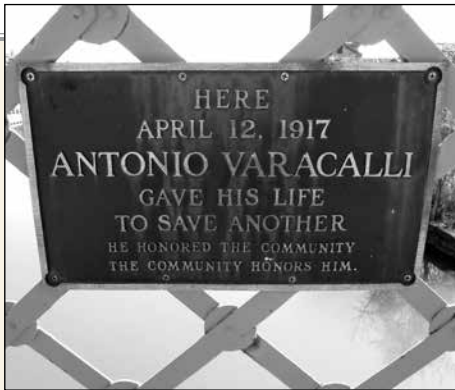




# imPULSE

A Periodic Newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission ISSUE 38 • JUNE 2014



## TOWN'S CARNEGIE HERO CELEBRATED ANNUALLY

Little is known about **Antonio Varacalli**, who died 97 years ago while saving a young woman from drowning in Seneca Falls, N.Y., but the townsfolk have firmly established this Carnegie Medal awardee in their civic consciousness. Years ago a bronze plaque was placed on the bridge at the scene of his heroic act, and this spring the second annual "Antonio Varacalli Day" in celebration of heroes was held on the anniversary of his death, April 12.

The story goes much deeper. Tradition holds that Hollywood director Frank Capra passed through Seneca Falls and based the drowning rescue in his classic 1946 movie, *It's a Wonderful Life*, on the Varacalli event. Myriad other similarities that exist between the town and the fictional setting of the movie, Bedford Falls, are celebrated at an annual festival in Seneca Falls at Christmastime.

The Hero Fund played a role in this year's Antonio Varacalli Day. See page 6.



## 1999 rescue changed hero's perspective, prompts ordination to church diaconate

By **Brian J. Phillips, Cary, N.C.**  
Carnegie Medal Awardee #8394

On June 28, 1999, I was enjoying a well-deserved family vacation at Topsail Beach, N.C. After playing with my young children in an unusually rough ocean, I left them with my wife to play in the sand. I strolled down the beach with my metal detector to see what treasures I could dig up in the almost deserted, tide-washed beach.

I had planned a short walk, not wanting to leave my children long, but as I walked down the beach, a force compelled me to go farther. Near a hurricane-smashed fishing pier, I heard a woman screaming, "My babies!" I looked up and saw two small heads way out in the ocean. Suddenly, I realized that they were children and they were in serious trouble.

Being a strong swimmer, I figured I could help rescue at least one of the children. I dove into the water and started swimming out to them, realizing immediately that they were caught in a vicious rip current. When I reached the children, two 6-year-old girls, and saw that no one else was coming to help, I knew I had to rescue both at the same time. I put one of the girls on my back and her friend across my chest

*(continued on page 3)*



Carnegie Medal awardee **Brian J. Phillips** (top row, second from left) was one of 14 men in the deacon formation program of the Diocese of Raleigh, N.C., who were instituted to the Ministry of Acolyte last December. Photo courtesy of the diocese.



### THE MORAL CHOICE TO TAKE MORTAL RISK

By Mark Laskow, Chair  
Carnegie Hero Fund Commission



I confessed in an earlier issue of *impULSE* that I have been a lawyer “in recovery” for 20 years or so. (Sadly, no permanent cure has yet been discovered.) While there are drawbacks to that status, my early legal training has given me a great appreciation for the rigor and thoughtful-

ness of the criteria the Commission applies in awarding the Carnegie Medal. Over the course of 110 years, the Hero Fund has developed standards that focus the award on individuals who make a moral choice to take mortal risk solely for the benefit of another.

What do I mean by “moral choice?” Well, suppose that as I enter my barbershop on a Saturday morning, I trip – and the flailing door knocks the gun from the hand of a robber holding the barber and customers hostage. Kidnaping foiled, start embossing my medal! Well, no, actually. I didn’t make a choice of any kind, much less a “moral choice.”

Take things a step farther. Suppose I get through the door of the shop without tripping and discover that a man with his back to me is screaming abuse at the barber. I tap him on the shoulder, telling him to calm down. Then I see the gun in his hand. Even if I manage to disarm him, it would not warrant the medal. When I decided to intervene, I thought I was taking the risk of an awkward social moment, not death by gunshot. Lucky for me and the barber if I disarm him, but I was extricating myself from a situation into which I stumbled accidentally. No “moral choice” there.

Finally, suppose that I am walking by the barber shop, with no intention to go in. (Check out my picture. How often do I need a haircut?) I glance through the window, see the intruder, gulp hard, and crash through the door as hard as I can. Here, finally, I would have made a true “moral choice” because I understood the true nature of the risk I was taking.

How does this question come up in the Commission’s deliberations? There are several ways. For example, we do not award the medal to rescuers who were so impaired by drugs or alcohol that they could not appreciate the risk they were

(continued on page 3)

## Hero’s tragic death was ‘not in vain,’ with purchase of rescue equipment



Mr. Jenkins, with son Kameron.

One year after the death of **James Russell Jenkins** on Feb. 7, 2013, family members say they have some closure. Jenkins died attempting to save 5-year-old Elijah T. Walker from drowning in the icy pond of an apartment complex in Columbus, Ohio, and last December he was announced as a posthumous awardee of the Carnegie Medal.

At a ceremony held in March at the Chief James G. Jackson Columbus Police Academy, Douglas R. Chambers, the Commission’s director of external affairs, and Julia Panian, who investigated the case for the Hero Fund, presented Jenkins’s medal to his son, Kameron Gilbert, 5. Kameron’s mother, Sherese Gilbert, said that he is still coming to terms with the death of his father. “The medal will serve as a family heirloom that Kameron can hold on to as he gets older,” Gilbert said. “It’s one thing for us to tell him his father was a hero, but this shows that others knew so too.” Jenkins’s mother, Barbara Meredith, who also was present, said the award puts Jenkins “in a category that is among honored heroes.”



Proudly displaying the Carnegie Medal awarded for the heroic actions of his father, James Russell Jenkins, is Jenkins’s son, Kameron Gilbert. With him are, from left, his mother, Sherese Gilbert; Columbus Police Officer Daniel Panella; Jenkins’s girlfriend, Alana Gamble; his mother, Barbara Meredith; Columbus Police Officer Christopher Lieb; Jenkins’s brother, Aaron Jenkins; and Police Sgt. Christopher Smith-Hughes. All three of the officers responded to the scene to aid in the rescue of Jenkins and the boy he was trying to save.

At the ceremony, Columbus Police officers announced the department’s purchase of 25 floating rope bags for use in water and ice rescues. Sgt. Elrico Alli said the bags were purchased through a grant made possible by relaying the account of Jenkins’s death: Elijah broke through ice covering a section of a retention pond near his home, about 50 feet from the bank. After holding on for several minutes, he floated face down in the open water, and Jenkins, who was passing by, stepped

on the ice and started to walk toward him. Cracking and breaking ice took Jenkins to his hands and knees, and eventually he too broke through the ice, at a point about 10 feet from Elijah. Jenkins used his arms and fists to make a path through the ice and, finally reaching him, attempted to keep Elijah’s head above the surface of the 39-degree water while calling for help.

Unsuccessful in his attempt to swim toward the bank, Jenkins submerged but was able to keep Elijah’s head out of water until he too submerged. Responding police officers and firefighters tried several times to enter the pond and rescue the victims, but they were unsuccessful. When divers recovered them, Jenkins could not be revived. Elijah died three days later. Police officers and firefighters who participated in the rescue attempt were recognized at the ceremony, along with Jenkins.

The “Russell Rescue Rope Bag,” as officers are calling the new lifesaving device in honor of Jenkins, was used recently in the rescue of a man who fell into an icy pond.

(continued on page 3)

## 1999 rescue changed hero's perspective

(continued from cover)

and started to swim back to shore. When I realized I wasn't making any headway, I kept calm and thought that if I could just get to one of the pylons of the pier, we could hold on until help arrived.

As I started to swim toward the pier, I felt a push on my back. Suddenly my feet were on the sandy ocean floor. It could only be explained as divine intervention! I returned the children to the woman on the beach and then disappeared, fearing for my own children possibly venturing out into those treacherous waves.

Later, the woman on the beach, who was the mother of one of the girls, searched for me and nominated me for the prestigious Carnegie Medal. I accepted the award, although I felt I was doing only what I'd want another to do for my children if they were in trouble.

From that day, my awareness of others has greatly changed. I am conscious of those marginalized in our society: the homeless, the young, the elderly, the infirm, the incarcerated, and the immigrant. I feel called to serve others and to try to make a positive impact on them. Recently retired from a career as a chemical engineer, I now work in a local school. I had always wanted to work in a school, to help to form children in the virtues, so I volunteered in a local Catholic elementary school, starting off as the receptionist in the front office.



Mr. Phillips

As I have a master's degree in safety, security, and emergency management, I now work as the school's gatekeeper. I get to see all the children—more than 500—as they come into the school and interact with them daily, knowing almost every child by name. In my position, I get to minister to them in many ways and by example. I can teach them virtues like honesty, forgiveness, kindness, and self-giving, and I regularly get to lead the school prayers. I can brighten the students' day with a smile and an encouraging word or two, or teach them an interesting fact or principle. I can model my faith and life to them.

The rescue also increased my confidence in myself and helped me feel worthy to pursue a dream of becoming a permanent deacon in the Catholic Church. A few months ago, I was called to be ordained to Holy Orders by Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of the Diocese of Raleigh, N.C. As a remarkable coincidence, the ordination will occur 15 years—to the day—of when I performed this act of love (and heroism) for those two children at the beach. These two young ladies and their families will be my guests of honor on June 28, 2014. ☒

## Hero's tragic death

(continued from page 2)

That man survived. After the ceremony, the police dive team gave a demonstration of the rope bags. "I'm just glad Russell didn't die in vain," said Alana Gamble, who was Jenkins's girlfriend at the time of his death. "It's nice to know that something good came out of it, that other people can be saved now. I just wish that these had been available at the time for him," she said. ☒



Kameron Gilbert participates in a demonstration of the Russell Rescue Rope Bag, named after his father, James Russell Jenkins.

## BOARD NOTES

(continued from page 2)

taking. In a similar vein, we are very cautious in making the award to young children. We want to know that they understood the danger they faced, and, indeed, whether they understood the concept of death itself. And we do find cases in which we wonder if the rescuer understood the danger. These can be hard decisions. We have a few lawyers on the Commission, including a retired federal judge, but all of the members bring a remarkable thoughtfulness and common sense to these deliberations. The bright shining light of a true heroic act is our best aid in finding our way through the award criteria.



## IRISH-AMERICAN HEROES

Officer Richard Donohue, right, of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Police Department was chosen by The American Ireland Fund in New York earlier this year as the recipient of the second annual Dylan Smith Community Spirit Award. The award is named for Carnegie Hero **Dylan Patrick Smith**, who helped to save six people from drowning on Oct. 29, 2012, after Hurricane Sandy flooded the streets of his Rockaway Beach, N.Y., neighborhood with more than five feet of water. Donohue was chosen for this year's award for responding to back up local law enforcement officers in Watertown, Mass., who were attempting to apprehend suspects in the Boston Marathon bombing of 2013. A bullet severed Donohue's femoral artery in an ensuing gunfight, and he suffered severe blood loss at the scene. He spent two months recovering in a hospital and rehabilitation center and still continues physical therapy. Shown with Donohue is New York Police Inspector Patrick Kerins, and also on hand to witness him receive the award were Smith's mother, Mary Smith, and other family members. Smith, an Irish-American, died late in 2012. His award of the Carnegie Medal was announced last December.



### REMEMBERING SACRIFICES APPRECIATED

I just wanted to write and thank you for including my son, **Travis Wayne Koehler**, in the March issue of *imPULSE*. It was an amazingly welcome surprise! You have him on page 11 in a new feature "designed to remember those in the Hero Fund's 110-year history whose lives were sacrificed in the performance of their heroic acts."

Sometimes I get busy and don't always read *imPULSE* right away, but for this issue I sat down and began to read. The stories of what others have done are always touching, and so I was surprised and so touched to see my son's smiling face and the write-up about him. I cannot thank you enough for the work you do to recognize all those heroes throughout the years who have gone above and beyond to help someone in need, some sacrificing their lives for that of others.

For those of us who have lost a loved one who was attempting to save another life, it helps us see and gives a bit of comfort to know that our loved one is not forgotten. Grief continues, but as time passes we get used to them not being around. My world is different now, but to open the pages of your newsletter and see that my boy is still remembered like this gives me a little more peace. Thank you again and God bless you all for the work that you do!

*Debi Koehler-Fergen, Las Vegas, Nev.*

### THE POWER OF KINDNESS

I appreciate your sending the most recent news release. In many ways, reading through these stories is very difficult for me. I see so many circumstances where the recipient lost his or her life helping others, and it makes me think about how lucky I and my friends are to have survived our own ordeal. However, the stories of these heroes bring to light the strengths of modern humanity and the power of kindness. Many people do not have the opportunity to see this side of themselves, and I am honored and proud to see so many individuals selflessly acting in the defense of others. Almost eight years ago to the day, I truly understand selflessness and the need for a good moral compass. That said, these stories teach me how much more I still have to learn.

*Kyle DeLapp, Denver, Colo.*

*DeLapp was awarded the Carnegie Medal in 2007 for saving two children from drowning a year earlier. See page 14.*

*(continued on page 5)*

## 'Service before self' by Carnegie Hero cited by Medal of Honor recipients

Those who have received the Congressional Medal of Honor—3,487 since 1863—know something about heroism. They have been given America's highest military honor for personal acts of valor above and beyond the call of duty in combat, and every year living recipients of the medal gather at Arlington National Cemetery, Washington, D.C., to recognize "ordinary" civilians for heroism of a different kind: extraordinary service. There are 77 living recipients of the medal, forming the Congressional Medal of Honor Society.



*Connor Farland Stotts, right, recipient of the Medal of Honor Society's 2014 Citizens Honors Medal, is shown with fellow awardee Troy Yocum, left, and Sharon Landsberry, center, widow of awardee Michael Landsberry. (Photo courtesy of the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation.)*

This year, 2012 Carnegie Medal awardee **Connor Farland Stotts**, 20, of Oceanside, Calif., was selected as a recipient of the society's Citizen Service Before Self Honors Medal. On National Medal of Honor Day, March 25, the anniversary of that medal's first medal presentation 151 years ago, Stotts was cited for the heroism he exhibited in saving three friends from drowning. The two other citizens cited by the society this year were Michael Landsberry of Sparks, Nev., who died

shielding students from an armed assailant at a middle school last October, and Troy Yocum of Kentucky, an Army veteran who founded Active Heroes, a charity that provides support services to veterans. Landsberry has also been nominated for the Carnegie Medal.

"People like this are what makes America great," says Medal of Honor recipient Barney Barnum. "They have stepped forward and made us proud."

The awards were given at Arlington after a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns. Greek sculpture on the tomb representing the virtues of peace,

*(continued on page 7)*



*The 2014 Citizens Honors medal was presented at an impressive ceremony in Arlington National Cemetery by many of the living recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor. Seated among them at right is Carnegie Medal awardee Connor Farland Stotts. (Photo courtesy of the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation.)*

## 'Outstanding Teen' urges water safety after father drowns in heroic rescue

Madeline Brindley of Conway, Ark., was 6 when she lost her father to drowning, and now as a maturing young woman of 17 she is spreading awareness of water safety and drowning prevention. Named Miss Conway Outstanding Teen 2014 last September in a program that is part of the Miss America Pageant system, Madeline has launched an educational platform to get her message out, particularly to children. In that regard, she has written a book, *The Royals Go to the Beach*, intended to teach kids about keeping safe while having fun around water.

Madeline's father was **Kenyon D. Brindley**, a senior sales associate for his company and an active member of the Conway community, including its Methodist church. On June 8, 2003, he and his family had just started their vacation at their "most beloved" Grayson Beach, on the Gulf Coast of Florida. The surf was rough that Sunday, prompting red flags to be posted to warn beachgoers of strong rip currents.

Brindley, 36, knew to stay out of the water, but others did not. He was on the beach when he was alerted to two swimmers, a 12-year-old boy and his father, who were in trouble in the surf. A good swimmer who was trained in scuba diving, Brindley entered the water for them with other beachgoers and succeeded in the rescue of the boy. He was then overcome by conditions while helping in the attempted rescue of the boy's father, who drowned. Removed from the water, Brindley himself died of drowning two days later. For his heroic sacrifice, Brindley was posthumously awarded the Carnegie Medal in 2004.



*Madeline Brindley, Miss Conway Outstanding Teen*

The men were two of nine people who would drown along that stretch of the Florida panhandle coast as the result of the weekend's rough water conditions. A sergeant with the sheriff's department told the Hero Fund that 67 rescues were effected by his department and other first responders on Sunday alone.

"My dad was my hero," Madeline says. "He has missed out on our lives and we miss him. I can't change that he isn't here, but I hope I can change attitudes about the importance of water safety. I can help get the word out that drowning is preventable, and I hope to make a difference in saving another family the heartbreak of losing a loved one from drowning."

Madeline started her educational platform, *Safe Splash: Water Safety and Drowning Prevention*, when she became involved in the teen pageant, and her winning the Miss

(continued on page 7)

### TO THE HERO FUND

(continued from page 4)

#### MINE DISASTER LEGACY

The March issue of *imPULSE* got my attention! The story about the Cherry, Ill., mine disaster on Nov. 13, 1909, strikes close to home. My great-grandfather on my mother's side, **George Eddy**, was a mine examiner and was one of the miners trapped underground for eight days behind the wall of coal, which they built to shield them from the mine fire and to preserve their oxygen.

Although I never met my great-grandfather, who was a recipient of a silver Carnegie Medal, the story was handed down through the generations. Stories of the "black damp" and the miners eating their leather boot tongues to survive caught the attention of us kids growing up. Some of the true heroes were the ones who went back down into the mine time after time to rescue those they could. The story of the 12 men who were stuck on the elevator and arrived at the surface burned to death is very haunting, sad, and tragic. Although I currently live in Ohio, I still have family in Streator, Ill.

*Mike Liston, Gambier, Ohio*

#### CITADEL GRAD RELATES

I had to write and say thank you for the excellent "From the Archives" article in the most recent issue of *imPULSE*. The Citadel is my alma mater and I did not know this incredible story from 1962. I found the article remarkably well written (haunting) and authentic in details about student life and the local area. I cannot imagine facing such a predicament my sophomore year of college. I also find it touching that they were successful in saving the lives of their dates. What a moving read for a 2003 graduate all too familiar with Dewees Inlet who only experienced Gen. Mark W. Clark as a statue in a building bearing his name. McElroy is a true inspiration as well as Rickley. The fact that McElroy is a Vietnam Veteran makes him all the more admirable to me.

Each time I receive my copy of *imPULSE* I drop whatever is happening and read it cover to cover. What a thrill to be on the mailing list! Congratulations to the new round of recipients! Thank you and I look forward to the next issue.

*Abigail R. Zuehlke, Earlysville, Va.*

*Zuehlke was awarded the medal in 2012 for helping to save two men from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean at Hunting Island, S.C., a year earlier.*



## Rescue AN ODE TO GORDON

By Harold Anderson

The early morn portends a day  
of joy and pleasure on its way.  
But to those who knew great danger lay,  
just off the shore of that Florida bay.

At that instant up the beach  
one man's life was swept from reach.  
Taken by the current that lay  
below the surface of Fort Lauderdale Bay.

The man who ran the sand that day  
could not have known what peril lay  
until those frantic cried alarm,  
signaled a swimmer in the path of harm.

Onlookers pointing out to sea  
revealed the looming catastrophe.  
Into the surf the man did go  
aware of the deadly undertow.

Could he withstand the raging force;  
would his valor be the source,  
to tame the power of the sea  
that drove him back relentlessly.

Now he knows the price of fate,  
sees the black coach of sorrow wait,  
knows the cost could be two lives.  
Can he determine who survives?

Now he has her in his grip,  
fights the awesome power to rip  
this helpless victim from his side;  
such a fate he would not abide.

Now her voice full of fear pleaded softly in his ear:  
don't let me die, don't let me die.  
From her lips came a whispered sigh,  
don't let me die, don't let me die.

In the face of that threat of death,  
he knew he would give his remaining breath.  
Now his lungs so filled with pain  
vowed her plea would not be in vain.

What braver feat could one man own  
than risk his life for one unknown,  
to pull from death's relentless reach  
a mournful soul on that treacherous beach.

Back on the sand he lay in rest  
but deep inside his pounding breast  
he knew God found for him the way  
to save a life in Fort Lauderdale Bay.

Anderson's poem was written about the actions of his son, **Gordon Scott Anderson**, who on Feb. 15, 1989, saved a 30-year-old woman from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean at Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Gordon, then also 30, was awarded the Carnegie Medal the following year and subsequently received scholarship assistance from the Hero Fund to help with costs of schooling at Western Washington University, Bellingham, Wash.



At podium, Kyle Laude read the Hero Fund's report of Antonio Varacalli's heroic actions to those attending an event in his honor on the "Bridge Street Bridge" at the scene. Photo by Henry Law of the It's a Wonderful Life Museum.

## Rescue in Capra film "Wonderful Life" bears similarity to Carnegie Hero's act

When Kyle Laude stepped up to the microphone to address those gathered on a bridge in Seneca Falls, N.Y., for the annual Antonio Varacalli Day on April 12, she dispensed with any sort of greeting or welcome. Rather, in tone as crisp and clear as the day itself, she began to read the Hero Fund's 97-year-old investigative report on the actions of the man who drowned in the canal below after helping to save a woman apparently intent on suicide.

*Antonio Varacalli, 20, who was strong and could swim a mile, wore heavy underwear, trousers, shirt, overalls, coat and shoes. He was born in Italy.*

Varacalli was on the south bank of the canal, west of the steel-truss bridge. A laborer, he earned \$32.50 a month and of that sent \$10 or \$15 to his mother and sisters in Italy in the hopes of helping them get to America to join him and his father. Varacalli did not know the woman who appeared on the bridge. It was about 10:40 a.m., a Thursday.

*Miss Dunham, who was despondent, dropped from the east side of the bridge, screaming as she struck the water 20 feet below.*

The Cayuga-Seneca Canal connects the two Fingerlakes having those names with the Erie Canal. At 195 feet wide, it flows east, and on April 12, 1917, the water was cold and practically still. From the figuring south bank, it was wadable for only about 10 or 15 feet.

*Removing his coat, Varacalli waded a few feet into the water and swam to Miss Dunham. Her arms were outstretched, and she was moving them slowly. She seemed dazed and too weak to struggle. Varacalli grasped her left hand and drew her to his back with her arm over his left shoulder and then swam southward,*

(continued on page 13)

Seneca Falls . . .  
**IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE**  
The Real Bedford Falls



The "Bridge Street Bridge" in Seneca Falls, N.Y., figured in the Hero Fund's case of Antonio Varacalli, and its look may have been duplicated in Frank Capra's classic film, *It's a Wonderful Life*.


## 'Outstanding Teen'

(continued from page 5)



*Carnegie Medal awardee Kenyon D. Brindley at the beach in 2002 with his wife Melanie and children Madeline and Blake.*

every day, including two children age 14 and under, Madeline presents a drowning prevention program that encourages a five-step system of water safety: learn to swim or float, obey posted signs and flags, swim with adult supervision and a buddy, wear a lifejacket, and follow the “reach, throw, row, go” procedures for rescue. She plans to continue her promotion of water safety and drowning prevention for the rest of her life. Her book is available through [www.madelinebrindleywatersafetybooks.com](http://www.madelinebrindleywatersafetybooks.com).


Now finishing her sophomore year in high school—and this month competing for the Miss Arkansas Outstanding Teen crown—Madeline wants to study occupational therapy in college. She is on a competitive dance team and volunteers for the First United Methodist Church Food Pantry in Conway, where she lives with her mother, Melanie, and younger brother, Blake. 

## 'Service before self'

(continued from page 4)

victory, and valor has been incorporated into the Citizen Honors medals to link those serving in the military to those serving in civilian life. The society has concluded that the courage, sacrifice, selflessness, and patriotism identified with the Medal of Honor are not demonstrated only by those in the military during combat.

Stotts, 20, is now enrolled at the Naval ROTC program at the University of Southern California, where he is studying international relations, with an emphasis on China. On July 31, 2011, he was on a church outing at a Pacific Ocean beach in Oceanside when he and several others were carried from shore by a rip current. A strong swimmer who was certified as a life guard by the Boy Scouts, Stotts, then 17, an Eagle Scout, returned one member of the group to wadable water with no difficulty and then went back for the others, who were about 200 feet out. In repeated trips, he saved two more members of the party, becoming nearly exhausted himself.

Stotts was one of 20 finalists for the 2014 Citizens Honors medal who were selected from hundreds of nominations from across the country, and he and the two other awardees were chosen by a panel of judges composed entirely of Medal of Honor recipients. Two other Carnegie Medal awardees received the same honor since it was instituted in 2008: **Jencie Regina Fagan** of Reno, Nev., a teacher, received the inaugural medal for her actions of March 14, 2006, by which she saved students from a gun assault in their school, and **Brandon M. Wemhoff** of Lincoln, Neb., received the Citizens Honors medal in 2012 for his actions of May 29, 2011, by which he rescued a woman from an assault by a gunman in a pharmacy. Fagan received the Carnegie Medal in 2006, and Wemhoff in 2013. 

15:13



### HE GAVE HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIEND

**Samuel E. Wolf** of St. Louis, Mo., was only 10 when he died performing an act of heroism 101 years ago, but his last deed is still very much on the mind of his sister, Betty Rose, 86, of Merriam, Kan. Rose, the last surviving of the 13 Wolf children, wants to place a stone on the grave of her brother, whom she never knew. Toward that end, the Hero Fund provided her one of the bronze grave markers cast in the likeness of the Carnegie Medal, as Samuel was posthumously awarded the medal in 1917.

Samuel's heroic actions took place on May 30, 1913, when he and six other boys were cavorting on the banks of a small pond just outside St. Louis. The oldest and largest of the group, William C. Lewis, 12, was wading 10 feet from the closer bank in chest-deep water when he became mired in muck and began to sink. He called for help.

Samuel was wading nearby, and the other boys urged him to aid William. According to the Hero Fund's 1916 investigative report, Samuel, who was five inches shorter than William and 20 pounds lighter, was “evidently afraid” but waded toward William, extending both hands as he came within reach. William grasped him and pulled him under. A struggle ensued, during which both boys submerged. They did not resurface.

Samuel and William were buried together in a grave that has remained unmarked, and Rose wants to place a stone that will memorialize both of them. Samuel, who earned \$3 a week peddling milk for his father, is pictured with his younger sister, Stella, in an oil portrait done shortly before his death.

*15:13 calls to mind those in the Hero Fund's 110-year history whose lives were sacrificed in the performance of their*

(continued on page 9)



# At end of sales, distributor reflects on limited-edition

## 2.5-INCH COMMEMORATIVE MEDALLION DUPLICATES LOOK OF CARNEGIE MEDAL

Cybercoins.net, Inc., a rare coin and precious metals dealer, is the exclusive distributor of the Carnegie Hero Fund's 100th anniversary commemorative medal, released in 2004. Nearing the end of its limited-edition run of 500, the medal can be viewed on line or in person at Cybercoins.net's brick-and-mortar store in the Dormont section of Pittsburgh.

Selling for \$85, the commemorative medal duplicates the features of the Carnegie Medal. On the obverse, a bust of Andrew Carnegie, the Commission's founder, is above a banner carrying the 100-year dates. On the reverse, the seals of the United States and Canada flank a cartouche that is adorned with ivy, oak, laurel, and thistle to represent the respective characteristics of a hero: friendship, strength, glory, and persistence. A verse from the New Testament encircles the obverse: *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends* (John 15:13).

The medal is distinctive in size, metallic content, and finish. It is 2.5 inches in diameter and struck in silver-clad bronze. The silver plating is of .999 grade, and the bronze used in both medals is an alloy of 85 percent copper and five percent each of zinc, tin, and lead. The edge of the medal is



stamped with its issue number, and each medal is accompanied by a certificate that is signed by the Commission's president to attest to the medal's authenticity. None of the medals has been touched

*(continued on page 9)*



*Blaine C. Shiff, distributor of the Hero Fund's 2004 centennial commemorative medal.*

*By Blaine C. Shiff, Vice President  
Cybercoins.net, Inc., Pittsburgh, Pa.*

Ten years ago the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission contacted our company to partner on a special medal commemorating the Hero Fund's 100th anniversary. We confess to having known little about the organization. What an education we've received since that time.

For those who haven't had the honor, the moment one walks into the Hero Fund's offices there's an immediate sense of being in a special place, where there is a clarity of purpose and a dedication to mission. A place where its people know they are doing things that matter... a place where even Holden Caulfield would feel inspired and fulfilled.

Initially for us, though, it came down to the finished product we would be working with. *What would the medal look like?* Would the moment of truth be one of encouragement, or *discouragement*? Looking back, it's almost embarrassing that we thought the experience would be met with anything but enthusiasm. The medal turned out to be stunning, the presentation box was beautiful, and we were relieved. We would have a superior *exonumic* (i.e., coin-like) work of art to make available to the public for direct purchase—the first for the Commission since its founding 100 years earlier. It was the beginning of a very satisfying and successful 10-year run, a run that is now coming to an end with the last of the 500 centennial commemorative medals now for sale.

It was only after we had the finished medal in hand that we began to realize what honor it was to be given the privilege of serving the Carnegie Hero Fund community. It was one thing to know intellectually what the Commission did, but it was an entirely different matter to integrate into that community and meet the actual

*(continued on page 9)*



## 2004 centennial medal

(continued from page 8)


heroes and their families in person. We did so at the Hero Fund's centennial anniversary dinner in 2004, where we got to meet those who had performed extraordinary acts of heroism. Of them I especially remember **Paul J. Archambault** and **John Augustus Rose**, who evaded a fire department roadblock to race into a forest fire to save a woman they knew to be living literally in the line of the fire. By the time they drove away, the paint was burned off their vehicle and its tires were flattened. We also had the honor of meeting the son of **Rudell Stich**, who was awarded the Carnegie Medal twice for his courageous acts, the second of which claimed his life. The son made the trek to Pittsburgh to celebrate his dad's heroic sacrifice.

Since the centennial event, we have continued to be inspired by the people we've dealt with. For example, we've experienced the pride that the families feel for the accomplishment of their family member, whether recent or in legend and lore. Some families have actually purchased several medals so that each member could own a symbol of what made their hero so special.

The best experience came from a mother in Detroit, Mich., whose son didn't qualify for the award. He had jumped into the Detroit River to save someone from drowning, but the case fell short of the Hero Fund's exacting award requirements. While she understood and respected the judgment of the Commission, she told us that her son was still a hero in her eyes, and she saw the commemorative medal as her way of being able to reward her son for his selfless actions. To this day, it's still an emotional experience for me when relating the story.

It should be pointed out that the U.S. numismatic community can also take pride in having worked directly with the Commission as part of its effort to send relief funds to Hurricane Katrina victims by way of the American Red Cross. During the months following Katrina, *Coin World*, *Numismatic News*, and the *Numismatist* all provided free advertising space to promote the effort to send 100 percent of the profits from the sale of the medal to the Red Cross. We had increased the price of the medal at that time, asking the Commission if it would like a share of the increased revenue to go towards their funding, but the Commission graciously instructed us to send all additional monies straight to the Red Cross. It was a great collaborative effort on the part of the Commission and these three publications to contribute to a very worthy effort.

In addition to the commemorative medal, there's a way to own another inspirational piece of the Hero Fund's centennial: A book containing accounts of extraordinary acts of bravery and heroism is available through the Commission's website ([www.carnegiehero.org](http://www.carnegiehero.org)). It includes stories and photographs of the heroes as well as the places where they risked their lives. One of our favorites is the story of **Elsie H. McEvoy**, a Canadian woman who was recovering from recent surgery when two neighbor boys ran to tell her their friend was being attacked by a mountain lion. McEvoy rushed outside, grabbed a branch off the ground, and beat the lion on the head, thereby stopping the attack. When the animal was found a short time later, it was discovered that McEvoy had actually beaten it so hard that she fractured its skull. There are many stories like this throughout the book.

Cybercoins.net, Inc., would like to thank the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission for extending to us the opportunity to work together on what turned out to be a lifetime of memories that has brought joy, inspiration, and relief (both emotional and financial) to people all over the country. 

(Cybercoins.net, Inc. was started by Shiff's father in 1959 under the name of *The Coin Collector*, and Shiff started helping out when he was in the second grade. The company changed its name to the current one in 1995 when it became the first coin shop in the world to load photographs of items for sale on an internet website. Shiff is bourse chairman of the Pennsylvania Association of Numismatists Coin Convention, the largest coin convention between Chicago and the east coast.)



### COMMEMORATIVE MEDALLION

(continued from page 8)

by unprotected hands and each will retain its proof-set finish as long as it is kept in its protective plastic capsule. Workmanship was provided by Greco Industries of Danbury, Conn., a recognized leader in the field of medallion art. The medal's sculpture work is by Luigi Badia of Somers, N.Y.

Cybercoins.net offers the medal in good company, placing it among items from inexpensive coins for kids to investment-grade coins for serious collectors. Its offerings include some of the first U.S. coins ever minted, such as the 1793 chain cent and the 1795 dollar that could have been in George Washington's pocket. Ancient Greek and Roman coins are also for sale—company vice president Blaine C. Shiff says they can be surprisingly affordable. "When my daughter was studying Alexander the Great in seventh grade," he said, "I brought in a coin from his approximate time period and did a talk on it. It was such a hit, I was invited back for an encore presentation. That was a lot of fun."

### 15:13

(continued from page 7)

heroic acts. The name identifies the chapter and verse of the Biblical quote from the Gospel of John that appears on every medal: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Of the 9,675 medal awardees to date, 1,992, or 21 percent of the total, were recognized posthumously. **They are not to be forgotten.**



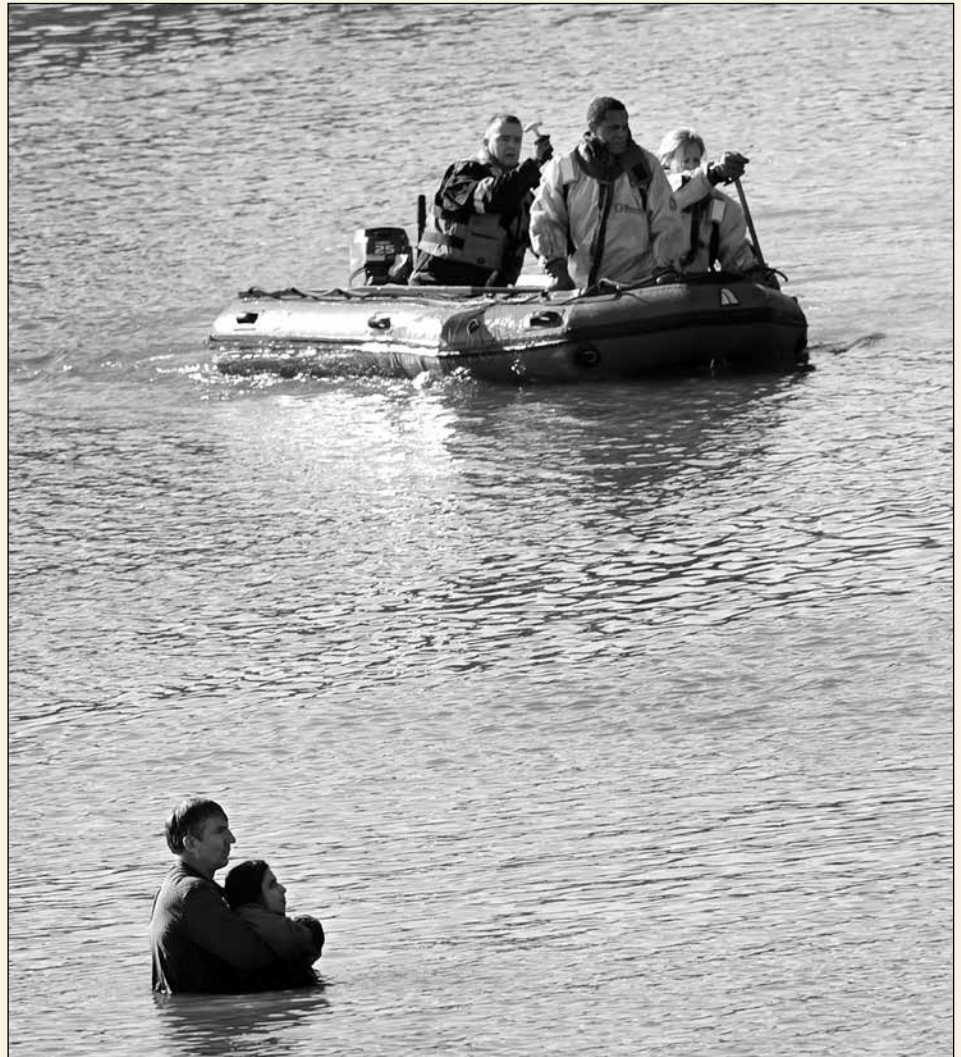
LATEST AWARDEES  
OF THE CARNEGIE MEDAL

SINCE THE LAST ISSUE OF *imPULSE*, THE FOLLOWING 22 INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN AWARDED THE CARNEGIE MEDAL, BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS TO 9,675 SINCE THE HERO FUND'S INCEPTION IN 1904. THE LATEST AWARDS, WHICH WERE ANNOUNCED ON MARCH 26, ARE DETAILED ON THE COMMISSION'S WEBSITE AT WWW.CARNEGIEHERO.ORG. THE NEXT ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARDEES WILL BE MADE ON JUNE 26.

Walmart managers **Lincoln LeMere** and **Archie Jordy** attempted to rescue Jaime Padron from assault by a gunman in Austin, Texas, on April 6, 2012. Padron, 40, a police officer, tackled a suspected shoplifter who was fleeing from the store. In a brief struggle, the suspect produced a semiautomatic handgun and shot Padron twice. LeMere, 35, of Pflugerville, Texas, and Jordy, 42, of Round Rock, Texas, approached. LeMere placed a knee into the assailant's side and pushed him to the floor, and Jordy grasped the assailant's gun hand to disarm him, the gun discharging a third time. Jordy then removed the weapon from the assailant's grasp and slid it away and with LeMere continued to restrain the assailant until police arrived shortly and arrested him. Padron died of a gunshot wound.

**Kyle Robert Hardman** of Barbourville, Ky., died attempting to save Hanh Nguyen and four others from drowning in the Mississippi River at Sauget, Ill., on June 12, 2012, and **Jarvis Shelton** of Villa Ridge, Ill., helped in the attempt. Nguyen, 33, and the others were in a motorboat that, disabled, was pulled by a swift current to a stationary fleet of barges. It became lodged against one of the barges. From a towboat in the vicinity, Hardman, 55, and Shelton, 39, deckhands, launched a rigid-inflatable emergency vessel and took it toward the stranded boat. Hardman threw a line toward the victims, but to no effect. The current pushed the rescue boat against the barges, and it capsized, throwing both men into the river. Crewmembers of an arriving tugboat took both men aboard and then assisted in the rescue of Nguyen and the others. Hardman could not be revived, as he had drowned.

**Keith G. Smedema**, 53, an air traffic control instructor from Indianapolis, Ind., saved a woman from drowning in the White River at Indianapolis on Feb. 7 last year. While bicycling, Smedema became aware of a woman floundering in the river at a point about 150 feet from the bank. He went onto a bridge at the scene to a point above the woman and



*Keith G. Smedema jumped 30 feet from a bridge into the White River at Indianapolis, Ind., to save a drowning woman, even though he did not know the depth of the water. He secured the woman until both were picked up by the Indianapolis Fire Dept. Photo by Matt Kryger, is provided courtesy of The Indianapolis Star.*

ascertained that she needed help. Fully clothed, he then climbed over the railing and jumped 30 feet into the river, despite not knowing its depth there. The 47-degree water took his breath away, but Smedema swam to the woman and grasped her, finding that they were in water about four feet deep. As the nearer bank comprised a wall that was inaccessible, Smedema held to the woman until firefighters responded in a rescue boat several minutes later and took them to safety. (See photo.)

**Keno Goode, Sr.**, 62, a retired firefighter from San Carlos, Ariz., helped to save a girl from drowning in Sevenmile Wash at San Carlos on Sept. 4, 2012. A young girl stood crying in the wash, stranded by rising water after heavy rain. At the scene to observe water conditions, Goode, whose health required him to use crutches, saw her and, abandoning his crutches, entered the wash for her. He lost his footing in the cold, swift water but managed to reach the

girl and secure her in wadable water at a point about 60 feet from the closer bank. Secured by a line tied to him, a police officer entered the water and proceeded to Goode and the girl, as did other men. Using the secured lines, the men removed the girl and then Goode from the wash to safety. (See photo.)

Landscaper **Christopher Allen Staley**, 22, of Newberg, Md., died attempting to save his friend Christopher J. Kelly, 24, from drowning in the Wicomico River at Mechanicsville, Md., on Aug. 6, 2011. Kelly jumped into the river from a pier that extended 600 feet from the bank and struggled to stay afloat in the choppy water. Staley and others were on the pier. Staley jumped into the water for Kelly, but he submerged, as did Kelly, and did not surface. Others jumped into the water for the men, but their rescue efforts were not successful. Divers recovered Kelly and Staley from the river

*(continued on page 11)*

**LATEST AWARDEES***(continued from page 10)*

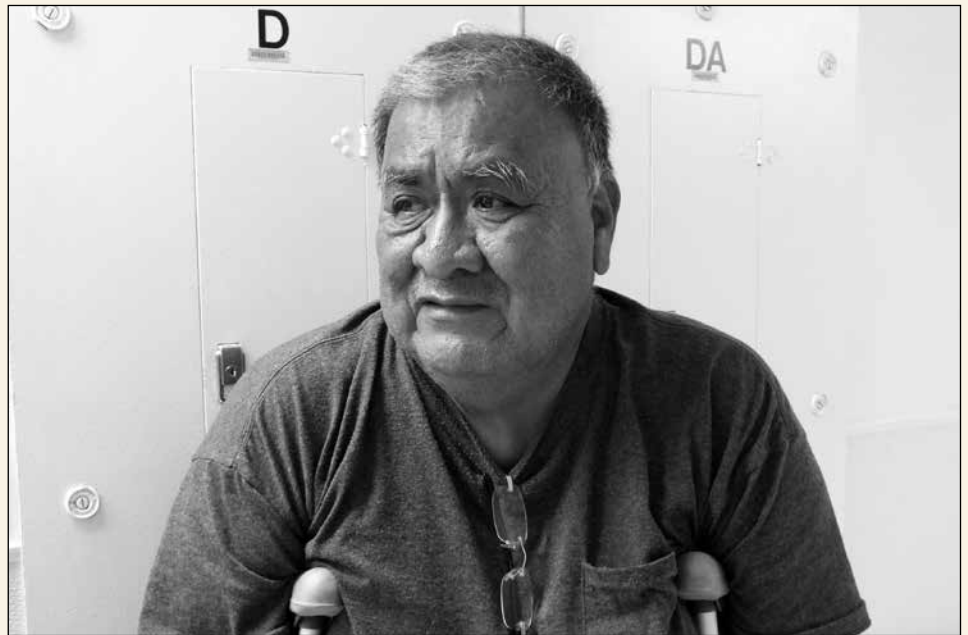
several hours later. Both had drowned.

**Steven L. Rogge**, 40, a technician from Farmington, N.M., saved a 12-year-old boy from drowning in the Animas River at Farmington on April 14 last year. The boy was wading along the bank of the river when he slipped, fell, and was swept over a two-foot drop into a 12-foot-deep pool of water just below the drop, where he submerged. In another party at the scene, Rogge ran along the bank to a point opposite of where the boy was last seen. He dived into the river, swam about 30 feet, and submerged twice before finding him. Grasping the boy, Rogge pushed off the bottom of the river and surfaced with him. Maintaining his hold of him, Rogge let the river carry them about 100 feet downstream to shallower water. He stood there and assisted the boy from the river. Rogge fractured a toe and sustained cuts and bruises to his legs.

High school student **Jason Austin Cole** of Lonoke, Ark., saved a boy from drowning in Spirit Lake at Spirit Lake, Idaho, on Jan. 27, 2013. While playing on ice covering the lake, a boy about 8 broke through thin ice in the vicinity of a highway culvert. Jason, 16, was watching the boy from a dock about 200 feet away. He ran across the ice toward the boy but also broke through into the frigid water at a point within a few feet of the boy. Jason swam to the boy, submerged, and, pushing off a rock, lifted him onto solid ice. Requiring repeated attempts against ice that broke under his weight, Jason then hoisted himself atop solid ice and with the boy went across the ice to safety.

**Justin Tak Chan**, 34, a software engineer from Burnaby, B.C., died attempting to save his friend Amy Wong, 31, from drowning in the Cheakamus River at Whistler, B.C., on Aug. 6, 2011. Wong and Chan were fly-fishing when Wong lost her footing, fell, and was moved downstream, her hip waders filling with water. Chan, also wearing hip waders, was fishing closer to the bank. He immediately jumped into the deeper pool of water between him and Wong, swam across it, and made his way to her. Chan cradled Wong but did not regain his footing as both were carried downstream. Chan was found an hour later at a point about 2,000 feet downstream. He had drowned. Wong was not found.

**Edward J. Garlinghouse**, 44, a carpenter from Boynton Beach, Fla., died after helping to save Kimberly Waldrige and Jasmine Chapman from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean



*Keno Goode, Sr., cast aside his crutches to go to the aid of young girl stranded by rising waters in a desert wash in San Carlos, Ariz. Photo by Ed Kuehneman is provided courtesy of the Copper Country News, Globe, Ariz.*

at Palm Beach Shores, Fla., on Feb. 9 last year. Kimberly and Jasmine, both 10, were playing near the waterline when a breaker took them into the surf, and a strong current carried them farther out. From nearby, Garlinghouse, Jasmine's father, and a third man ran into the water and swam out to the girls, reaching them at a point about 150 feet from shore. Although they tried to swim back to shore with the girls, the current took them to a point about 300 feet out. As they trod water, the men rotated the

girls among them, giving each man a chance to rest. A responding boater took Kimberly and the third man aboard, and an arriving police boat rescued Jasmine and her father. Garlinghouse submerged about then and did not resurface. He was not found.

Brothers **Brian Patrick Joyce**, 21, and **Steven Edward Joyce, Jr.**, 23, both of Littleton, Mass., saved Erin E. Brogan and David T. Yahoodik from a burning car in Newton, Mass., on July 28, 2012. Brogan and Yahoodik, both 25, were occupants of a sport utility vehicle that struck a concrete barrier and overturned onto its passenger side. Flames broke out at the front of the vehicle. Brian and Steven, landscapers, approached in another vehicle, stopped, and ran to the burning car, where Brian attempted to open its driver's door. Unsuccessful, he opened the rear door and then extended his upper body inside through it. As he moved the headrest from the driver's seat to give the victims more room to maneuver, Steven opened the vehicle's hatch and entered. He reclined the back seat and then, taking Brogan by the arm as Brian guided from the door opening, removed her through the back of the vehicle, Yahoodik following. Flames soon grew to engulf the vehicle.

**Kurt T. Buchler**, 44, a bartender from Sanatoga, Pa., rescued Kaitlyn M. Fadely from a dog attack in Pottstown, Pa., on March 15 last year. Arriving to visit at a private residence, Fadely, 19, was attacked by three dogs weighing from 80 to 100 pounds. The dogs dragged her to a point beside a fence and



*Mr. Chan*

*(continued on page 12)*



## LATEST AWARDEES

(continued from page 11)

mauled her. Buchler was about 350 feet away when he heard Fadely's screams. He ran to the scene and went to the opposite side of the fence, where he yelled at the dogs and punched at them to distract them. The dogs chased Buchler into the street. Realizing that he could not outrun them, Buchler turned and fought against them, kicking and punching. Fadely was helped to safety inside the residence, and a passing motorist used her vehicle to stop the attack on Buchler. Both required hospitalization for treatment of severe bite wounds, Buchler's causing him to miss three months' work.

**Virginia R. Grogan**, 54, of Gloucester, Va., died attempting to save her grandsons, Gabriel I., 6 months, Michael V., 2, and Thomas P. Grogan, 7, from the family's burning house on Jan. 16 last year. The boys and their mother were in a second-floor bedroom after fire erupted at night in the living room, which was below the bedroom. Grogan, a college student and retired military officer, alerted the mother to the fire and then with her husband climbed through a window in their bedroom to the roof of the front porch. They went to a window in the boys' bedroom and pulled the mother from the house. As Grogan's husband aided the mother to ground level, Grogan entered the bedroom for the boys. Flames grew to engulf and destroy the structure. Firefighters later located the boys in the bedroom and Grogan in the living room, all having succumbed to smoke inhalation.

12



Ms. Grogan

**Matthew P. Schons**, 25, a cook from Tracy, Minn., rescued his neighbor, Jadyn B. Haugen, 2 months, from her family's burning house on Sept. 15, 2012. Jadyn was in a crib in the living room after a large explosion in the house set spot fires throughout the structure and rendered it unstable. Schons heard the explosion and saw flames and smoke issuing



Father-of-three Christopher John Ihle was wearing cowboy boots as he fought for traction while pushing a stranded car off a railroad track at a crossing. With only seconds to spare, he saved the car's elderly occupants from being struck by a train bearing down on them. He smelled something hot and metallic, he told *Men's Health* magazine. "Probably the train's brakes. Or my own fear." Photo by Rodney White, Copyright 2013, The Des Moines Register and Tribune Company. Reprinted with permission.

from the scene. He ran to the house and, learning that Jadyn was still inside, entered the living room through the front door. Despite flames burning throughout the room, Schons moved along its perimeter to search for Jadyn, not knowing her location. Passing within inches of the flames in deteriorating conditions, he found the crib in the far corner of the room. Schons picked Jadyn up and, cradling her in one arm while shielding her face with the other, fled outside to safety. Flames grew quickly to engulf the house.

Banker **Christopher Jon Ihle**, 38, of Ames, Iowa, saved Marion A. and Jean M. Papich from being struck by a train in Ames on July 31 last year. Marion, 84, and his wife, 78, remained in a car that stalled on a railroad track at a crossing. Having seen the car on the track, Ihle, who was in the bank's parking lot nearby, immediately ran to the crossing when its gates, lights, and bells were activated. With an approaching train then about 450 feet away, Ihle pushed on the rear of the car but, having insufficient traction on the paved crossing, could not move it. He then ran to the front of the vehicle and, with the train about 300 feet away, pushed it backward, off the track. Ihle moved to the side of the car just seconds before the front of the train passed, within a few feet. The front of the train reached a point well beyond the crossing before the train stopped. (See photo.)

**Roger Costa**, 39, a warehouse employee from Tustin, Calif., attempted to rescue Maria C.T. Frivaldo, 56, from her burning apartment in Tustin on Nov. 20, 2012. Frivaldo was trapped on the balcony of her second-floor apartment after fire broke out in the unit's kitchen and spread, blocking access to its door. She screamed for help as flames issued into the balcony. A resident of the same complex, Costa responded to the scene after seeing the fire from his apartment. He climbed to the level of the balcony and, holding to its wooden railing with one hand, reached out for Frivaldo, but she slipped from his grasp. Costa lost his hold of the railing and fell backward to the ground. Frivaldo died in the fire, and Costa required six days' hospitalization for treatment, including surgery, of burns up to third-degree to a hand and an arm.

**Michael Jerome Cade** of Enid., Okla., rescued a woman from an armed assault in Houston, Texas, on May 17 last year, and **Henry McHenry** of Houston then rescued Cade. A 26-year-old woman screamed for help after a man broke into the shop where she worked and, at gunpoint, forced her outside and into his pickup truck. A patron of the barbershop two doors away, Cade, 45, a vocational rehabilitative specialist, witnessed the assault. When he approached the assailant at the truck and pushed him away, a struggle between the men ensued, during which the assailant

(continued on page 13)

## “Wonderful Life”

(continued from page 6)

holding her hand with his left hand.

A man on the bank tied a rope around himself and gave the free end to another man to hold. He then entered the canal and swam toward Varacalli.

When Varacalli had swum 27 feet with Miss Dunham, he brought her around in front of him and shoved her toward the man on the rope. Varacalli then suddenly stopped swimming. His body turned around in a small circle, and he then sank and was drowned. The man on the rope caught Ms. Dunham, and she was taken ashore. She was unconscious but was revived.

Varacalli's body was recovered from the canal at 1:15 p.m. that day. Ninety-seven years to the minute later, the bells of Seneca Falls pealed in his honor. Laude had finished reading the Hero Fund's report, and the crowd was silent. She then directed them to cast flowers into the canal in further tribute.


Late in 1917, Varacalli was posthumously awarded the Carnegie Medal, which was given to his father.

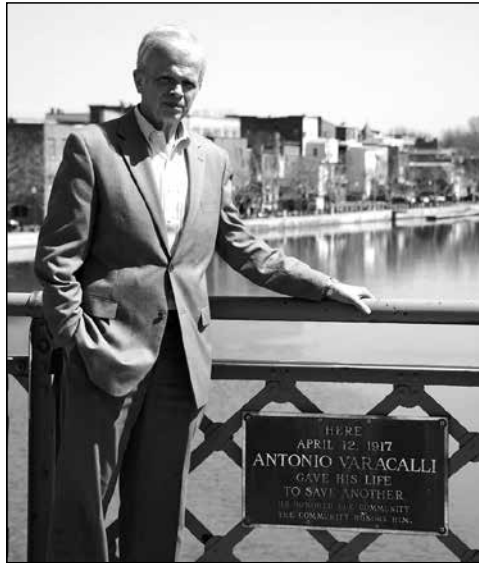
Varacalli was buried in a cemetery not far from the center of town, and Laude, as a member of the It's a Wonderful Life Committee, had arranged for the Hero Fund to provide a bronze marker, cast in the likeness of the medal, to be affixed to his headstone. The marker was formally presented to the committee by the Hero Fund's newly named president, Walter Rutkowski, who had driven from Pittsburgh for the event.

It's a wonderful life?

It's said that in 1945, Hollywood director Frank Capra, himself an Italian immigrant, stopped in Seneca Falls for a haircut while in the area visiting relatives. A year later, his classic holiday film, *It's a Wonderful Life*, was released. The movie's pivotal scene is the rescue of a man who jumps from a steel-truss bridge in a fictional upstate New York town called Bedford Springs. The man who jumps is an angel named Clarence who had been dispatched to look over the story's main character, George Bailey, played by Jimmy Stewart. Despondent himself, Bailey had been on the bridge contemplating suicide when Clarence intervened, and Bailey jumps into the water to save him, thereby commencing his redemption.

Other similarities—from architecture to street and family names—have the people of Seneca Falls believing that their town influenced Capra in the making of his film. In fact, the child actress who played Zuzu, Bailey's daughter in the film, visited Seneca Falls in 2002, looked around, and said, “Was I in Bedford Falls...or in Seneca Falls? I felt like I was in both!”

Capitalizing on the town's association with the film, the “Wonderful Life” committee sponsors an annual *It's a Wonderful Life* festival on the second weekend every December that attracts much attention, including internationally. In 2010, the It's a Wonderful Life Museum opened its doors and among the displays carries a photo of the Carnegie Medal in its tribute to Varacalli. In 2013, the first annual “Antonio Varacalli Day” was held on the anniversary of his rescue act to celebrate all heroes, including teachers, firefighters, members of the military, and others of positive influence. “Mr. Varacalli represents so many people around us who are willing to risk all they have to help others, even strangers,” says Barb Reigel, president of the committee. 



Hero Fund president Walter F. Rutkowski attended the Antonio Varacalli event in Seneca Falls, N.Y. Photo by Henry Law of the It's a Wonderful Life Museum.

### OVERHEARD

**Call 911. Don't hate me.**—Instruction from **Meghan O'Reilly-Green**, Carnegie Medal nominee #85948, to her family before entering the surf to save two men from drowning.

**When did we decide as a society to allow our children to grow up without spines?**—Mother of a 13-year-old Carnegie Medal nominee who was disciplined for intervening in a knife incident on school property.

**The police and fire department and emergency personnel still there saluted us as we drove by. It made me cry instantly and it made me very proud.**—Carnegie Medal nominee who helped to rescue survivors of a deadly highway accident.

### LATEST AWARDEES

(continued from page 12)

fired twice at Cade, grazing his scalp. As Cade and the assailant continued to fight, going to the pavement, the woman fled the vehicle to safety. McHenry, 39, barber, also left the shop and approached the assailant. He applied a chokehold to him, allowing Cade to remove the gun from the immediate scene, and held him to the pavement until police arrived and arrested him. McHenry sustained minor injury, and Cade required hospital treatment for gunshot wounds, fractures, and lacerations.

**Drew James Loftus**, 22, a security guard from San Diego, Calif., and **Austin Jeffrey Mann**, 23, a research analyst from Carlsbad, Calif., saved Lynn E. Sauer from being struck by highway traffic in Encinitas, Calif., on March 3 last year. After an accident on an interstate highway at night, Sauer, 63, was trapped in her van, which had overturned onto its driver's side across one of the four lanes of travel. Loftus and Mann were traveling in an approaching vehicle that swerved to avoid the van. Stopping at the scene, they responded to the van and learned that it was occupied. Loftus mounted the passenger side and opened its front door as Mann faced oncoming traffic and used the light of his cellular telephone to alert approaching motorists. Loftus pulled Sauer from the vehicle and lowered her to Mann, on the highway, on which the speed limit was 65 m.p.h., and then ran with them to safety on the nearer shoulder. Moments later, the van was struck by an automobile, and both vehicles burst into flame, the van coming to rest atop the hood of the automobile. Loftus and Mann ran to the driver's side of the automobile, where Mann pulled the driver through the opened driver's door. They returned to the shoulder with her as flames on both vehicles grew.



FRIENDS REMEMBERED



**Robert P. Davies**, 49, of Golden Valley, Ariz., died March 21. Davies was awarded the Carnegie Medal in December to recognize his efforts in helping to save an elderly neighbor from her burning house on Dec. 21, 2012. Davies climbed into the woman's bedroom as

Mr. Davies

flames advanced and held her to the window for air. The fire chief arrived shortly, and between them the men managed to get the 92-year-old woman through a window to safety despite rapidly deteriorating conditions. "Not many neighbors would risk their life like that," said the chief, Thomas O'Donohue.

**Hugo F. Greco**, 81, of Bethel, Conn., died March 30. Greco was the founder of Greco Industries, whose specialties are medallic arts, highly detailed metal casting, metal finishing, and the engraving of metal, plastic, and other items. As



Mr. Greco

such, the company was the manufacturer of the Carnegie Medal from the time of its centennial in 2004 until 2012, and it produced the Hero Fund's limited-edition, centennial commemorative medal (see page 8).



**John C. Springer**, 70, of Alexandria, Va., died Aug. 29. Springer was awarded the medal in 2007 for his actions of Jan. 9, 2005, by which he intervened in a knife assault in the nursing unit of the retirement home in Alexandria where his

Mr. Springer

mother was living. Springer, then 62, was visiting his mother when a disturbed man attacked a female staff member in her office nearby. "I knew what I had to do," Springer later said. He grabbed the assailant and struggled against him, allowing another employee to pull the injured staffer away. The assailant inflicted numerous knife wounds to Springer about his head and face before leaving the immediate scene. Springer's heroic actions were described in articles appearing in the *Reader's Digest* in 2005 and 2006.

# Washington, Steve Jobs, and Carnegie: Life lessons on a cross-country car trip

By Kyle DeLapp, Denver, Colo.  
Carnegie Medal Awardee #9112

**Q:** Suppose you had to choose three people—people alive now or people from another era—to travel with you on a cross-country automobile trip. Who would you choose and why? What would you hope to learn from them?

**A:** I have driven through Nebraska and Kansas many times, and there is nothing like 424 miles of cornfields with only your thoughts and a little music to keep you company. In choosing three people, I would look for individuals who would make the trip both enjoyable and could also contribute to my personal growth; people who were consequential leaders who demonstrated competence, character, and a unique ability to adapt. While it is difficult to find someone who meets all my criteria, I would choose Steve Jobs, George Washington, and Andrew Carnegie, given their particular strengths.

Steve Jobs is widely recognized as a visionary, responsible for many of today's modern technological advances. He is considered the Thomas Edison of the modern age and revolutionized how we function, operate, and enjoy the arts. While working at an Apple retail store after college, I was able to see firsthand Jobs's vision and his comprehensive genius. I would hope to build on that experience through my time with him to learn how to be more creative, more innovative, and more farsighted. However, Steve Jobs was not known to be a people person.

Which brings me to my second choice: George Washington. The first President of the United States was well respected and possessed many rare qualities. To this day, Washington is one of the most influential people in American and World history. He had an uncanny ability to bring people together, particularly in difficult times. Whether it was the soldiers under his command at Valley Forge or the political factions he encountered throughout his life, Washington possessed the extraordinary ability to navigate treacherous waters. From Washington, I would endeavor to learn and understand his logic and reasoning, his ability to understand and dimensionalize a situation, and his unique insight into people and their surroundings.

My last passenger, Andrew Carnegie, embodies many of these attributes. Carnegie was a born leader who possessed vision and leadership. He led the expansion of the steel industry, which helped usher in the Industrial Revolution. He was a dedicated, although quiet, philanthropist who endeavored to improve himself and those around him. He established the "Andrew Carnegie Dictum," which emphasized spending the first third of one's life amassing all the education one can, the next third accumulating all the money one can, and the third, giving it all away "to do real and permanent good in this world." Nearly a century after his death in 1919, Andrew Carnegie accomplished just that by touching and enhancing my life when I was awarded the Carnegie Medal for saving two children from drowning in the Gulf of Mexico. A man of tremendous wealth, Carnegie ultimately used it to help others. From Andrew Carnegie, I want to learn and acquire greater empathy and philanthropy for others. ☒



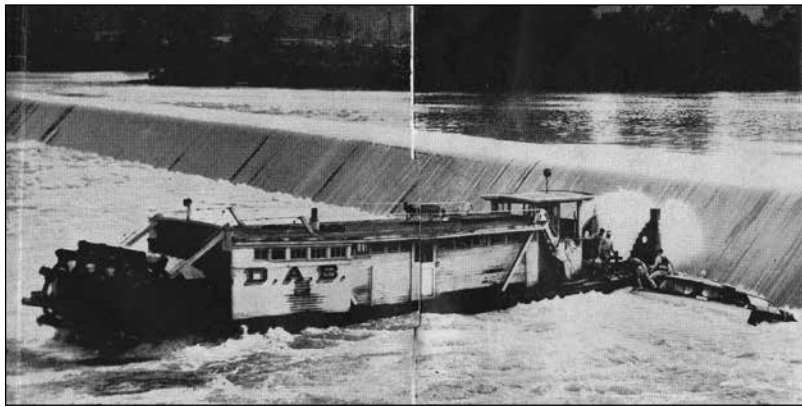
*DeLapp, a graduate of the University of Colorado, submitted this piece as part of his application to the Kelley School of Business of Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind. He was accepted and, with a bit of tuition aid from the Hero Fund, will start work on his master's degree in business administration this fall. While high school student from Georgia on spring break in 2006, DeLapp and two friends—Steven M. Gartner and Hooman Nourparvar—saved four children from drowning in the Gulf of Mexico at Miramar Beach, Fla. Each of the rescuers was awarded the Carnegie Medal.*

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

*Night-long river rescue proved deadly*

Barges plying the Allegheny River north from Pittsburgh are a common site year round, as river traffic has been important to the economy. The region's waterways through their connection to the Mississippi River provide a direct route to New Orleans, and to improve navigation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers constructed locks and low-head dams on the lower Allegheny beginning in the 1920s. The benefit of pooling the river at intervals was to enable navigation over longer distances, but with the new locks and dams came a threat: turbulent backwash of the water flowing over the dams.

On June 11, 1950, James P. McHugh, Jr., 24, was spending the Saturday evening with friends at a boat club in Oakmont, just south of Lock and Dam No. 3, which spans the river between Harmar Township to the west and the borough of Plum to the east. The owner of a 27-foot long cabin cruiser that was equipped with an inboard motor, he invited five friends—three men and two women—to accompany him on a nighttime river cruise. All accepted his invitation, and at 10:30 they boarded McHugh's boat. With McHugh piloting, they moved upstream. McHugh was an experienced boater and had been navigating the Allegheny for about two months.



*Rescue by paddle towboat was successful, but boat was later stranded and torn apart by turbulent water.*

To operate the lock, a lockmaster was present 24 hours a day. Shortly after McHugh and his party embarked on the river, **Hull L. Wright**, 55, began his shift as lockmaster, relieving **James H. Woffenden**. Wright lived in Oakmont with his wife, and Woffenden, 50, and his family lived in neighboring Verona.

At a few minutes before midnight, Wright opened the lock, which was along the east bank, and McHugh's boat went through it and reached the river above the dam.

The dam is a reinforced concrete wall, the top of which is more than 20 feet above the floor of the river. A concrete "apron" on the bottom of the river extends downstream from the dam and includes vertical baffles to dissipate the force of the water flowing over the dam. Mitigating the advantage of the baffling, however, is the backwash of water returning toward the dam. The confluence of currents at the base of the dam creates a turbulence exerting significant draw.

Once McHugh's boat was above the dam, one of the other men took the wheel and continued to pilot the boat upstream. Shortly after midnight, the party decided to return to the boat club. The night was overcast, but the boat's light was good for about 200 feet. Lights were positioned on the lock, but McHugh's friend mistook the lights on a nearby bridge pier for the lock's and headed the boat in that direction. McHugh and his friends realized the

mistake too late, and the boat was swept over the dam and became caught broadside against it in the backwash. Water flooded the boat and caused the engine to stall.

At the lock, Wright became aware of the accident. It was 12:35 a.m. He called Woffenden and asked what he should do; Woffenden told him to ready a wooden boat with outboard motor that was kept at the dam and to load it with personal flotation devices and lines. He also told him not to attempt under any circumstances to rescue the boat's occupants alone. Woffenden arrived on scene and boarded the boat, which Wright piloted parallel with the dam but outside the area of turbulence. Both men knew well the dangers of the backwash.

When Wright and Woffenden were opposite McHugh's boat and about 100 feet downstream from it, Wright idled the engine. Their plan was for Woffenden to control the boat while Wright threw lines toward McHugh's boat, but before Wright could attempt a throw, their boat was pulled violently into the backwash

and then against the face of the dam. The force of the water broke the boat apart, but both Wright and Woffenden pulled themselves aboard McHugh's boat. It was then about 1:15 a.m.

McHugh's boat was pitched by the backwash and continued to take on water. About five minutes after Wright and Woffenden boarded it, its stern, or rear, submerged, and all of its occupants were thrown into the water. Only McHugh, one of his male friends, and Woffenden surfaced. They were able to climb aboard the boat, which had risen back to the surface of the water.

For two hours the three men clung to the boat as people gathered on both shores to watch, yell encouragement, and surely to pray. A ferryboat attempted to reach them but ran aground downstream of the dam. A blimp was used to attempt to drop a line to the men, but that attempt failed as well. After the sun rose, some men in a paddle towboat approached McHugh's boat from downstream. With the bow, or front, of the towboat against the dam, McHugh, his friend, and Woffenden were able to climb aboard it before the towboat itself swung against the dam and became caught. People atop the lock lowered a ladder to the towboat, and the three men climbed to safety. To the surprise of many, another of McHugh's friends was still alive and was seen bobbing up and down. By 7:25 a.m., he too was rescued, but Wright and the three other of McHugh's friends drowned.

The Commission awarded Carnegie Medals to Woffenden and posthumously to Wright, and it provided a monthly beneficiary grant to Wright's widow, Margaret, that continued until her death in 1979. Woffenden died in 1969. ☒ —*Marlin Ross, Case Investigator*

**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

Editor: Walter F. Rutkowski, President

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

Fax: 412-281-5751

E-mail: [carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org](mailto:carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org)[impulse@carnegiehero.org](mailto:impulse@carnegiehero.org)Website: [www.carnegiehero.org](http://www.carnegiehero.org)**MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION**

A. H. Burchfield III

Robert J. Cindrich

Robert M. Hernandez

Thomas J. Hilliard, Jr.

David McL. Hillman

Linda T. Hills

Peter J. Lambrou

Mark Laskow

*Chair*

Nathalie Lemieux

Christopher R. McCrady

Priscilla J. McCrady

*Vice President*

Ann M. McGuinn

Nancy L. Rackoff

Frank Brooks Robinson

Dan D. Sandman

*Treasurer*

Arthur M. Scully

Michael A. Thompson

Sybil P. Veeder

*Chair, Executive Committee*

Joseph C. Walton

Susanne C. Wean

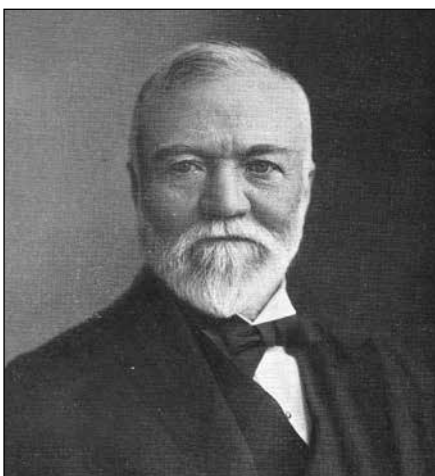
Thomas L. Wentling, Jr.

*Chair, Finance Committee***HONORARY MEMBERS**

William P. Snyder III

James M. Walton

## ✦ THE QUOTABLE A.C. ✦



*'There is no purchase in money' of any real happiness. When used for our own gratification, it injures us; when used ostentatiously, it brings care; when hoarded, it narrows the soul.*

—From *Round the World*, 1902, pp. 355-6.

## ✦ CONTINUUM ✦

**GRAVE MARKERS** Bronze grave markers (below), 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 Rizza ([susan@carnegiehero.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:doug@carnegiehero.org)).

**ANNUAL REPORTS** Copies of the Hero Fund's most recent annual reports (2010-2012) are available by contacting Gloria Barber ([gloria@carnegiehero.org](mailto: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](http://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.

**imPULSE ON LINE?** Should you wish to receive imPULSE in PDF rather than in your mailbox, let us know: [impulse@carnegiehero.org](mailto:impulse@carnegiehero.org)

**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](mailto:carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org) Website: [www.carnegiehero.org](http://www.carnegiehero.org)