



CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION

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News release

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17 civilian heroes named for acts of heroism will receive Carnegie Medal

PITTSBURGH, Dec. 14, 2020 — The Carnegie Hero Fund Commission today announced 17 people will receive the highest honor for civilian heroism in the U.S. and Canada for risking their lives for others in life-threatening peril.

Among those awarded the Carnegie Medal was **Wendy Winters** who grabbed two plastic bins and charged at an active shooter who had forced entry into the Maryland newsroom where she worked. She was shot and killed.

The Carnegie Medal is given throughout the U.S. and Canada to those who enter mortal danger while saving or attempting to save the lives of others. With this fourth and final announcement of 2020 recipients, a total of 10,202 Carnegie Medals have been awarded since the Pittsburgh-based Fund’s inception in 1904. Commission Chair Mark Laskow said each of the awardees or their survivors will also receive a financial grant. Throughout the 116 years since the Fund was established by industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, more than \$42 million has been given in one-time grants, scholarship aid, death benefits, and continuing assistance.

The awardees are:

Calvin Parham	Knights town, Indiana	Benjamin M. Blostein	Royal Oak, Michigan
Stacey Redmon*	Vernon, Florida	Christopher F.N. Schultz*	Frazee, Minnesota
David A. Dulkis	Corona, California	Jason Aaron Strunk	Canton, Ohio
Darren Cox	Corona, California	Seth Robert Bond	Tallmadge, Ohio
Robert Lawson	King, North Carolina	Leslie E. Shaffer	Akron, Ohio
Jeffrey Johnson	Winston-Salem, North Carolina	Jonathan Stein-Palmiere*	Calgary, Alberta
Robert J. Whitley	New London, Missouri	Wendy Winters*	Edgewater, Maryland
James W. Whitley II	Hannibal, Missouri	John D. Phelps	Tampa, Florida
Harmanjeet Singh Gill	Brampton, Ontario		

*deceased

Summaries of the acts to follow. To nominate someone for the Carnegie Medal, complete a nomination form online or write to the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, 436 Seventh Ave., Suite 1101, Pittsburgh, PA 15219. More information on the Carnegie Medal and the history of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission can be found at carnegiehero.org. Follow us on Facebook: facebook.com/carnegiehero and Twitter: [@carnegie_hero](https://twitter.com/carnegie_hero).

Calvin Parham

As **Calvin Parham**, 44, left his Knightstown, Indiana, home for work as a forklift operator during the early morning hours of Jan. 11, 2019, he smelled smoke and spotted the glow of fire from a neighboring home, where he knew his elderly neighbor lived. Running to a side entry of the home, he kicked in the door there, and entered the home's smoke-filled kitchen. Crouching down and struggling to breathe, Parham called for his neighbor – 85-year-old Edward A. Norfleet who had mobility issues. Hearing Norfleet respond, Parham followed his voice about 12 feet into an adjoining room, where he helped Norfleet from his bed and carried him out of the home. By the time firefighters arrived, Norfleet's home was completely engulfed in flames. Norfleet was seen at the hospital, but he was not injured. Parham suffered some ill effects from smoke inhalation but he recovered.

Stacey Redmon

A 48-year-old man died June 21, 2019, attempting to save a boy from drowning in dangerous waters in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Panama City Beach, Florida. Despite dangerous water conditions including large waves and a rip current that prohibited swimming at the time, **Stacey Redmon**, a disabled air structural repairman of Vernon, Florida, and others ran into the ocean after becoming alerted to a boy who was being carried away from shore. Redmon swam toward the boy while screaming for help. Three surfers responded and swam to Redmon and the boy, who were then about 100 feet from shore in water about 8 feet deep. They took the boy and others to the beach and then returned for Redmon, who was on his back, struggling to stay afloat. A large wave struck, submerging everyone. When they surfaced, Redmon had lost consciousness. The surfers pulled Redmon to shore. Others on the beach tended to Redmon, who was in cardiac arrest. He could not be revived.

David A. Dulkis and Darren Cox

David A. Dulkis and **Darren Cox**, nearby motorists who saw a burning SUV at the bottom of an embankment responded to the Feb. 3, 2018, accident in Corona, California. The 23-year-old driver Saul D. Flores was slumped over the steering wheel when Dulkis, a 47-year-old executive chef of Corona, arrived at the scene. Dulkis pulled hard on the door several times until he yanked it open. Flames by then had reached the passenger compartment and spread to the back of the front, passenger seat. Dulkis failed to unbuckle Flores' seat belt, so he lifted the shoulder strap over Flores' head and arms and struggled to pull his torso and legs through the lap belt. Cox, 35, of Riverside, California, arrived about then and, as flames encroached on the driver's seat, helped pull Flores through the lap belt and out of the vehicle. As they laid him on the ground outside the vehicle, ammunition from inside it began exploding. They moved him farther away. Flores died, and Dulkis suffered second-degree burns to an arm. Cox has subsequently moved to Corona.

Robert Lawson and Jeffrey Johnson

After a July 11, 2019, highway crash in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, involving a semi-truck and several other vehicles, a 64-year-old woman was pinned in the driver's seat of her burning, heavily damaged car. Flames inside the car surrounded Susan R. Leonard, who unbuckled her seat belt but could not open her door. Leonard screamed for help. Driving nearby, 32-year-old welder **Robert Lawson**, of King, North Carolina, and 47-year-old nurse **Jeffrey Johnson**, of Winston-Salem, stopped at the scene and ran to the car. Reaching the car first, Lawson pulled on the driver's door handle, which broke off in his hand. He reached through the driver's window and tried the interior handle, but the door failed to budge. When Johnson arrived, they both reached through the window, grasped Leonard's arms and pulled her from the wreckage.

Robert J. Whitley and James W. Whitley II

Two Hannibal, Missouri, cousins responded to a deadly boat accident on the Mississippi River near Hull, Illinois, on Aug. 3, 2019. Robert J. Whitley, a 38-year-old construction worker, and James W. Whitley II, a 36-year-old laborer, were in James' 20-foot jon boat when they saw a pontoon boat carrying seven people — including 2-year-old Mea A.K. Lewis, who was not wearing a life jacket; 22-year-old Brittany L. Caldwell; 49-year-old Harland L. Miller; and 42-year-old Barbara Ann Young — swept into the slanted bow of a moored barge, where it capsized. The pontoon boat occupants fell or dived into the water, and the Whitley cousins responded to the scene. As they neared the scene, a strong current nearly capsized the jon boat twice by pushing it into the front of the barge as the cousins stood in the bow trying to bring Mea into the boat. As a result, James moved to the engine and backed the jon boat away from the danger in front of the barge. James then circled the jon boat around while Whitley stood at the bow and pulled Mea into the boat on a subsequent pass. Because the jon boat was at risk of colliding with and being forced beneath the barge, James kept the motor on full reverse to maintain a safe position before circling away several times as Whitley helped Caldwell into the boat, and then on a subsequent pass, Miller. At some point during the rescue, Young submerged and did not resurface. The Whitleys then navigated away from the immediate danger, where they pulled two other pontoon passengers floating farther away from the barge into the jon boat, and then transported the pontoon boat passengers to shore where they were met by first responders. One of the last two people Whitley pulled into the boat had drowned. Another man was rescued by the crew of a tugboat. Young's body was recovered the following day from beneath the barge. Robert Whitley subsequently moved to New London, Missouri.

Harmanjeet Singh Gill

Harmanjeet Singh Gill, a 20-year-old truck driver from Brampton, Ontario, was driving Aug. 29, 2018, in Brampton when he saw a violent crash in which an SUV struck several vehicles and landed on its driver's side a few feet from a house. Large flames burned at the vehicle's rear, and Gill responded to the scene. Gill extended his head and arms through the car's sunroof and pulled one of the three men inside to safety. Gill returned to the vehicle and dragged a second man to safety. Returning to the car to remove the third man, Gill had difficulty. With the help of a teen who also responded to the scene, Gill broke the sunroof to create a larger opening. They then pulled the third man to safety. The car was shortly engulfed in flames, which spread to another car and impinged on the house.

Benjamin M. Blostein

A fishing trip could have turned deadly if it weren't for the quick actions of **Benjamin M. Blostein**, a 30-year-old commercial roofer of Royal Oak, Michigan. On June 6, 2019, Blostein was fishing the Big Manistee River near Marilla Township, Michigan, when a 71-year-old man who was fly-fishing nearby asked for his assistance in wading from knee-deep water to a nearby island. Blostein waded into the 62-degree water and grasped Kim J. Fairchild's hand, but as Fairchild moved toward the island, he lost his footing in the swift current, fell into the water separating from Blostein, and was carried downstream as his fishing waders filled with water. Blostein fully entered the water and swam after Fairchild. He reached him and struggled to tow him to safety until another man on the bank grabbed Blostein's hand and pulled. As others tended to Fairchild, Blostein ran barefoot to meet responding authorities to direct them to the remote scene. Fairchild recovered after spending one night in the hospital.

Christopher F.N. Schultz

After his 3-year-old son fell into a 20-foot-deep channel on June 15, 2019, near Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, **Christopher F.N. Schultz** jumped in after him, fully clothed. Schultz, a 31-year-old construction worker of Frazee, Minnesota, grasped Ashton M.C. Schultz under his arms and held him above the water, while swimming toward a bank about 80 feet away. Struggling at a point about halfway to the bank, Schultz's friend jumped into the water and took Ashton from Schultz, swimming him the rest of the way to the bank. Schultz submerged, and efforts to locate him failed. Police and a dive team responded and pulled Schultz from the water, but he had drowned.

Jason Aaron Strunk, Seth Robert Bond, and Leslie E. Shaffer

A 23-year-old mother and her three young children were walking along an Akron, Ohio, sidewalk on June 16, 2019, when the mother's ex-partner, armed with a handgun, approached them and shot the mother in the back. **Jason Aaron Strunk, Seth Robert Bond, and Leslie E. Shaffer** were in vehicles nearby and saw the mother attempting to shield her children; they drove to the scene. Strunk, a 38-year-old group home supervisor of Canton, Ohio, exited his vehicle and positioned himself between the mother and the gunman. Bond, 26, of Tallmadge, Ohio, left his vehicle and ran to the mother, removing his shirt and holding it against her wound. The assailant reached around Strunk and shot the mother a second time, then pointed the gun at Bond's head as he continued to render aid. Strunk grasped the assailant's gun-wielding arm and struggled with him to obtain control of the gun. Bond joined the struggle, the gun discharging once toward the ground, until the assailant lost control of it and it fell to the ground. The assailant then produced a knife. Strunk put two of the children in his car. Shaffer, a 31-year-old certified nursing aide of Akron, who had also responded to the scene and was nearby when the gun discharged, took Gray and the other child into her vehicle. Strunk and Shaffer drove from the scene while Bond continued to fight with the assailant, who eventually fled. He was chased by Bond and police, but he ultimately fatally shot himself. The mother was hospitalized but recovered. The rescuers and children were unharmed.

Jonathan Stein-Palmiere

Jonathan Stein-Palmiere, a 20-year-old apprentice carpenter of Calgary, Alberta, died May 31, 2019, after entering Lake Windermere near Windermere, British Columbia, to rescue a 10-year-old girl struggling in the water. After the girl lost hold of an inflatable float, she struggled to return to the beach. Despite being a poor swimmer, Stein-Palmiere, who was in the family's party at the beach, responded. He swam to the girl, grasped her, and pushed her closer to the beach. She was able to return to shore, but Stein-Palmiere submerged and failed to resurface. Others recovered Stein-Palmiere and attempted to revive him, but he had drowned.

Wendy Winters

After a man wielding a pump-action shotgun shot through the locked, front door of an Annapolis, Maryland, newspaper office and shot a sales assistant, severely wounding her, he proceeded toward the back of the office. Eleven employees were working June 28, 2018, and several people took cover under their desks. Sixty-five-year-old reporter **Wendy Winters** of Edgewater, Maryland, grabbed a plastic garbage bin and recycling bin and left her desk area and charged toward the gunman, telling him to stop. The assailant shot Winters in the chest and then proceeded deeper into the office where he fatally shot three others. Two others fled, and although the assailant shot at one, he missed. The assailant hid under a desk until police arrived. Four others hid under their desks for the duration of the ordeal. Winters and the sales assistant died from their gunshot wounds.

John D. Phelps

A 60-year-old public commuter bus driver in Tampa, Florida, was sprayed with pepper spray by an agitated man that had just entered the bus on Nov. 19, 2019. Using a utility knife the man then repeatedly slashed the driver's upper body. The driver, Schnaider Prophete, fell to the ground and then the man slashed at his legs. Among the passengers was 61-year-old Tampa cook **John D. Phelps**, who approached the assailant and told him to stop. The man backed toward the bus' front door, and another passenger gave Phelps a metal, portable grocery carrier. Phelps stepped toward the assailant and used the shopping cart to ward the man off the bus. Phelps followed him and stood on the sidewalk a short distance from the assailant, who lunged at him with the knife before leaving the scene. Phelps waved the remaining passengers off the bus. Prophete underwent emergency surgery and was hospitalized for several days while recovering from his injuries. Police arrested the assailant.

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