they are reliving the trauma through experiences such as nightmares and flashbacks. They feel a need to avoid things that remind them of the traumatic event, have difficulty sleeping, and feel detached or estranged.

According to the National Center for Post-Traumatic-Stress Disorder, an adjunct of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, an estimated 23 million Americans will experience PTSD at some point in their lives, with about 3.6 million U.S. adults having PTSD during the course of a given year.

“The good news,” Laskow said, “is that the condition responds to treatment. We wish to make our awardees aware of that, and to ensure that those needing treatment but cannot afford it are given the assistance they need.”

In developing the program, the Commission turned to Katherine Shear, M.D., a University of Pittsburgh professor of psychiatry who is affiliated with Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, Pittsburgh, and to retired psychotherapist Sybil P. Veeder, Ph.D., who is a member of the Commission’s board. Dr. Shear, who had already created specialized therapy for patients suffering from traumatic grief, was eager to lend assistance, as she said the Hero Fund’s efforts would further help de-stigmatize those suffering mental illness.

“We acknowledge that heroes can exhibit the symptoms of PTSD,” Dr. Shear said. “Often they are exposed to more than their minds can metabolize. We hope to facilitate their seeking treatment.”

Psychiatrists and other mental-health professionals use a variety of methods to help PTSD patients work through their trauma and pain, including cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), which focuses on ways to understand the traumatic events and to change thought patterns and habitual behaviors. Implicit in this approach is the idea

DIAGNOSIS OF PTSD

Post-traumatic-stress disorder (PTSD) is unique among psychiatric diagnoses because of the great importance placed on the originating agent, the “traumatic stressor.” In fact, a diagnosis cannot be made unless the patient has actually met the stressor criterion, which means that he or she has been exposed to a traumatic event that evokes a response of intense fear, helplessness, or horror.

Other criteria include symptoms from each of three clusters:

Intrusive recollection, in which the traumatic event remains a dominating psychological experience that retains its power to evoke panic, terror, dread, grief, or despair. These emotions manifest in daytime fantasies, traumatic nightmares, and flashbacks.

Avoidance and psychic numbing are behavioral, cognitive, or emotional strategies that PTSD patients use to reduce the likelihood that they will encounter trauma-related stimuli. “Psychic numbing,” a pervasive kind of avoidance, is like an emotional anesthesia that makes it extremely difficult for people with PTSD to participate in meaningful interpersonal relationships.

Hyper-arousal symptoms such as insomnia and irritability occur as symptoms of PTSD and are also seen in other anxiety disorders and depression. Hyper-vigilance and an exaggerated startle response are unique to PTSD.

Additional criterion include that the above symptoms persist for at least a month and that the patient suffer from functional distress—social, occupational—as a result of the symptoms.

PTSD is not a new disorder. There are written accounts of similar symptoms that go back to ancient times, and clear documentation exists in historical medical literature starting with the Civil War. Careful research and documentation of PTSD began in earnest after the Vietnam War, and PTSD has subsequently been observed in all veterans populations that have been studied, including those of other countries.

HISTORY CENTER DISPLAY

The Hero Fund is represented in a display at the Senator John Heinz Regional Pittsburgh History Center that features a collection of Carnegie Medals, historical documents, the continuous showing of the Commission’s centennial video, and hook-up to a database that contains resumes of all awarded cases. The display, made possible in part through a generous contribution from the Laurel Foundation, Pittsburgh, was inaugurated in 2004 as part of the Hero Fund’s centenary. More than 100,000 visitors tour the museum, an adjunct of the Western Pennsylvania Historical Society, annually.





Dr. Shear


that PTSD is caused in part by automatic thoughts, and symptoms can be relieved by exploring alternative explanations and assessing the accuracy of the thoughts, along with exposure to thoughts and situations that are avoided.

In exposure therapy, the patient recounts the trauma in a safe and controlled context, by imagining it and/or by revisiting the scene. Treatment with medication also helps in reducing anxiety, depression, and insomnia often experienced with PTSD. Some people benefit from group therapy, where trauma survivors share their experiences within the safety, cohesion, and empathy of others suffering from PTSD.

A wealth of material on PTSD and its treatment is available on the Internet through an abundance of reputable sites, including those sponsored by the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, the PTSD Alliance, the National Institute of Mental Health, and the Canadian Mental Health Association. A listing of recommended sites is available through the Hero Fund, and, for those without Internet access, the Commission will distribute, on request, printouts of selected material.

The sites contain a fuller description of PTSD symptoms and treatment, including ways to locate professional assistance in different geographical locations.

“Sometimes people who experience the symptoms of PTSD believe that they are going ‘crazy,’” Dr. Veeder said. “This produces anxiety and isolates the person, which intensifies the symptoms. Hopefully recognizing PTSD as a stress response syndrome will encourage people to get help to move beyond the resulting symptoms.”

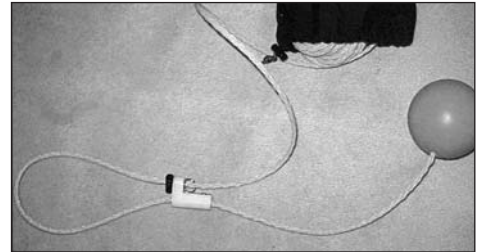
For those awardees diagnosed with PTSD but who need assistance with the cost of treatment, the Commission is making provision to supply aid. Based on need, funds are available on application, which includes the awardee verifying his or her financial circumstances and authorizing the Commission to ascertain the diagnosis from the applicant’s care provider. Inquiries, which will be kept confidential, are to be directed to Walter F. Rutkowski, Executive Director, by mail, email (walter@carnegiehero.org) or telephone (toll-free at 1-800-447-8900). Funds received by the awardee are considered taxable income for the year of receipt. 

LONG-TIME FRIEND IN NEW HAMPSHIRE



Medal awardee Ralph Allen Kelley was only 16 on Jan. 14, 1938, the day he saved two women who were trapped on the second floor of a burning factory in Nashua, N.H. On only his third day at the plant, Kelley, a “floor boy,” ran upstairs to help the women escape after fire broke out on the first floor. They dropped through a window to safety, but Kelley broke two vertebrae in the fall, paralyzing him. Not one to stay down, Kelley started a home-based telephone-answering service that grew over the course of a half-century to employ as many as 17 at one time. Now 84, he is shown with his wife Lourdes in their home in Nashua. Commission Executive Director Walter F. Rutkowski visited Kelley there to present one of the Hero Fund’s centennial commemorative medals—No. 38 in a limited series of 500, to mark the year of Kelley’s heroic act. The commemorative medals, available for purchase, can be viewed on the Commission’s website at www.carnegiehero.com. Kelley has stayed in touch with the Commission over the years, often nominating acts of heroism for review.

ACTIONS OF POSTHUMOUS AWARDEE PROMPT LIFE-SAVING INVENTION




Richard Stimpson of Tyngsboro, Mass., was watching television one night in January 1999 when a news story caught his attention: Richard Silvia, 39, of Taunton, Mass., died attempting to rescue a teenage boy from drowning in an ice-covered pond.

Floundering in the frigid water after breaking through the ice, the boy called for help, and Silvia, a passerby, responded. Silvia carefully made his way toward the boy but broke through as well. He submerged and resurfaced repeatedly then disappeared from view below the water’s surface. Arriving rescue personnel were able to save the boy, but, tragically, Silvia did not survive. He was posthumously awarded the Carnegie Medal for his efforts.

Troubled by Silvia’s death, Stimpson began to think about a way to reduce the risk to first-responders when faced with similar life-and-death situations. Working with several other individuals over many months, he helped develop a unique “throw rope” that he and his partners believe will be an effective tool in emergencies where time is of the essence.

The patented device, dubbed “Secure-A-Life,” consists of 100 feet of nylon rope attached to a 12-ounce ball that the first-responder throws to a weak or incapacitated drowning victim. The victim then places an arm or hand in an open loop attached to the ball. When the rope is pulled taut, the loop closes securely on the victim’s arm and locks, allowing him to be pulled to shore.

It’s this “locking loop” that makes Secure-A-Life distinctive. The device was designed to be used by just about anyone with only minimal training.

Mark Trudell of the Lowell, Mass., Police Department informed that his department has purchased 18 of the devices and ultimately plans to equip all of its squad cars with them. What feature impressed him the most? “The accuracy,” he said. Trudell pointed out that a life ring is less accurate when thrown, especially in a breeze, while the ball of the Secure-A-Life device was “dead on” each time it was thrown during testing.  Jeffrey A. Dooley, Investigations Manager



Officers from OPP, Massachusetts court cited by Carnegie Medal presentations

RECENT AWARDEES ON HERO FUND WEBSITE

Profiles of two 2004 awardees of the Carnegie Medal have been added to the Hero Fund's website at www.carnegiehero.org: **Debra Nicholls**, top photo, of Trabuco Canyon, Calif., was cited for helping to save a friend from an attacking mountain lion in January 2004. The women were riding bicycles through a wilderness park when the 122-pound lion pounced on the friend's back, took her to the ground, and started dragging her down a ravine off the trail. Nicholls threw her bike at the animal, then grasped her friend by the leg and desperately held on. Others threw rocks at the lion until it fled.

In the bottom photo is **David Lee Custer** of Parkman, Maine, pictured with his wife Mary, a native Finn, and their children, Rebecca, 8, Tara, 6, and Shiloh, 5, while visiting Finland in 2003. Custer and a co-rescuer, **Mark A. Potter**, of Canaan, Maine, were each awarded the medal for saving a 3-year-old boy from an overturned and burning car in September 2003. Custer and his family live on 50 acres in central Maine, where Custer nurtures his interests in self-sufficiency, world peace, and family history.



THE COMMISSION'S WEBSITE HAS WON A WEBBY WORTHY AWARD FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF DIGITAL ARTS AND SCIENCES FOR ITS "STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE." FEWER THAN 20 PERCENT OF 4,000 ENTRIES SUBMITTED WERE CITED IN THE NINTH ANNUAL PRESENTATION OF THE WEBBY.



Sgt. Belinda Lee Rose, center, of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), was presented her Carnegie Medal by, from left, Douglas R. Chambers, OPP Commissioner Gwen M Boniface, Susan L. Marcy, and Alfred W. Wishart, Jr. Photo by Mark A. Maltais, of the Forensic Identification Unit, OPP North West Region.

Personal presentations of the Carnegie Medal to recent awardees were made in June by Commission representatives.

Sgt. Belinda Lee Rose of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) was given her medal at a ceremony in Thunder Bay, Ont., by Commissioner Alfred W. Wishart, Jr., Case Investigator Susan L. Marcy, and Director of External

Affairs Douglas R. Chambers. Other OPP officers and civilians from throughout the northwest region of the province were cited during the ceremony for their achievements.

Sgt. Rose's heroic act took place in Elora, Ont., 40 miles west of Toronto. On April 11, 2001, she responded to a gorge in Victoria Park, where a man was attempting suicide from an overlook atop a 70-foot-high promontory.

Sgt. Rose is a slightly built woman, by appearance hardly a match for a man outweighing her by 120 pounds and intent on jumping into the gorge. But Rose, then 29, drew on strength that belies her size, grasped the man around his legs, and held onto him as he struggled against her atop a low wall that rimmed the overlook. Another officer arrived and pulled them to safety.

Both Sgt. Rose and the would-be victim were taken to the hospital for treatment of minor injury. In the same ambulance, the man admonished Rose for saving him and vowed to commit suicide when he next had the opportunity. He did not follow through but within days sent his rescuer a bouquet of roses with a card: "Thanks for a second chance at life."

Mark Richard Bradley, 31, of Braintree, Mass., was waiting in traffic on a highway ramp on August 28, 2003, when an attempted carjacking took place there.

Two men who had just robbed a bank entered the ramp on foot and approached a car in front of him. One of them attempted to open the driver's door, but the woman inside fended him off, screaming. The man then entered the back seat and pointed a gun at her, and his partner entered the front seat.

Bradley, on his way home from his job as an officer in the Massachusetts Juvenile Court Department, was almost in shock as he watched. Using his biggest asset—his *Ram-tough* Dodge truck—Bradley drove into the woman's car, pushing it into the guide rail and blocking it. "In my absolute terror," the woman later said, "my thought was, *this is good.*" Bradley got out of the truck as the suspects, brandishing their guns, exited the car and fled. They were later apprehended.

Bradley's medal was presented in Quincy, Mass., at a meeting of the National Association of Government Employees (NAGE), of which Bradley is a local member. ☒



Mark Richard Bradley, left, received his Carnegie Medal from the Commission's executive director Walter F. Rutkowski.

BEHIND THE SCENE

Hero Fund staffer observes 'semicentennial' of hiring



The Hero Fund Staff honored Myrna Braun, seated at center, on the 50th anniversary of her being hired by the Commission. Her coworkers are Eileen White, seated at left, and Susan Marcy, right. Standing, from left: Jeff Dooley, Doug Chambers, Gloria Barber, Marlin Ross, Melissa Spangler, and Walter Rutkowski.

one of the Hero Fund's two administrative assistants. Not ones to let a major milestone slide by, her coworkers showered her with attention in an event they dubbed "the semicentennial observance" of her hiring.

Highlight of the event was the presentation of a *Book of Memories*, which was compiled over the previous few months by Myrna's office mate Gloria A. Barber. Each staffer presented a page of accolades, as did several retired coworkers, including Lawrence Wm. Haywiser, who joined the staff a year after Myrna did but who retired after "only" 42 years, and Dianne R. McKenzie, who worked alongside Myrna for three decades.

Also represented was Robert W. Off, who served as Commission president from 1979 to 2001. The Commission has had only seven presidents in its 101-year existence, and Myrna has reported to five of them.

Humor was abundant in the offerings, as was the acknowledgement of Myrna's contributions to the work and the "warmly efficient" ways in which she carries them out. The Commission's board was represented by the gift of an engraved watch, which was presented over lunch in one of the finer restaurants downtown, and a reporter and photographer from the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* made Myrna the local news in the following day's paper (<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/05165/521054.stm>). She went on to receive applause from her fellow bus riders, and congratulatory emails included one from China, where board member Ann M. McGuinn was visiting Shanghai.



Myrna Braun

In the interests of full disclosure, it should be noted that Myrna was not employed by the Commission during the full 50-year period. She left the workforce in 1959 to marry her high school boyfriend Allen E. Braun ("Spike") and raise their two sons, Eddie and Mark. She rejoined the staff at the Hero Fund's request in 1971 and has been here ever since, with no plans, thankfully, to retire soon. She is now a grandmother.

Myrna's duties at the Commission center largely on the administration of the awards, grants, and scholarship aid, once determination of the

Myrna J. Heese of Pittsburgh was only 17 on Monday, June 13, 1955, the day she joined the staff of the Carnegie Hero Fund as a telephone operator and clerk. She had just been graduated from high school when she started to work (at \$175 a month) for the only employer she'd ever have.

Advance to Monday, June 13, 2005.

Unaware of the significance of the date, Myrna reported promptly as usual to the office, where she is

heroes has been made by the Commission's Executive Committee. Letters informing the awardees of the Commission's decisions are produced by her, and when the heroes unwrap the medal itself they witness the attention to detail that Myrna gives. A more public facet of her work is overseeing the Commission's dealings with its roster of 73 beneficiaries, who receive monthly grants from the Fund.

Myrna (at 5') shares with Andrew Carnegie (5'3") the trait of diminutive stature, but like the founder, she has placed her mark on the organization in big ways. According to her supervisor, "no company could ask for more in an employee." ☒

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!

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

INTO THE DEPTHS

Two Texas men became heroes on Dec. 11, 1932, when they entered an extinct volcano to rescue an unconscious man.

Berlyn Brixner, 21, and two friends went to the site of the volcano, near what is now El Malpais National Monument in the New Mexico desert. The scene was remote, at least seven miles from the nearest community, Afton, N.M., and the nearest road ended two miles away. Persuading his friends to lower him by a rope into a vent of the volcano, Brixner reached a point about 10 feet below the surface, as deep as the length of rope would allow. When his friends began to pull him back up, the rope,

worn thin against sharp protrusions in the lava walls, broke. Brixner fell about 155 feet to a ledge covered by dried bat dung, into which he sank up to his shoulders. He was unconscious. The depth of the vent was unknown.


One of the friends ran back to the road, then drove to Afton, where he alerted help. He then continued to El Paso, 55 miles away. At the highway police office in that city, Millard F. Scherer, 40, patrol officer, and Bertie Morris, secretary, both off duty, learned of the accident and volunteered to assist in a rescue attempt.

Scherer and Morris drove to the scene, where ranchers, railroad workers, and others were gathered, none of them attempting to enter the vent. Some warned Scherer and Morris that rattlesnakes were believed to hibernate inside the vent. On opposite sides of the vent were two small peaks, and the ends of a rope were tied around the peaks to form a line across the vent. A pulley and cable were attached to that line to form a block and tackle hoist. To the cable was attached a length of rope with a loop at each end.

Scherer and Morris each put a leg through a loop of the rope and, equipped with flashlights, were lowered into the vent. Brixner had been inside about five hours.

The rescuers reached a shelf about 75 feet below the surface, and Scherer agreed to stay there to relay signals to the men at the top. That meant, however, that he had to relinquish the security of the rope.

Morris was lowered to the ledge on which Brixner lay. With some difficulty, he established a hold on him, and the two were pulled to the surface. Activity inside the vent had stirred up clouds of bat dung, making it difficult for Scherer to breathe. Morris entered the vent a second time and was lowered to where Scherer was waiting. Scherer re-secured himself to the line, and the men were hoisted to the surface.

Brixner was hospitalized for treatment of a broken left ankle and multiple cuts, including a serious one to his head, and he recovered within a month. Neither Scherer nor Morris was injured. Sixteen months later, both men were awarded the Carnegie Medal and \$1,000.  Marlin E. Ross, Case Investigator

Rescue personnel share a pack of cigarettes before Morris and Scherer start their descent.



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