



# CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION

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## 18 will receive Carnegie Medal for acts of extraordinary heroism; seven posthumously

PITTSBURGH, Sept. 22, 2021 — In its third announcement of 2021, the Carnegie Hero Fund is proud to recognize 18 civilians who risked their lives for others. Each will receive the Carnegie Medal, North America’s highest honor for civilian heroism.

Among those to be awarded this quarter is **John D. Colter**, 66, who rushed into his daughter’s home after hearing gunshots and confronted her estranged husband, who had shot and wounded her. As he wrestled over control of the gun, Colter yelled for his daughter to go get help. Minutes later, the gunman shot and killed Colter, and fled. Also awarded are five men who drowned attempting to save others: **Evan Patrick Ishima**, 24, and **Gabriel Cedrik Saechao**, 20, attempted to rescue another man who had submerged at the top of a waterfall along a hiking trail; **Draven M. Starr-Howell**, 20; **Edgar F. Moreno Alba**, 17; and **Sivad H. Johnson**, 49, all drowned while attempting to rescue children who were struggling in deep water in three separate incidents. In addition, **Allen Robert Linder** will also receive the Carnegie Medal posthumously; he died attempting to save a young woman who suffocated inside the tank of a tanker truck that she was cleaning. Shortly after entering, Linder lost consciousness and could not be revived.

The Carnegie Medal is given throughout the U.S. and Canada to those who enter extreme danger while saving or attempting to save the lives of others. With this announcement, a total of 10,256 Carnegie Medals have been awarded since the Pittsburgh-based Fund’s inception in 1904. Commission Chair Mark Laskov said each of the awardees or their survivors will also receive a financial grant. Throughout the more than 117 years since the Fund was established by industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, more than \$43 million has been given in one-time grants, scholarship aid, death benefits, and continuing assistance.

The awardees are:

<b>Hiedi Johnston</b>	Willow Creek, California	<b>Stephen P. Carkhuff</b>	Auburn, New Hampshire
<b>Draven M. Starr-Howell*</b>	Palmyra, New York	<b>Sivad H. Johnson*</b>	Detroit
<b>Scott McFarland</b>	Beaverton, Michigan	<b>Evan Patrick Ishima*</b>	Florin, California
<b>Erich M. Funccius</b>	Kingston, New York	<b>Gabriel Cedrik Saechao*</b>	Sacramento, California
<b>Allen Robert Linder*</b>	Milan, Ohio	<b>Ernest Beuparland</b>	New Bedford, Massachusetts
<b>Jean-Paul LaPierre</b>	Weymouth, Massachusetts	<b>Ronald Rock</b>	Fairhaven, Massachusetts
<b>Edgar F. Moreno Alba*</b>	Aguascalientes, Mexico	<b>Christian W. Smith</b>	Brookings, Oregon
<b>John D. Colter*</b>	Fenton, Missouri	<b>Eric C. Keys</b>	La Plata, Maryland
<b>Alan R. Cote</b>	Auburn, New Hampshire	<b>John Miner</b>	Phillipsburg, Kansas

\*deceased

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](http://carnegiehero.org). Follow us on Facebook: [facebook.com/carnegiehero](https://www.facebook.com/carnegiehero) and Twitter: [@carnegie\\_hero](https://twitter.com/carnegie_hero).

### **Hiedi Johnston**

A 49-year-old stay-at-home mom acted without hesitation after she saw a pickup truck speed into Humboldt Bay off Eureka, California, in the afternoon of Jan. 2. The truck entered the 51-degree water and drifted away from shore with the outgoing tide. **Hiedi Johnston**, of Willow Creek, California, climbed down the rocky shore, waded, and then swam to the truck. After the driver's window was lowered, Johnston hoisted herself partially through the opening and released the seat belt of the unresponsive 78-year-old driver. She then grasped the man's vest with both hands and pulled him out of the truck. Shortly the truck submerged completely, and Johnston, with one arm around the man's upper body, stabilized herself on top of the truck's front end. A man swam out and joined her at the scene, helping to keep the driver afloat. Shortly, another man piloting a boat responded to the scene, helped all three aboard, and took them to safety. The driver was taken to the hospital for treatment. Johnston was checked at the scene by medics. After the rescue, she was cold and had suffered a cut on her forearm, but she recovered.

### **Draven M. Starr-Howell, *deceased***

A 14-year-old floating on an inner tube on Lake Ontario on July 2, 2020, was being carried away from shore, and, panicking, she left the inner tube and entered the water with her brother, who was able to swim to safety. The girl was struggling in waves several hundred feet from shore. **Draven M. Starr-Howell**, a 20-year-old retail clerk of Palmyra, New York, was fishing on the pier, left his personal items on the pier, and then jumped into the water. Meanwhile others, including the girl's mother and a sheriff's deputy, entered the water or assisted from the pier and pushed and pulled the girl, who was by then unresponsive, to safety, as well as the mother and the deputy. The girl was hospitalized overnight and recovered. A sheriff's boat crew, helped by two bystanders, pulled Starr-Howell, who was unresponsive, from the water. He died the next day due to complications of drowning.

### **Scott McFarland**

It was close to midnight on Dec. 13, 2019, when 47-year-old ironworker **Scott McFarland** heard a car violently crash into a tree in the backyard of his Beaverton, Michigan, home. McFarland rushed to the van, where he saw a 9-year-old boy exiting through a broken-out rear window opening. McFarland helped the boy from the van and then heard screams coming from inside. McFarland leaned into the van through the window, unlatched the seat belt securing 11-year-old Grant A. Smith, and attempted to pull him to safety, but his legs were trapped beneath the driver's seat. While Grant's legs burned, McFarland repeatedly pulled on them until he jerked them free. He then pulled Grant from the car. Grant suffered a neck injury and broke both arms in the crash; he also sustained severe burns. McFarland was treated at a hospital for burns to both hands and recovered.

### **Erich M. Funccius**

**Erich M. Funccius**, a 32-year-old security officer, was grilling a steak on Oct. 1, 2020, on the porch of his home in Kingston, New York, when a nearby car struck a utility pole. Funccius ran to the scene, where electric lines had draped across the car's hood which was also on fire. With fire spreading, Funccius pried open the front, passenger door and one man, 20, fell onto the ground. Funccius dragged the man away from the car, and then returned to the car for the driver, 30. He opened the driver's door, reached across the man and released his seat belt, and then dragged him to safety. Learning that a third man was still inside, Funccius returned to the car again and located the 19-year-old man in a rear seat. He opened a rear door and removed that man. The car was shortly engulfed in flames. The three men were taken to the hospital and treated for injuries sustained in the crash, but they were not burned. Funccius sustained smoke inhalation, and he recovered.

### **Allen Robert Linder, deceased**

Thirty-year-old Ashley N. Friedman collapsed while cleaning the inside of the tank of a tanker trailer, which contained residual chemicals on Feb. 20, 2020, in Cleveland. Her mother, who worked with her, was on top of the tanker and screamed for help when Friedman did not respond to her calls. **Allen Robert Linder**, a 65-year-old truck driver of Milan, Ohio, responded. Without a respirator or air supply, Linder ascended a ladder on the tank's side and entered the tank through a hatch. Shortly, Linder, too, collapsed. A responding firefighter equipped with a self-contained breathing apparatus entered the tank and assisted others operating a cable hoist to remove Friedman and Linder from the tank. They both died.

### **Jean-Paul LaPierre**

At 5:40 a.m. before the Oct. 13, 2019, Chicago Marathon, a man armed with a loaded handgun was robbing passengers on a crowded train headed for downtown. A passenger at the back of that train car, 54-year-old **Jean-Paul LaPierre**, a storage facility manager from Weymouth, Massachusetts, saw the assailant approaching passengers nearer to the front of the car, but couldn't immediately tell that it was a robbery. When the train stopped at the next station, nearly all the passengers disembarked. Following them, LaPierre asked what was happening. A fellow passenger told him about the gunman. LaPierre quickly followed the gunman, who was briskly walking to the next car in the train. Once aboard the second car, LaPierre pinned the gunman against a set of closed doors and pried the gun away from him. Another passenger took the gun from LaPierre and reset the safety on it. LaPierre secured the assailant until police arrived to arrest him. No passengers were injured, except for LaPierre who injured his arm in the encounter.

**Edgar F. Moreno Alba, deceased**

High schooler **Edgar F. Moreno Alba**, 17, of Aguascalientes, Mexico, drowned June 28, 2020, after assisting a younger boy who was struggling in Lake Camanche near Valley Springs, California. The 14-year-old struggled after entering the lake, and, immediately, Edgar entered the lake and advanced to the boy, despite not knowing how to swim. Edgar pushed the boy closer to shore where the boy's sister could assist him out of the water, but Edgar submerged. A dive team recovered him later; he had drowned.

**John D. Colter, deceased**

After hearing screams and shots fired from inside his daughter's home, **John D. Colter**, a 66-year-old pharmacist of Fenton, Missouri, ran inside the home and tackled his daughter's estranged husband, 45, who had entered on Jan. 23, 2020, lay in wait, and then shot at Kristine M. Kempf, striking her in the leg and ankle. Colter wrestled with the assailant for control of the gun on the hallway floor, where Kempf also attempted to seize the weapon. Colter called for Kempf to leave and get help. She ran to a neighbor's home. The man fatally shot Colter and fled; authorities located him in another state eight days later, and, before they could arrest him, he shot himself dead. Kempf was hospitalized for treatment of her wounds. Colter died at the scene.

**Alan R. Cote  
Stephen P. Carkhuff**

Neighbors who heard a late-night crash outside their Auburn, New Hampshire, homes, rushed to the scene. On Oct. 23, 2019, the car, containing Cohen D. Bergeron, 23, and Fallon R. Andrews, 23, had crashed into a roadside tree, its hood igniting immediately. **Alan R. Cote**, a 54-year-old public works superintendent, and **Stephen P. Carkhuff**, a 57-year-old operations director, responded to the burning car; its passengers were unresponsive. Cote arrived at the car first and forced open the driver's door. As flames lapped over the windshield area, he entered the car and attempted to release Bergeron's seat belt. Cote grasped Bergeron and pulled him out of the car. Carkhuff and others helped carry him to safety. Carkhuff then returned to the car, crawled across the driver's seat and center console and was attempting to free Andrews. Cote arrived and through Andrews' window, cut her seat belt with a knife. Carkhuff grasped Andrews and inched her out of the car. There, Cote and others assisted Carkhuff in carrying her to safety. Andrews suffered extensive injuries in the crash, but she was not burned.

**Sivad H. Johnson, deceased**

An off-duty firefighter entered the Detroit River Aug. 21, 2020, to save three children who were drowning near Detroit. **Sivad H. Johnson**, 49, of Detroit, was with his daughter when they saw three children struggling in the swift-moving water off an island beach. Johnson entered the water and advanced toward the children while a boat was responding to the scene. Ultimately the children were safely removed from the water, but Johnson submerged and did not resurface. His daughter sought help, and Johnson was reported missing. Divers found him 60 feet from shore after a two-day search; he had drowned.

**Evan Patrick Ishima, *deceased***  
**Gabriel Cedrik Saechao, *deceased***

Two rescuers died while trying to save another man who, on May 28, 2020, had entered the North Fork Cosumnes River near a waterfall and submerged into an underwater chamber. Tim Nguyen, 20, was hiking with friends near Somerset, California, when he entered the river and submerged among the boulders at the falls. **Evan Patrick Ishima**, 24, of Florin, California, was hiking in another party when he saw Nguyen submerge. Kneeling at a boulder near the entrance to the chamber, Ishima extended his hand down into it, then lowered his lower body into the chamber while bracing his arms on two boulders. His friend held to him, while others at the scene formed a human chain, but Ishima was pulled down into the chamber and submerged. **Gabriel Cedrik Saechao**, a 20-year-old college student of Sacramento, California, who was in Nguyen's party, then ran to the scene. Saechao entered the river near the chamber and was also drawn into it. He submerged and did not resurface. Nguyen's body was found a week later when it emerged from the chamber near the base of the falls. Family and friends recovered Ishima's body 13 days later, and Saechao's, the next day. Nguyen, Ishima, and Saechao drowned.

**Ernest Beuparland**  
**Ronald Rock**

On the morning of Feb. 3, 2020, an 83-year-old man who used a wheelchair was trapped on the second story of a burning building after flames broke out on the third floor and the electricity turned off making his motorized chairlift inoperable. After realizing the Fairhaven, Massachusetts, building was on fire, his daughter, who was on the first floor, and his granddaughter, who was on the second floor, went to Colin G. Jackson and moved him from his bed to the floor of his bedroom. They could not hoist him down the stairs however and yelled out for help. **Ernest Beuparland**, a 66-year-old retired laborer of New Bedford, Massachusetts, was driving nearby and saw flames. He stopped and ran up the stairway, along with a 58-year-old ferry boat captain of Fairhaven, **Ronald Rock**, who was also driving nearby and responded. Beuparland and Rock grasped Jackson under the legs and, backing slowly down the stairs, carried him outside, as fire spread along the ceiling above them. Beuparland and Jackson inhaled smoke, but they recovered.

**Christian W. Smith**

**Christian W. Smith**, 27, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, had just finished a dog training session on June 1, 2020, on a pedestrian bridge that spanned the Grand River near Grand Rapids, when he saw that a man had jumped from the bridge into the 60-degree water in a suicide attempt. Smith ran from the bridge to the bank of the river, jumped in, and then swam more than 300 feet to the man, who was by then submerged. Smith pulled the man to the surface, held him against his chest, and swam to the bank. Using all his strength, Smith pushed the man up onto the bank and then exited the water. A rescue boat arrived and took the man to safety. He was treated at a hospital for near drowning. Smith was uninjured.

### **Eric C. Keys**

A 37-year-old woman was unconscious and trapped inside her burning SUV after it left a highway and crashed into a tree on March 13, 2019, in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. A 35-year-old sheriff's deputy of La Plata, Maryland, **Eric C. Keys**, was riding in a van nearby and saw the burning car. Fire spread to the grass around the vehicle. Running to the car, he gave a bystander a fire extinguisher, instructing them to discharge it toward his feet. As the fire intensified and ignited nearby trees, Keys used his metal baton to break the driver's window, then reached through the opening to unlock and open the door. Despite thick smoke, Keys kneeled on the driver's seat and grasped the woman by the back of her pants and pulled her toward him. He bear-hugged her and dragged her from the vehicle to safety. She was not burned. The hair on Keys' legs was singed and he was treated at an emergency room for smoke inhalation; he recovered.

### **John Miner**

In another police rescue, Sheriff's Deputy **John Miner**, 39, of Phillipsburg, Kansas, pulled off a rural highway in Long Island, Kansas, to offer aid to two families that had pulled their pickup trucks to the side of the road after one of them had engine issues on Nov. 4, 2020. A tractor trailer driving on the highway hit the police vehicle and a trailer, rupturing one of the semi-truck's fuel tanks. Diesel fuel was sprayed onto one of the pickups and flames erupted on its passenger side. After being informed that there were children in the backseat of the truck, Miner ran to the passenger side and opened the rear door. He quickly unlatched 4-year-old Ella Rae L. Sorensen-Wilkens from her car seat, lifted her from the seat and brought her to her father. Miner then ran back to the vehicle and entered the burning vehicle from the same side to reach 2-year-old Emric C. Wilkens in a car seat behind the driver's seat. Unable to unlatch the harness, Miner used a pocketknife to cut the straps of the car seat and freed Emric. As flames spread and ignited Miner's pant leg, Miner dropped Emric to the ground, where his father retrieved him and took him to safety. Ella and Emric were not injured. Miner suffered second- and third-degree burns to his leg that required skin-grafting surgery. He ultimately recovered.

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