



# imPULSE

A Periodic Newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission ISSUE 6 • JUNE 2006

## The gift of a hero: The power to inspire confidence in others

### CONNECTING COURAGE WITH CHARACTER

Craig Allen Cross was awarded the Carnegie Medal three years ago for rescuing an elderly man from a burning building in Frostburg, Md., on Oct. 21, 2002. Having thus found Cross to be courageous, the Hero Fund subsequently tapped into his other qualities as an articulate educator for its participation in a novel character-development program for use in public schools.

At the end of March this year, Cross recounted his heroic act to an assembly of more than 800 students of Indiana, Pa., Junior High School. He told them how the elderly man was in the second-floor apartment of a two-story building when an explosion of leaking natural gas occurred there. Two walls of the building were blown off, the roof collapsed partially, and flames began to spread throughout the structure. At his home nearby, Cross, then 32, heard and felt the explosion. Barefoot and in nightclothes, he ran to the scene, where he entered the house, climbed over debris upstairs to the man's apartment, and found the victim, dazed and badly burned. Cross dragged him to the stairs, then carried him down to safety.

Cross's appearance at the school can be traced to an initiative adopted by the board of the Hero Fund in late 2004. The board's charge was to explore how its awardees' heroic acts could be used as illustrations of the good that can be found in the human spirit, and, more specifically, how they could be used in a school setting to encourage and promote character development.

That prompted the Hero Fund to research organizations involved in character-education curricula, a path that soon led to the Pittsburgh-based Heartwood Institute, which develops such programs for schools throughout the United States. A partnership was established, various committees

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*Carnegie Medalist Craig Allen Cross, with Indiana, Pa., Junior High School Principal Dr. Luanne Kokolis*

*By Craig Allen Cross • Carnegie Medal Awardee*

What makes a hero? First, heroes step out of the ordinary and into the unknown. This usually puts them at risk, and they may not want to go. They may be afraid, but nevertheless they push past fear and continue.

Second, heroes accomplish something that is not easily done—they overcome an obstacle, pass a test, meet a challenge, slay a dragon. They dive into shark-infested waters to rescue a drowning person or go back into the heat of battle to help a fallen comrade.

Third, heroes return to their ordinary circumstances, changed somehow from the process of putting their lives or reputations on the line. They bring something back to share that is good for the rest of us: a lost treasure, secret knowledge, or some boost of strength such as an increase in confidence.

After my experience, people kept coming up to me and saying things like, "Not everyone would have done what you did," or, "I can't believe a guy like you did such a thing." At the time, I thought it was kind of funny that people kept saying these things, but now I realize that they were putting themselves in my shoes. While I tried to stay humble, my friends were bragging about knowing a hero. They were gaining power, confidence, and strength from imagining themselves as the hero. This power to believe in themselves, that they too could be the hero, is the greatest gift a hero has to

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### THE POWER OF AN IDEA

By Mark Laskow, President • Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

This spring the Carnegie Rescuers Foundation of Switzerland is honoring 27 individuals as part of a national day of heroes. It is the kind of work that has been performed for a century by the 10 surviving Carnegie hero funds in the United States and across Europe.

But there is more. On behalf of the community of Carnegie hero funds, the Swiss foundation is recognizing and welcoming back the 11th, "missing," Carnegie hero fund. The rebirth of the Carnegie Stiftung für Lebensretter of Germany is described in detail on page 7 of this issue of *IMPULSE*, but I would like to reflect briefly on what this happy event says about the nature of Andrew Carnegie's philanthropy.

Carnegie created and endowed 23 institutions, including 11 hero funds. (His numerous libraries and church organs were simple gifts.) All of those organizations, save the original German hero fund, survive to this day. It is remarkable enough that Carnegie made such generous gifts. It is more remarkable yet that he had the imagination and foresight to conceive missions for these organizations that remain as vital and relevant a century later as they were when the organizations were established.

Money alone cannot account for the remarkable success of these organizations. The power of Carnegie's ideas, coupled with his generosity, made the difference. The revival of the German hero fund illustrates the point perfectly. There is no money left, but the idea alone had the power to compel Germans to act to restore the organization.

Before Andrew Carnegie acted, nothing like a hero fund existed. It seems, however, that the hero funds satisfy a need in us so important that we will not be without them.



Mark Laskow, left, Commission president, told of the work of the Hero Fund at a program sponsored by the Flagler Museum, Palm Beach, Fla., in April. Shown with him is John M. Blades, the museum's executive director. The museum is the first established in Florida.

### 40-YEAR CLUB

Frank Brooks Robinson, right, was cited at the Hero Fund's annual board meeting in February for having reached the 40th anniversary of his election to the Commission. Board President Mark Laskow presented Robinson with a certificate marking his "dedication to the purposes of the Commission and his distinguished service" as a member of the executive, finance, and membership committees during his tenure. Robinson joins two other current board members who have served at least four decades: William P. Snyder III (55 years) and Arthur M. Scully, Jr. (42 years).



### *The gift of a hero: The power to inspire confidence in others* (continued from cover)

offer—immense power is acquired by assuring yourself in your secret reveries that you were born to control affairs!

Who are my heroes? They include Albert Einstein, Bob Dylan, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Andrew Carnegie, Mark Twain, John F. Kennedy, Abraham Lincoln, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Edison, Walt Disney, and Paul Newman. These folks were the great innovators of their time. They brought change in the ways people thought or lived. However, if you probe deep enough into their lives you will find they had their faults. Heroes are not perfect, but what is important is that these folks had the courage to seek and speak the truth, to hold fast to their principles, and to bring forth a higher standard for the entire human race. It is always well to remember that there are giants in our day, too.


Does a hero always have to have super powers or do some amazing, death-defying feat? Maybe not. Sometimes the simplest acts are mighty heroic. Isn't it heroic to write a book that attempts to change the way people think about a subject, even though you know that others will not accept it and may even threaten you for writing it? Isn't it heroic to refuse to be discriminated against, even under threat of imprisonment or beating for a simple act of disobedience? Isn't it heroic to speak out about injustice, to tell the truth about something you believe strongly in when you know that you will be condemned for even mentioning your beliefs?

Certainly these are heroic acts, but let's look even further into everyday life. What about our mothers who endured nine months of pregnancy then entered into the scary unknown and even life-threatening process of labor to bring us into the world? Could they be called heroes?

What about our fathers, or their fathers before them, who went down into coal mines or worked in a factory, accepting that that day could be their last? Could they be called heroes for ensuring a certain standard of living for the families?

What about the first child of a family brave enough to go to college, knowing that all the hopes and fears of the family ride on his success or failure? Maybe that child had trouble reading or doing math but decides he's not going to be stopped from trying.

My family are all heroes to me, but especially my grandfather: He fought in World War II in the Battle of the Bulge, and he also rescued many people as a volunteer firefighter. Most important, he was like a father to me for most of my life, teaching kindness, generosity, and virtue.

When I was a kid, my grandfather would take me every week to get a new Spider Man comic book. I read them over and over and imagined myself springing into action to save people in trouble. I'd climb trees and buildings and swing from vines in the woods. Most people thought I was crazy for the stunts I tried, but I now know all that was training for the night I ran into a burning building. I knew I could do it. I didn't know I wouldn't get hurt, but I knew I could climb up there. It had taken more than 20 years, but I was able to help someone with my own special abilities. Someday you may be called to use your abilities to help someone in need, to dig deep inside yourself for the courage, the confidence, and the strength to be a hero. 



## Carnegie Heroine at 96 soars among the clouds



*Carnegie Medal awardee Evelyn Bryan Johnson. Photo by Earl Neikirk.*

By Jackie Sheckler Finch • American Profile

When Evelyn Johnson's husband enlisted in the Air Force during World War II, the Tennessee woman decided she'd get a hobby to ease her mind. Picking up the Sunday newspaper, Johnson saw an ad that sent her soaring.

"It was just a little notice about learning how to fly," Johnson says. "I had never in my life thought about flying. But I decided that I believe I will."

That was in 1944. Now 96, the aviation legend still has her heart in the clouds. She has logged more flight hours than any other woman in the world—57,630—and taught more than 5,000 aspiring pilots how to fly. She's also certified about 9,000 pilots for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and has managed the Moore-Murrell Airport in Morristown, Tenn., since she opened it in 1953.

"Oh, honey, it's a whole different world up there," Johnson says. "You leave your problems behind, even if only for a little while."

In an era when women pilots were a rarity, the barely five-foot-tall woman says she never worried about handling any airplane. Dubbed "Mama Bird" by one of her students, she has flown a variety of aircraft, from single-engine airplanes to commercial seaplanes and helicopters. She has had several "close calls"—two complete engine failures and an onboard fire while airborne—but has never crashed. In 1959, she won a Carnegie Medal for saving the life of a helicopter pilot who crashed during takeoff at the Morristown airport a year earlier. Crawling into the wreckage, Johnson turned off the engine, stopping the spinning blades, then sprayed it down with a fire extinguisher, and helped pull out the pilot.

Although Johnson never had children, the aviation pioneer has left her mark on the younger generations. Adele McDonald, a pilot since 1987, acknowledges that Johnson not only taught her how to become a pilot but "helped pave the way for women" in a primarily male-dominated profession. "She is my greatest mentor and role model, as a pilot and as a person," says McDonald, 53, who works as a corporate contract pilot.

Robert Klepper, 70, of Jefferson City, Tenn., shares McDonald's admiration for Johnson. "I'm proud to be one of her flock," he says. "She taught me how to fly and I spent 33 years as a pilot before I retired in 1991."

A tough instructor, Johnson always has been adamant about flight safety. "She made sure you knew what to do in case of engine failure," Klepper says. "In fact, you never knew when she was going to reach over, pull the throttle back to idle and ask where you were going to put the plane down."

Mama Bird wanted to be sure her little flyers were able to land safely in any situation, Klepper says. "No matter where you were, you learned to keep an eye out for some

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### CARNEGIE SOJOURN

Descendants of Andrew Carnegie visited Pittsburgh in March, and included among their tour of Carnegie-related sites was the grave of his parents. Shown at the grave marker is Linda Thorell Hills, second from right, who is one of Carnegie's 15 great-grandchildren. She is pictured with her husband Harold and their children, the "great-greats" James and Louise. Residents of Littleton, Colo., they were viewing some of the sites—Carnegie's libraries, his former steel mills, the Carnegie Science Center—for the first time. Carnegie's parents, William (1804-1855) and Margaret Morrison Carnegie (1810-1886), are buried in Pittsburgh's historic Allegheny Cemetery. The family emigrated to the United States in 1848 from Scotland, their heritage marked by the sculpted thistle at the foot of the stone.



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### FAST FRIENDS

David N. Guldner, left, and Taj Matney were strangers on Oct. 13, 2003, the day that Matney pulled Guldner from a burning truck after an accident near Sonoma, Calif. Matney was awarded the Carnegie Medal in 2004 for his actions. The men reconnected and, already bonded by the rescue, discovered a mutual interest in vehicle conversion and customizing that established a friendship. Details on the Hero Fund's Website at [www.carnegiehero.org](http://www.carnegiehero.org). The photo was taken by Matney's mother, Nellie Wooldridge.



## THANK YOU, THANK YOU

The Hero Fund does not actively solicit donations but accepts them gratefully and uses them in the furtherance of its work. Two recent ones are worthy of note:

William F. Bauman of McKinney, Texas, was awarded the Carnegie Medal for his actions of more than a half-century ago. On May 5, 1951, Bauman, then 30, saved a 17-year-old boy from drowning in the Brazos River. The boy was caught in the strong backwash of a dam, and, swimming to him, Bauman supported him for more than a half-hour, until other rescuers arrived with equipment and aided them to the bank.

"I could see my wife holding my baby and anxiously waiting the outcome," Bauman said. She begged me not to go in, but being hard-headed I went anyway to help the boy." Both rescuer and rescued were tired after their ordeal, but they recovered.

"I'm an old man now," Bauman writes, "but I want to tell you how proud I am of my medal. It was one of the best things that ever happened to me." The note was accompanied by a personal check.

It's hard to miss Michael Fesen in a crowd—at six-foot-ten, he stands out. His actions of Sept. 14, 2000, likewise set him apart. Northbound on Interstate 95 en route to his home in Springfield, Va., that day, Fesen came across a 25-foot motor home that had pulled onto the highway shoulder and was burning.

Fesen stopped to investigate, finding the vehicle's owners—a retired police officer and his wife—still inside. The husband was struggling to aid his wife, who was disabled and nearly blind. Fesen entered the vehicle hunched over and made his way to the front, where flames were on the dashboard, floor, and side wall. He lifted the wife from her seat and with her husband carried her back to the side door and out of the vehicle. The motor home was destroyed by fire. Luckily, no one was seriously injured.

Now relocated to Harrisburg, Pa., where he is an executive in government relations for Norfolk Southern Corp., Fesen stays in touch with the Hero Fund, even dropping by to visit when in town, and while in Florida on business in March, he visited the couple whom he had aided. His last communication to the Hero Fund office included a check from Norfolk Southern's Local Discretion Fund. "We like to recognize those who recognize others," Fesen said.

Touching gestures from two heroes.



Michael Fesen

William F. Bauman

## Carnegie Heroine at 96 soars among the clouds

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place to land in case of an emergency," he says. "We would get just about close enough to touch the grass and then she would give you the throttle back. A lot of livestock and cows were continually on their toes when our airplane was around their pastures."

Born in Corbin, Ky., Johnson has awards, citations and mementos galore, as well as a listing in the Guinness Book of Records for most hours in the air by a female pilot. She also has been inducted into the Kentucky Aviation Hall of Fame and the Tennessee Aviation Hall of Fame.

Diagnosed with glaucoma, Johnson still flies, but no longer solo, and she has no plans to stop soaring among the clouds. "My first flying lesson was Oct. 1, 1944, and I fell in love with it from the start," she says. "It is so awesome that I don't know how anybody could be up there looking down at this beautiful world and not be thankful to God."

Jackie Sheckler Finch is a freelance writer in Bloomington, Ind. This piece appeared in the Jan. 8-14 issue of "American Profile," published by Publishing Group of America, Franklin, Tenn., and appears with its and the writer's permission. ☞

### TOWN TURNS OUT FOR MEDAL PRESENTATION

Hyndman is a small, tight-knit community in Bedford County, a sparsely populated rural area in southwestern Pennsylvania...and a place where, to borrow the lyric, everyone knows your name.

It was no surprise therefore that a large gathering of family members, friends, and neighbors, as well as town, county, and state government officials, showed up to witness the presentation of a Carnegie Medal to one of their own. The event took place in late February at the Hyndman Volunteer Fire Department.

The hero was Earl E. Cummins, from the even smaller community of Fairhope, just a few miles from Hyndman. He was cited by the Hero Fund for rescuing Mary E. Shaffer from her burning home on the evening of Sept. 29, 2004. A retired steelworker, Cummins, 72 at the time, was on his way home from a church function when he noticed flames rising from the structure. He stopped at the scene and then entered the house and pulled the woman to safety.



Carnegie Hero Earl E. Cummins and his wife Shirley, seated, hold their grandchildren Nathaniel and Olivia Klemm. Standing, from left: daughter Amy Klemm, sons Andrew and Kelly Cummins, brothers Blair and Joe Cummins, and daughter Lorraine Scott.

Among several family members in attendance were a son who returned from Germany and a daughter who traveled from Georgia.

### CONNECTING COURAGE WITH CHARACTER (continued from cover)

were formed, and the components of the program were defined. The Hero Fund's principal role was to be with the program's "whole school" component, a kick-off event to introduce a school's students to the entire program.

The assembly in Indiana was a test run of that component and was made possible by Dr. Luanne Kokolis, principal of the school and also one of the committee members developing the whole-school program. Also on that committee, Doug Chambers, the Hero Fund's director of external affairs, spoke about the Hero Fund at the assembly and showed the Commission's centennial film, *A Century of Heroes*.

Cross's account of the rescue easily held the students' attention, but it was his other remarks about heroism and courage—and how the students could exhibit both in their daily lives—that was the most poignant (see accompanying article). The students gave him a standing ovation, and he was asked numerous questions about the rescue. It was a wonderfully enriching experience.

The Hero Fund will update *impULSE* readers on the progress of the Heartwood program, which is expected to be launched in the fall. Further, the help of other awardees in volunteering to play a role similar to Cross's will be sought as the program is implemented throughout the country. ☞



LATEST AWARDEES  
OF THE CARNEGIE MEDAL

SINCE THE LAST ISSUE OF *imPULSE*, THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS WERE AWARDED THE CARNEGIE MEDAL, BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS TO 8,997 SINCE THE HERO FUND'S INCEPTION IN 1904. THE LATEST AWARDS, WHICH WERE ANNOUNCED ON MARCH 23 AND MAY 11, ARE FULLY DETAILED ON THE COMMISSION'S WEBSITE, [WWW.CARNEGIEHERO.ORG](http://WWW.CARNEGIEHERO.ORG).

**Leslie Joseph Staniewski**, 51, a cab driver from North Las Vegas, Nev., died after saving Kensen Lee from assault by an armed man in a Las Vegas casino on April 1, 2004. When the angered man shot at Lee, 45, a bartender at the casino, Staniewski grappled with him. The gunman shot Staniewski twice, then walked from the casino. Lee survived, but Staniewski died of his wounds.

**Peter J. Pelletier, Sr.**, of Lee, Maine, saved a woman from a burning house in Lee on Dec. 20, 2004. A forest ranger, Pelletier, 38, responded to the scene before firefighters. As fire conditions thwarted entry through the front door, Pelletier climbed into the house through a bedroom window after seeing the woman in that room. He helped her through the window to another man, then exited to safety himself.

**Wesley E. DeVane** and **Johnny P. Senn**, both of Elba, Ala., rescued Justin A. Wilks from a burning pickup truck after a nighttime highway accident in Spring Hill, Ala., on Nov. 12, 2004. Returning home from a football game, friends DeVane, 40, a transportation supervisor, and Senn, 39, a state trooper, came upon the scene. Despite leaking gasoline on the pavement and flames at the front of the vehicle, DeVane and Senn worked to free Wilks, 21, from the driver's seat. They carried him away moments before an explosive rush of flames engulfed the truck and spread to another vehicle nearby.

**Charles D. Bell**, 46, a farmer from Greenup, Ill., rescued Jimmy S. Derixson from an overturned and burning pickup truck after an accident in Greenup on Jan. 3, 2004. Working nearby when the accident occurred, Bell drove to the scene and with his son attempted to douse the flames. With no other means of accessing the cab available, Bell crawled beneath the bed of the truck and pulled Derixson, 26, through the rear window. He and his son then took Bell to safety.

Farm and ranch operator **Kenneth A. McIntosh**, 46, of Pierceton, Ind., rescued Pamela M. Walls from her burning house in Pierceton on Sept. 15, 2004. Walls, 49, was asleep in her bedroom after fire erupted in the adjacent kitchen. Driving nearby, McIntosh stopped at the scene and climbed through one of the bedroom windows. He dragged Walls to the window, lifted her outside to others, then exited to safety himself. Flames destroyed the house.

**Timothy J. Paquette** of Auburn, Mass., saved Thomas E. Bramich, Jr., and Andrew W. Felsing from a crashed and burning airplane in Fitchburg, Mass., on May 27, 2004. Paquette, 34, an associate court officer, was on his way to umpire a high school softball game when he witnessed a small plane crash shortly after take-off. He ran to the burning wreckage, freed Bramich, 32, the pilot, and dragged him away. Paquette returned for Felsing, 24, and likewise dragged him to safety.

**Edsel G. Lorenzen**, 75, a retired farmer from Radcliffe, Iowa, saved Ryan A. Reisinger, 21, from a burning car after an accident in front of Lorenzen's home on Feb. 23, 2005. Lorenzen ran to the car, where he found the driver's door blocked by tree branches. He leaned through a window on the opposite side of the vehicle, grasped Reisinger about the shoulders, and pulled him out. Flames shortly engulfed the car.

Postal superintendent **Lawrence R. Eaddy, Jr.**, 37, of Sicklerville, N.J., saved Justin L. H. Phillips, 2 months old, from his family's burning house in Sicklerville on Feb. 14, 2005. Eaddy was in a car that was passing by at the scene. Learning that Justin was still in the burning house, he entered the smoke-filled living room, found the infant on the sofa, and fled with him to safety.

**Gerald L. Ribeiro** and **Keith Camp**, both of New Bedford, Mass., rescued Raymond A. Pittsley from burning, Freetown, Mass., Aug. 16, 2004. Pittsley, 80, was the driver of a dump truck that overturned onto its driver's side in the grassy median of a highway and leaked fuel. Ribeiro, 33, a delivery van driver, and Camp, 42, a truck driver, were struggling to pull Pittsley out when fire erupted suddenly at the truck and repelled them. They returned and removed Pittsley to safety. Injured and burned, Pittsley succumbed nine days later.

**Patricia A. Rupert** of Grand Rapids, Ohio, rescued Jillian M. Badenhop, 22, from her burning sport utility vehicle after a highway accident in Liberty Center, Ohio, on Nov. 20, 2004. Badenhop was semiconscious in the driver's seat as flames entered the passenger compartment. Rupert, 43, a homemaker, was the driver of one of the other vehicles involved in the accident. Although injured, she reached through Badenhop's window and pulled her out. Another motorist carried Badenhop to safety. (See photo.)

Pipe fitter **Terry W. Thacker**, 47, of Trafford, Ala., pulled James D. and Virginia C. White from their burning car after a nighttime accident in front of Thacker's house on Jan. 21, 2005. Thacker heard the crash and immediately ran to the scene. He pulled White, 64, through the window of the driver's door, then reached farther inside for Mrs. White, 65, and pulled her through the same window. Another man moved them away from the vehicle, which was shortly engulfed by flames.

**Robert W. Aigeldinger**, 34, a state police dispatch officer from Mountain Top, Pa., and **John William Oplinger**, 56, a residential service aid from Wapwallopen, Pa., rescued Frank T. Tencza, 15, from the front seat of a burning pickup truck after an accident at night on Feb. 27,

2004, in Mountain Top. First on the scene, the men helped other occupants from the vehicle, then they worked to free Frank from the wreckage as flames grew and spread.

**Michael Mauldin**, 43, saved Brian K. Beaman, 8, from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean at Atlantic Beach, N.C., on July 15, 2003. While wading, Brian was carried farther from shore into water beyond his depth, and his father had difficulty attempting to reach him. Lying on the beach, Mauldin, a police officer from Charlotte, N.C., was alerted. He ran into the water, swam about 170 feet to Brian, and fought an undertow as he made his return.

**Peter J. Varsalona**, 56, an attorney from Bayonne, N.J., helped to remove Usman A. Chaudhry from a burning car after an accident at night in Kearny, N.J., on March 26, 2005. Chaudhry, 18, remained in the driver's seat of the car, unconscious, as flames broke out at the front end and grew rapidly. Varsalona entered the car through the front passenger door and pulled on Chaudhry as another man pushed from the back seat. They dragged him to safety as flames engulfed the car. Chaudhry did not survive his injuries.

**Nicolas E. Barrelet** of Harrisburg, Pa., and **Randy A. Nolen** of New Cumberland, Pa., rescued Juancio Irizarry, 59, from a burning bedroom on the second floor of a row house in Harrisburg on Jan. 28, 2005. Barrelet, 39, a supervisor, and Nolen, 43, executive, were each driving by the scene at the time of the fire. They advanced to the smoke-filled second floor, grasped Irizarry, and carried him downstairs to safety.

**Curtis L. Brewer**, 42, a mechanic from Wakefield, Va., saved Leonard M. Gray, Sr., from his burning house in Ivor, Va., on Dec. 21, 2004. Brewer was en route to work early in the morning when he saw smoke and flames issuing from Gray's house, then learned that Gray, 50, who was partially paralyzed, was still inside. Although recovering from broken ribs, Brewer entered the house and with difficulty took Gray to safety.

**Kenneth LeRoy Joseph**, 49, a salvage technician from Albany, Ore., rescued his neighbors Barbara A. Miller and Rita M. Baker, both 56, from an attacking male pit bull on March 24, 2005. The 70-pound dog pulled Miller from Baker's porch and began to maul her, and Baker attempted to get the dog away. Joseph heard the attack and responded, pulling the dog away and securing it in Baker's house. The women required hospital care, and Joseph was bitten in the finger.

Seventy-one-year-old retired tool designer **Robert H. Blasko** of North Huntingdon, Pa., rescued a woman from assault in White Oak, Pa., on Nov. 11, 2003. The 46-year-old woman was under assault by her boyfriend in the parking lot of a shopping center. When Blasko intervened, the assailant set upon him, striking him repeatedly in the face and sending him hard to the pavement. Blasko required extensive hospitalization for treatment, including surgery, of severe injuries, and a period of rehabilitation.



Law enforcement and firefighting representatives from Henry County, Ohio, recognized Patricia A. Rupert, third from left, for her rescue of Jillian M. Badenhop from a crashed and burning sport utility vehicle following an accident on Nov. 20, 2004, in Liberty Center, Ohio. Badenhop is standing beside Rupert, who was awarded the Carnegie Medal for her actions. Perhaps the highest accolade came from Badenhop's parents: "Instead of walking to the cemetery, we were able to walk Jillian down the aisle to get married last year."

**Jonathan Pinque**, 16, a high school student from Toney, Ala., helped to save two friends, Ricardo Jaramillo II and Jacob B. Green, both 15, from drowning in a pond on March 20, 2005. Ricardo and Jacob were occupants of a car that entered the pond and sank. From his nearby home, Jonathan witnessed the accident, then swam to the car and broke out its sunroof. Lying on the submerged car, he reached inside and pulled both boys out. Jonathan required hospital treatment for multiple cuts.

High school student **Terry Miller**, 15, now of Ionia, Mich., rescued Rachel Majewski, 4, and her brother Bradley Hammond, 9 months old, from their family's burning mobile home in Hastings, Mich., on Sept. 7, 2004. A gas explosion set fire to the home's kitchen and living room. Terry, then a neighbor, entered the burning structure and found Rachel in the kitchen. He carried her outside, then re-entered and rescued Bradley from the living room. The mobile home was destroyed in the fire.

**Thomas J. Moehler**, 16, of Bayville, N.J., rescued Mark K. Stanfield, 10, from an attacking dog on April 29, 2005. Mark was being attacked by a 75-pound dog, a pit bull mix. A friend, Thomas, who was a high school student, responded, and, although wearing a cast on his right forearm, grasped the dog and pulled it off Mark, enabling him to flee. The dog turned on Thomas and bit him repeatedly before he jumped onto a parked car. Mark and Thomas both required hospital treatment for their bite wounds.

Auctioneer **Christopher T. Cogswell**, 36, of Hanson, Mass., saved Wilton E. Wetter, 37, from a burning car after a nighttime accident in Hanson on Oct. 21, 2004. Wetter's car left the roadway, went down a steep embankment, and caught fire. Cogswell, who lived nearby, responded to the scene, where he opened

the driver's door with difficulty and struggled to pull Wetter out. They made it safely to the roadway as flames filled the interior of the vehicle.

**Patrick W. Mott**, 65, a retired logger, was working outside his home in Twin Lakes, Idaho, on Feb. 27, 2005, when he heard Henry W. Scheller, 74, calling for help. Scheller had broken through weak ice on Lower Twin Lake at a point about 700 feet from shore while ice fishing. Mott pushed a metal dinghy toward Scheller, but 10 feet from him he too broke through the ice. His efforts to climb from the open water were unsuccessful. Firefighters arrived shortly and rescued both men.

**Raymond J. Desadier**, 25, saved his coworker Betty W. Durham, 57, from drowning in the Angelina River at Jasper, Texas, on Sept. 29, 2004. In a highway accident, Durham's van entered the river and sank. She emerged from the vehicle but, a nonswimmer, was swept downstream by the swift current. Desadier, business manager, witnessed the accident. Fully clothed, he entered the river, swam 60 feet to Durham, and towed her to wadable water.

Drywall contractor **Jarrett Michael Chero**k, 23, of Whitaker, Pa., rescued Bruce A. Nedrow, 47, from his burning house in Pittsburgh, Pa., on June 8, 2005. Chero saw flames issuing from the house, in which his sister lived also. He broke in the front door, found his sister on the second floor, and carried her outside. He then re-entered the house, crawled upstairs, and found Nedrow in a burning bedroom. Chero dragged Nedrow downstairs and outside to safety. Nedrow later died of his burn injuries.

New York State Trooper **Anthony S. LaRock**, 34, of Burt, N.Y., pulled Kelly P. Chellino, 35, and Mary L. Sears, 21, from a burning sport utility vehicle after a nighttime

accident in Lewiston, N.Y., on April 14, 2004. The vehicle had overturned onto its passenger side in a ditch. Responding, LaRock found its undercarriage covered by flame. Reaching through a window, he pulled Chellino out then dragged him away. He then crouched in the ditch, reached inside again, and freed Sears. LaRock incurred a wrist injury, which disabled him for 10 months.

**Keith Leuci**, 38, a carpenter now living in Paris, Tenn., rescued James E. Barnes, 26, from a burning automobile in Egg Harbor Township, N.J., on Aug. 20, 2004. The automobile was one of three vehicles that caught fire in a highway accident. Leuci, then of Mays Landing, N.J., came upon the scene. Although he himself was injured in a highway accident just weeks earlier, Leuci ran to the car, bent down the top of a doorframe, and pulled Barnes out. Leuci required medical attention for minor burns and other injuries.

**Jack Timothy Dicus** of Destin, Fla., and **Christopher N. White** of Carrollton, Ga., rescued Jamie M. Daigle from an attacking shark in the Gulf of Mexico off Miramar Beach, Fla., on June 25, 2005. Jamie, 14, was swimming when a large shark attacked her. Dicus, 54, a computer network specialist, took a surfboard to her and placed her on it. White, 23, an environmental health specialist, responded from the beach with an inflatable raft, to which Jamie was transferred. They returned to shore, the shark re-appearing. Jamie died at the scene of her injuries.

**James Lonnie Hensley**, 56, of Skygusty, W. Va., saved Larry R. Beavers from a burning pickup truck after a head-on collision with another vehicle in Kimball, W. Va., on Dec. 16, 2004. Injured, Beavers, 53, remained in the driver's seat of the pickup as flames from its engine compartment began to spread. Hensley, a disabled coal miner, responded. He pulled hard on the truck's passenger door, then leaned inside, grasped Beavers, and, although Beavers outweighed him, pulled him from the vehicle and to safety.

Woodlawn, Va., resident **John R. Lane**, 57, saved George E. Rodgers, 46, from electrocution in Woodlawn on Feb. 15, 2005. Rodgers was servicing an elevator at the school where Lane was the head custodian. When he accidentally touched an energized component, he received an electric shock and could not free himself. Lane immediately grasped him and broke the contact, receiving a shock himself. Both men required medical treatment but recovered.

**Anthony D. Blaskoski** of St. Charles, Ill., rescued William B. Gunderson, 49, and attempted to rescue Gunderson's daughter Emma, 5, from the family's burning house in Elburn, Ill., on the morning of March 2, 2005. Driving near the house, Blaskoski, 45, a sales manager, saw smoke and flames issuing from it. He stopped and learned that Gunderson and Emma were still inside. Requiring repeated attempts, Blaskoski located Gunderson and dragged him to safety, but his effort to locate Emma was unsuccessful. She was recovered by firefighters and died the next day.



## *Carnegie's German hero fund resurrected after Nazi takeover*


After 72 years of inactivity, Andrew Carnegie's German hero fund, which was taken over by the Nazis in 1934, has been resurrected, thanks to the efforts of a private citizen in Mannheim.

The "Carnegie Stiftung fuer Lebensretter" (CSL), or Carnegie Foundation for Rescuers, was re-established April 15 on receiving recognition from the German courts as the only heir of the original fund. Andreas Huber, 36, the visionary behind the effort, said the reconstruction of CSL was a "painful" process and that it took hard work to get permission from the authorities to rebuild.

At its reorganization meeting in Mannheim, held on the 102nd anniversary of the founding of Carnegie's first hero fund, the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, CSL named Huber as president. Huber announced that a formal ceremony to mark the re-establishment will be held in Mannheim on July 13-14 and that representatives of all Carnegie institutions are invited to attend. They will join delegates from German government, industry, and other rescue organizations.

The resurrection of CSL is significant in that it had been the only philanthropic institution endowed by Carnegie that did not survive. All told, Carnegie established 23 such institutions, in the United States and Western Europe, including 11 hero funds. In addition to the CSL and the Commission, whose field of operation extends to Canada and the United States, hero funds are located in the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, France, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. Each is independent of the others, but all operate under the same basic charge, to recognize those who perform acts of civilian heroism.

Huber, of Karlsruhe, is a Mannheim city employee and fire brigade officer who first became aware of the CSL while researching means of bravery recognition. He personally assumed start-up costs until a charitable organization to support the work was established in late 2005. Providing assistance with the effort was Hans-Ruedi Hübscher, executive director of the Swiss hero fund.

Among the new board's challenges is to create a constitution that Huber hopes will be close to the goals of the original fund. He wants the document to be "in the spirit of Andrew Carnegie," taking into consideration "his will and ideals." 



*Andreas Huber met with delegates of Carnegie's 10 existing international hero funds in Edinburgh, Scotland, last fall. He is pictured here with Helen MacDonal of the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust of the United Kingdom.*



### RESCUED 83 YEARS AGO

Velma I. Hinton Burdette, 93, below, of Parkersburg, W. Va., received a visit earlier this year from Jack Dawson of Hurricane, W. Va., about 70 miles to the south. Dawson was on a mission: His grandfather, Jackson E. Dawson, saved Burdette from drowning in the Coal River, St. Albans, W. Va., in the summer of 1923, when Burdette was only 10, and was subsequently awarded the Carnegie Medal. Dawson-the-grandson, now 75, had heard the account all his life and recently decided to learn more about it. He found Burdette living with her son Garland, also pictured, and talked about that fateful day. Burdette was one of several children who were caught up by the river's current, and Jackson Dawson, 56, a deputy sheriff, entered the water for her. According to the Commission's investigative report, "Dawson had ridden horseback all day in the hills serving warrants and otherwise performing his shrievalty duties." He too was caught by the current but with Burdette in tow was rescued by a ferryboat. Three other children drowned. Burdette is holding a copy of the citation that was awarded her rescuer by the Hero Fund.



### 'AT IT AGAIN'

...is how the Salem, Mass., News headlined an article on Carnegie Medal Awardee James P. Webb, of Beverly, Mass. Webb and his son were skiing on Mount Crested Butte in Colorado in March when they came across a skier who had dislocated his shoulder in a secluded area 1,000 feet from the mountain's 12,000-foot peak. Webb, a trained ski patroller, popped the shoulder back into place then helped the man a half-mile to the nearest aid station. Webb received a Carnegie Medal for his heroic actions of Oct. 3, 2000, when he sustained a near-fatal electric shock while attempting to rescue a man from an overturned automobile after an accident in front of Webb's house. He yet combats the effects of short-term memory loss as the result of his injury but does so with indefatigable spirit: "To me, every day's extra," he says. "I'm living on borrowed time." Webb, 48, is shown in the kitchen of his home with his wife, Lucia.



TO THE HERO FUND

Thank you so much for including our class in your newsletter. The kids still talk about your visit, and *A Century of Heroes* remains the #1 most requested book in our library. (In fact, some kids have risked their lives trying to be first on line to check it out!)

The students and I are thrilled to be associated with the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission. We admire the heroes, and value the tradition of honoring them. Thank you for all your help.

Martin Richter • Ross Elementary School Pittsburgh, Pa.

I was extremely honored when Doug Chambers and Melissa Spangler of the Hero Fund arrived in New Bethlehem to present the Carnegie Medal to Delmar Burkholder and me. It was one of the most emotional times of my life.

Throughout my life, I have read about people who do extraordinary acts and I admired them as I read their stories. Over the years I have also read about some of the recipients honored by the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission. Not in my wildest imagination did I ever think that I might join this group of people.

Many prayers, unspoken and spoken, were answered on Oct. 4, 2004, when Delmar and I were involved in the rescue of Alexandria Hopper from her burning home. I feel that I did nothing other than react to a situation that required action. I thank God for providing me with the ability to react in a positive manner and also for guiding Delmar to be able to do the same.

When I was first contacted by the Hero Fund, I almost threw the application away because I did not want the notoriety. However, my wife convinced me that people need to hear about good things that happen, amidst all of the negative things that are published in the news.

I want to thank the members of the Commission for their commitment to keeping Andrew Carnegie's dream alive. I also want to thank the officers and staff for their dedication in gathering the information.

Thank you for the financial award. I gave a portion of the money to the girls who were rescued and donated the rest to my church. It is my hope that the church will use these funds in the community to continue the commitment of helping others.

Terry E. George • New Bethlehem, Pa.

I am deeply honored to receive such a prestigious award and to be affiliated with the Carnegie Hero Fund. What Mr. Carnegie did in 1904 by establishing the trust has been so helpful to many individuals and families that are now being called heroes.

To this day I still do not consider myself a hero or what I did an act of heroism but rather an act of necessity and kindness. I am truly amazed at what the Hero Fund stands for and how it helps human kindness, fallen heroes, and their families.

(continued on page 9)

MILESTONES

Being a female awardee of the Carnegie Medal is something of a distinction (only nine percent of all awardees are female), but within the past few months two heroines have each attained greater distinction by reaching a major milestone in age. Below left, Dessie Hayter Leaming of Lockwood, Mo., is feted at the celebration of her 100th birthday on March 12, and at right is Margaret Williams Herrington of Atlanta, Ga., who turned 90 on Feb. 10.

Leaming, who still maintains her own home, was awarded the medal for her actions of April 24, 1934, when, at age 28, she saved her niece, 5, from being struck by a train in Lockwood. The girl had stepped onto a railroad track to look at flowers as a passenger train approached, and Leaming snatched her away in time. Leaming, however, was struck and dragged by the locomotive and sustained the loss of part of her right leg. Six months after the accident, she married, and she now presides over a large circle of family and friends. (Photo courtesy of Roger Nomer of the Joplin, Mo., Globe.)

Herrington was recognized by the Hero Fund for her heroic act of May 24, 1930, when at age 14 she helped to save a 15-year-old boy from drowning in Big Haynes Creek, Conyers, Ga. The boy got into distress while swimming in the 10-foot-deep water, and Herrington responded. She supported him in the swift current as she returned to wadable water, where they were aided by a fisherman. Herrington used her hero grant money to attend college, and she married after her 1936 graduation. She and the boy she saved were reunited in the 1970s and for the next several years she and her husband were recipients of produce from his farm.



RESCUERS WITH MUCH IN COMMON— INCLUDING UNCOMMON BRAVERY

Robert L. Slyder and Robert L. Hanson have more in common than first names. Their ages are the same, they've known each other since kindergarten, they grew up together, and they just happened to be in the same vicinity of their hometown of Wheeling, W. Va., in the early afternoon of Sept. 17, 2004. That was a day of torrential rain, the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan.

Slyder, concerned about his mother-in-law, and Hanson, visiting his mother, were in a neighborhood on the banks of Middle Wheeling Creek. The creek swelled from its banks to overtake a row of houses there, trapping several residents inside. Over the course of more than an hour, the two men, both 42, worked to save several of the trapped residents from drowning by leading them from their homes through the swift water to refuge in a nearby office building.

For their efforts, the men were named Carnegie Medal awardees in December, 2005. They were presented their medals on Feb. 5 in the offices of Thomas F. Burgoyne, Sheriff of Ohio County, who secured their nomination for the award. The presentation was made by the Hero Fund's Director of External Affairs, Doug Chambers, and Melissa Spangler, case investigator. Hanson, of Triadelphia, W. Va., is a railroad engineer, and Slyder, of Wheeling, is a radio producer.



Receiving medals for their mettle are Robert L. Slyder, second from left, and Robert L. Hanson, third from left. They are flanked by members of the Ohio County, W. Va., Sheriff's Department, from left: Deputy Doug Ernest, Deputy James Hall, and Sheriff Thomas F. Burgoyne.



## BEHIND THE SCENE



Susan L. Marcy

*Blessed and awed*

By Susan L. Marcy, Case Investigator • Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

As a case investigator with the Hero Fund for 17 years, I have the distinction of making history when hired in 1989: I became the first female to hold the job.

Back when the Commission was created, the investigators, known as “special agents,” were on the road most of the year, traveling all over the United States and Canada, and the job favored unattached, young men. Because of advances in communications, our investigations are now done from the office through telephone interviews, faxes, and email and other on-line means.

Occasionally we get opportunities to research cases on site. A few years ago I met a schoolteacher in Ohio who disarmed a student who had entered the school with a gun, and in 2003 I investigated a local case in which a young man rescued a woman who was being assaulted on a city street. It’s great to actually meet the heroes—some might never talk to a real hero in their lifetime, but I’m surrounded by them! In the years that I’ve been with the fund, I’ve investigated nearly 600 cases of heroism.

When I was called to interview for the job, I had never even heard of the Commission, let alone imagined that it was established because of a tragic event that happened in my own community. I grew up in the small town of Cheswick, Pa., which is adjacent to the community of Harwick, the site of the former Harwick Mine. The heroic actions of two men after an explosion at the mine in 1904 inspired Andrew Carnegie to establish the Hero Fund. A historical marker was placed in nearby Springdale in 1996, and for the next three years while living in the community I passed by the sign every day. It reminded me of what a great job I have.

And it is a job that I love. Every case of heroism is different, so I’m never bored. What strikes me about our heroes is their humbleness. Generally they don’t think that what they did was out of the ordinary, but I can say that I am in awe of the heroic acts they perform. And the Hero Fund is here to tell them that what they did was indeed extraordinary.

Every day I get to read about human kindness. Since we hear so much that’s bad—some days when I get home I don’t even want to turn on the television to watch the evening news—it’s nice to hear something good. At work I get to hear about all the people who care enough about others to put their lives on the line for them. The accounts of our heroes and their rescues are heart-warming, and at the end of each day, I am proud to work for such a noble organization. I consider myself blessed!

## TO THE HERO FUND (continued)

Although I don’t speak for every one of the Carnegie Heroes who risked or sacrificed their lives, I can’t imagine all of them not having felt in their hearts Mr. Carnegie’s legacy the way that I did. Thank you.

Nicolas E. Barrelet • Harrisburg, Pa.

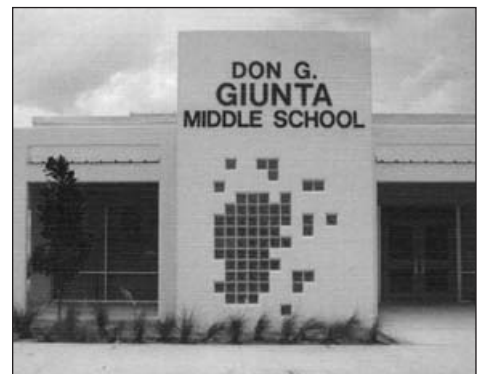
## FLORIDA SCHOOL NAMED AFTER POSTHUMOUS AWARDEE

For a man who spent his adult life teaching and coaching and who gave his life helping to save a boy from drowning, the honor was fitting: A new school was named for him.

The Don G. Giunta Middle School in Riverview, Fla., near Tampa, was dedicated April 2. Giunta, a long-time educator in that part of Florida, was posthumously awarded the Carnegie Medal in 2005 in recognition of his heroic actions of a year earlier. On July 21, 2004, Giunta drowned in the Gulf of Mexico at Honeymoon Island State Park, Dunedin, Fla., after responding to a family of four boys and their grandmother who had been caught in a strong current.

Giunta, 55, of Lutz, Fla., and his family were fishing nearby. He, his daughter, and others responded to the victims, Giunta taking one of the boys from his daughter and supporting him until he himself submerged. All survived the ordeal but Giunta.

“Don would be very proud of the new school,” his wife Peggy said. “The smiling faces of the students reflect the school’s atmosphere. They know that their teachers care about them and want them to do their very best.” Mrs. Giunta, in fact, volunteers at the school, where she teaches math. Her husband, who retired in 2002, also taught math and was a guidance counselor and coach in the Tampa area.





FROM THE ARCHIVES

HOME AGAIN

Almost 9,000 people have been awarded the Carnegie Medal since the Commission's founding more than a century ago. Although the medal has a certain intrinsic value, depending on its metallic content, its greater value for most awardees and their families, often for generations, is symbolic: An exclusive token representing great unselfishness by one human being in behalf of another.

But what happens to the medal after the death of its holder when there is no one to inherit it? In several instances, medals have been returned to the Hero Fund, which stores them in its off-site archives.

One such case was that of a bronze medal awarded in 1937 to Carl W. Miskin of Montreal, Que. After the deaths of Miskin and his wife, who were childless, the medal was held by Miskin's sister and her husband, Betty and Duncan Munro, also of Montreal.

Concerned that the medal might some day "end up in a dumpster," the Munros returned it to the Hero Fund in 1997.

Miskin had received the award for his actions of May 16, 1936, when he was working outside Indio, Calif., on the Colorado River Aqueduct, a mammoth project to supply water to the Los Angeles basin. Then 24,

Miskin witnessed the violent collision of two automobiles, one of which was laden with five cans of gasoline. Fire erupted. A man, badly burned, managed to exit one of the cars, but another lay partly outside the same vehicle, one of his feet caught in the wreckage.

Miskin removed his shirt and used it to pat out the flames on the first man, then he approached the second and struggled to free him. As he did so, a can of gasoline atop the car's fender exploded, and Miskin was sprayed with the burning fuel. The trapped man burned to death, and Miskin likewise sustained severe burns, which hospitalized him for nine weeks.

After nine years in the vault, Miskin's medal was dusted off and returned to Munro at his request when a means of permanent display suggested itself to him. Munro was a member of the 17th Duke of York's Royal Canadian Hussars (now known as The RCH, Montreal) and as such landed at Juno Beach, Normandy, on D-Day in 1944. Instrumental in the establishment of a museum honoring the regiment, Munro, 89, concluded that a civilian hero's medal was appropriate for display there. The medal was sent to Munro in March, along with a parchment certificate describing Miskin's actions. The museum is housed in the Côte-des-Neiges Armory, Montreal.

Believing the symbolic value of the Carnegie Medal transcends any commercial value, the Hero Fund is pleased to receive those in need of a good home. For more information, contact the Commission's executive director, Walter F. Rutkowski at (toll free) 1-800-447-8900, or write to the Hero Fund at 425 Sixth Ave., Suite 1640, Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1823. ☒ *Marlin Ross, Case Investigator*



*Carl W. Miskin*



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

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

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

**Address change?** Please keep us posted!

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