



Impulse

A periodic newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission
ISSUE 68 • WINTER 2022



Summer N. White

EXCEPTIONAL GRADUATES

CARNEGIE HERO ACHIEVES DREAM OF BECOMING A VETERINARIAN

Last spring, **Summer N. White** earned her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Oklahoma State University.

Ten years earlier, White acted on an impulse to attempt to save a 32-year-old woman who lay injured and incapacitated on the road beside her car after a nighttime accident on an interstate highway in Mulvane, Kansas.

White, 18, was a passenger in a pickup truck that stopped at the scene. The injured woman screamed for help. White exited the truck and went to the woman's aid. The threat of oncoming traffic loomed.

She grasped the woman's arms and started to move her when a truck struck the damaged car, causing it to spin. White and the woman were struck and knocked against a median barrier wall.

Both women were taken to the hospital. Over the next three days, White underwent treatment and surgery for injuries including fractures to her collarbone, shoulder, and back. The 32-year-old woman died.

On September 13, 2012, White was awarded the Carnegie Medal and a financial award for the extraordinary bravery she demonstrated that night.

"I don't ever remember a distinct moment or decision, it was just instinct to help others in danger. I was in motion before I even had thought through the repercussions," White said.

A decade later, as White reflects on her actions, she has clarity on the kind of individual she is and the strength which she possesses. [▶ p. 3](#)

Carnegie heroes appear on CBS' 60 Minutes

The segment shone a light on Carnegie Medal recipients, the Hero Fund's work, and the science of altruism.

The Hero Fund saw increased interest in the Carnegie Medal and its heroes in the months after CBS' news magazine *60 Minutes* aired a segment about Carnegie heroes this past fall.

The piece, reported by correspondent Scott Pelley, focused on three awardees: **Terryann E. Thomas**, **Peter F. Pontzer**, and **David Michael McCartney**, as well as neuroscience research headed by Dr. Abigail Marsh about altruism and heroism.

60 Minutes staff conducted preliminary interviews with at least 200 Carnegie heroes before settling on their three subjects.

Thomas was awarded the Medal after rescuing a Topeka, Kansas, police officer, in 2015. "I remember thinking just almost instantly, 'I am not gonna let somebody die,'" Thomas told Pelley.

Pontzer told Pelley he "just reacted" on a North Carolina Beach in 2015 when someone pointed to a boy struggling in a rip current.

"It's kind of like if you put your hand on a hot stove and pull it back right away without thinking. That's kind of what it was like for me. It just needed to be done and I did it," Pontzer said in the segment.

It was the same for McCartney, who pulled a woman from a burning vehicle in 2006 in Indiana. A minute after removing the driver, the car exploded.

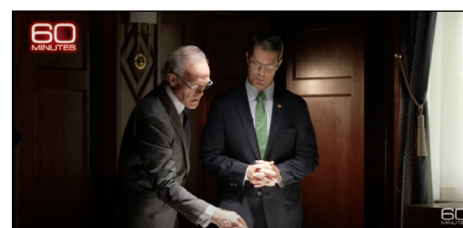
The work of Dr. Abigail Marsh, a neuroscientist, was also featured on the show. At Georgetown University, she has published studies on the brains of two kinds of people — psychopaths who have no compassion for others and people who have so much compassion that they donated a kidney to a stranger.

"People who are psychopathic show very minimal responses in the amygdala when they see a frightened face," Marsh said. "People who have given kidneys to strangers have an exaggerated response in the amygdala, which we think means that they are more sensitive than most people to others' distress, better at interpreting when other people are in distress. More likely to pick up on it."

60 Minutes asked Marsh to scan the brains of their hero-subjects.

"I was really pleased and gratified by what we found in the rescuers," Marsh said. "Which is that, just like the altruistic kidney donors, their amygdalas were larger than average and significantly more responsive to the sight of somebody else in distress"

Although that episode is now archived by CBS, Paramount+ users can stream it online. [📺](#)



Hero Fund President Eric Zahren, right, shows *60 Minutes* correspondent Scott Pelley some historical Hero Fund documents and artifacts.

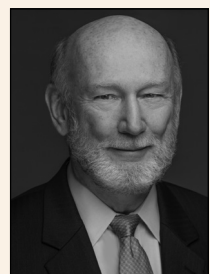


BOARD NOTES

IT'S A WONDERFUL DISCUSSION

By Mark Laskow, Chair
Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

Here at the Hero Fund we enjoy the traditional classic Christmas move *It's A Wonderful Life* as much as anyone. It's a great movie, one of the best American movies. We bask in the warmth of its celebration of American life and values



Mark Laskow

and its gloriously happy ending. And yet, as Hero Fund folk watch, other thoughts linger in the back of their minds: Would Jimmy Stewart's character, George Bailey, receive the Carnegie Medal for his rescue?

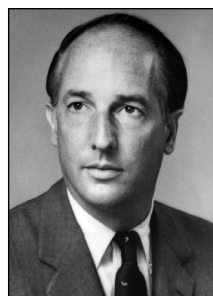
Oh, before I go on, let me say that I am not using "we" in the royal sense. At a minimum I will implicate Walter Rutkowski, retired Hero Fund president, and Jewels Phraner, our very un-retired communications director. The Hero Fund recently heard from Jimmy Hawkins, who played George's youngest son in the movie. This prompted Jewels to churn out a pile of research on these pressing issues along with a command that I start writing.

It's possible that the rescue of real-life Carnegie Hero **Antonio Varacalli** inspired George Bailey's movie rescue of his guardian angel, Clarence Odbody. This was discussed in a 2017 *Impulse* article by Rutkowski. As Walter recounts it, Seneca Falls, New York, claims to be the inspiration for George Bailey's hometown, Bedford Falls. Ellen Baker makes the case in "This is the Real Bedford Falls," a [December 2021 article](#) in the online magazine *Medium*. Baker tells of a Seneca Falls man who remembers cutting the hair of Frank Capra, director of the film, when he passed through town in the late 1940s. And Seneca Falls was the site of Varacalli's 1917 rescue memorialized in a plaque which Capra may have seen while having his hair cut. There were similarities between the real and the film rescues, as both involved apparent suicide jumpers from a bridge.

At least one movie historian disputes Seneca Falls' claim. But do you remember Zuzu, George Bailey's youngest daughter? Every year the actress who played Zuzu, Karolyn Grimes, returns to Seneca Falls for their annual *It's A Wonderful Life* festival. So, who do we believe? I'm going with Zuzu and Frank Capra's unnamed barber. It's Seneca Falls and Carnegie Hero Antonio Varacalli for me!

That leaves the big question, would Jimmy Stewart/George Bailey's action in the movie ▶

FRIENDS REMEMBERED



James M. Walton

James M. Walton, 91, of Gulfstream, Florida, died Sunday, Jan. 2, 2022, surrounded by his family.

Walton served on the board of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission from 1968 to 2012, and as an honorary member from 2012 until his death. Mark Laskow, Board chairman, reflected on Walton's time at the Hero Fund:

"Jim Walton was a giant in Pittsburgh's civic and business life. More importantly, he was a warm, wonderful, and witty man. The Carnegie Hero Fund was truly graced to have Jim as a member of the Hero Fund Commission for 44 years and bring all of those attributes into our deliberations."

Walton was born Dec. 18, 1930, to Rachel Mellon and John Fawcett Walton, Jr., in Pittsburgh. He attended Shadyside Academy and St. Paul's School before continuing his education at Yale where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in English literature.

Walton enlisted in the Army and achieved the rank of First Lieutenant, serving in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and Frankfurt, Germany. Back stateside, Walton graduated from Harvard Business School with a master's degree in business administration.

Walton began his professional career with Gulf Oil Corporation, which was founded by his maternal grandfather William Larimer Mellon. In this industry, Walton and his family traveled extensively, spending time posted in Philadelphia, Houston, Tokyo, and Rome. Walton was also elected to Gulf's Board of Directors.

Family and faith were priorities for the Waltons. Wherever the family moved, they were involved with the local Episcopal Church. Walton raised money and offered guidance to parishes and ministers in the U.S. and abroad. In 1966, Walton, senior warden of St. Paul's Church in Rome, was asked to be present in the Sistine Chapel for the first ever meeting between the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

In 1968, Walton was appointed as the President of the Carnegie Museums and Carnegie Libraries of Pittsburgh. He held this position for 16 years. Highlights from his tenure include organizational expansion, an addition to the Museum of Art, and enhanced financial security and community for future generations.

Walton's sincere interest in people and new ideas was reflected in the personal relationships he formed with museum employees. When Walton retired, he remained a life trustee and was elected president emeritus.

Walton's legacy continued after his working years. He served as trustee and chairman of the Vira Heinz Endowment and then vice chairman and vice chairman emeritus of the Heinz Endowments. In addition, he was a trustee of Carnegie Mellon University, the Allegheny Foundation, Penn's Southwest Association, World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh, UPMC, Make a Wish Foundation, Extra Mile Foundation, the Cultural District Development Committee, and others. Carnegie Mellon University and Allegheny College recognized Walton's contributions to the city of Pittsburgh by awarding him honorary doctorate degrees.

His family described Walton as one of Pittsburgh's great men who did his work with ready wit and good humor – a man who served with compassion, and was always welcoming and respectful. Walton was a corporate executive, philanthropic leader, and volunteer in his beloved Pittsburgh.

In later life, Walton moved to Florida where he continued to give and be involved in community with the Stephen's Ministry at St. Paul's Church, their after-school program, Paul's Place, and as a volunteer at Bethesda Hospital.

Summering in Ontario, Canada, with family and friends was a constant in Walton's life. During his time there, Walton was a board member of the ▶ p. 7

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Carnegie Hero achieves veterinarianian dream

"[That night] gave me the knowledge that when faced with extreme moments in life, I am the type of person who acts. I am proud to know that I am the kind of person who tries to make it better," she said.

White's selfless action also resulted in physical injury. Support from her family and friends, especially her parents, was vital to her recovery, she said.

She also found strength in her work – training horses.

"I grew stronger having the ability to focus my thoughts and pain into bettering myself and a horse's natural talents," White said.

White's decision to pursue a doctorate degree in veterinary medicine was the culmination of her life-long fascination with medicine, disease processes, and the pathophysiology behind them, she said.

"Having the ability to apply that fascination to helping animals and the people that love them is what drove me to pursue this challenging career," she explained.

White, a native Oklahoman, is proud of the veterinary medicine provided to the public and their animals by Oklahoma State University. And it was this pride that helped her decide to study at Oklahoma State University.

As a Carnegie hero, White was also eligible for continuous scholarship assistance in her academic endeavors from the Hero Fund.

"I will be forever grateful for [the Hero Fund] believing in me. Their continuous support in pursuing my dreams of being a doctor of veterinary medicine is invaluable," White shared.

One of White's favorite, albeit challenging, classes of veterinary school was surgical techniques.

"It made me realize how far I had come in my education. From being able to run anesthesia on a variety of animals to fine tuning my surgical skills on numerous different procedures. It showed me that I have the ability to think on my feet and truly apply the knowledge I have accumulated," she said.

White also completed rotations at different hospitals all over the nation. She traveled to Las Vegas, Texas, and Alabama, working in emergency hospitals, general practices, and equine hospitals.

"These experiences helped me tailor my decision on what type of veterinarian I wanted to be. I found a passion for small animal medicine in general practice," White said.

Since graduation, Dr. White has taken a job at a large, six-doctor general animal hospital in Yukon, Oklahoma. Her husband, fellow veterinarian, Dr. Seth Hiddink, works at an emergency hospital in Oklahoma City. On their days off, they enjoy spending time with family, friends, their two dogs Marlos and Koda, and horse, Tater.

Congratulations, Dr. White! ❁

—Abby Brady, Communications Assistant/Archivist



Carnegie Hero Summer N. White, right, and husband Seth Hiddink pose in their white coats after White graduated with her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree. Hiddink is also a fellow veterinarian.

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BOARD NOTES

qualify him for a movie Carnegie Hero Medal? The answer will tell you a lot about the meaning of the Carnegie Medal.

In the movie, George becomes distraught over the impending bankruptcy of the savings & loan bank. He gets drunk and, considering suicide, goes to a nearby bridge and prepares to jump. Before he can, his personal guardian angel, Clarence Odbody appears beside George and jumps into the river, where he struggles to stay afloat. George puts aside his own concerns and leaps after Clarence into the freezing water below. George successfully rescues him. On the surface, this looks like a good case, similar to many we have awarded in the past.

But, there are two issues: First, was George really attempting a rescue, or was he committing suicide himself but just got it wrong somehow? Second, was George too drunk to be considered? George had gone on a bender that night and was drunk when he went to the bridge. To award the Carnegie Medal, the rescuer must be able to understand the risk involved and make a reasoned decision to take the risk. Remember, we don't give the Medal because rescuers demonstrated great expertise or athletic ability in pulling off the rescue; We give the medal because the rescuers made moral decisions to take personal risk to save the life of another. We also don't give the medal for "hey, hold my beer" stunts.

George's actions answer both questions for us. We will award cases where the rescuer has used drugs or alcohol unless the rescuer could not understand the risk involved. In the case of George Bailey, his actions showed that he was fully capable of making a moral choice. George actually made two decisions: whether to jump into the river and whether to keep going. The first doesn't tell us much since it was compatible with either a selfish decision to commit suicide or an altruistic decision to save Clarence. The second, is more telling. George could have yielded to the cold water, escaped his woes, and left his life insurance payout to bail out the bank. Or he could have struggled against the cold, saved Clarence, and gone on to face his troubles without the life insurance money. The movie is about the difficulty and wisdom of his choice.

And this, of course, is why *It's A Wonderful Life* is a Christmas movie at heart. It is about family, community, and obligations that burden, bind, and buoy us all. So, with no authority at all to make this pronouncement, I say that if the imaginary world of Seneca Falls had a Hero Fund, it would award George Bailey the Carnegie Medal. Two medals, actually. Watch the film just one more time and see for yourself why that might be. ❁



PRESENTING



Hero Fund President Eric Zahren, left, along with Weymouth (Massachusetts) Mayor Robert Hedlund, presented the Carnegie Medal to **Jean-Paul LaPierre**, right, at a Nov. 3 ceremony held at Weymouth Town Hall. LaPierre subdued a gunman who was robbing passengers on a crowded Chicago train on Oct. 13, 2019. After being told about the gunman from a fellow passenger, LaPierre followed him onto another train car, pinned him against a set of closed doors, and pried the gun away from him. LaPierre was moved to tears during the ceremony and said he was “beyond honored” to receive the Medal.

“For a guy like me — I was a drug addict living under a bridge for part of my 20s before I got my life back together — so for a guy like me, that’s huge. Recognition confirms for me that I made the right decisions, and I am trying to live a good life ... that I’m on the right path,” LaPierre said.



In a screenshot of a Nov. 16 board meeting, **Hiedi Johnston**, of Willow Creek, California, displays the Carnegie Medal for the Humboldt County supervisors, who recognized Johnston. Johnston helped save a 78-year-old man from drowning after his truck entered the 51-degree Humboldt Bay near Eureka, California, on Jan. 2, 2021. Johnston swam to the truck’s driver’s door, partially entered through the window opening and pulled the man from the truck shortly before it submerged completely. The man was treated at a hospital.

“Thanks for showing us and the rest of the community how it’s done,” said Supervisor Steve Madrone. “You don’t even think twice, diving into that cold water. That’s just so amazing.”

Photo courtesy of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors.



Carnegie Medal recipients **Ernest Beuparland** and **Ronald Rock** pose with their partners after a private presentation held Nov. 2 at The Harvard Club of Boston, in which Hero Fund President Eric Zahren presented them with the Carnegie Medal.

Two years ago, Beuparland and Rock responded to a burning building in Fairhaven, Massachusetts. An 83-year-old man who used a wheelchair was trapped on the second floor of the building with his adult daughter who refused to leave his side. Beuparland and Rock entered the building, ran up a stairway, and grasped the man. As flames burned on the ceiling above them, they backed down the stairs and brought the man to safety.

Pictured, from left to right, are Robbie Raymond, Beuparland, Rock, and Terry Rock.

PRESENTING



Detroit Fire Commissioner Eric Jones, center, presented the Carnegie Medal posthumously awarded to **Sivad H. Johnson** to his brother, Jamal, left, and father, William, on Nov. 18. Johnson, an off-duty Detroit fire sergeant, died attempting to save three children from drowning in the Detroit River off an island beach in Detroit on Aug. 21, 2020. A firefighter for 26 years, Johnson was not assigned to a water-rescue unit and entered the swift current without any safety equipment. He had been at the beach with his 10-year-old daughter, the younger of his two children. Johnson advanced toward the three endangered children, who were struggling in the water; a boat also responded to the scene. Ultimately, the children were safely removed from the water. Divers located Johnson, who had submerged, the following day; he had drowned. Jones presented Johnson’s medal during the Detroit Public Safety Foundation’s “Above and Beyond” awards ceremony.

“We are immensely proud of Sgt. Sivad Johnson, and we are thankful that the Carnegie Commission recognized his incredible act of love,” Jones wrote to the Hero Fund upon agreeing to present to Johnson’s family. Both Jamal and William Johnson also served as Detroit firefighters. Photo courtesy of the Detroit Public Safety Foundation.



Carnegie Medal recipients **Stephen P. Carkhuff**, left, and **Alan R. Cote**, right, pose with Fallon R. Andrews, one of the two people the duo saved from a burning vehicle on Oct. 23, 2019, in their Auburn, New Hampshire, neighborhood. After hearing a late-night crash, Cote and Carkhuff responded to the scene. Cote arrived first and forced opened the driver’s door as flames lapped over the windshield area. He entered the car, grasped the driver, and pulled him out of the car. Carkhuff and others helped him carry the driver to safety. Then Carkhuff returned to the car, crawled across the driver’s seat and center console, and was attempting to free Andrews from her seat belt, when Cote, through the passenger’s window, cut the belt. Freed, Carkhuff grasped Andrews and inched her out of the car, where Cote and others assisted him in carrying her to safety. Hero Fund President Eric Zahren presented the Carnegie Medal to the pair at a Nov. 3 ceremony at Auburn Town Hall. Also present was Auburn police Chief Charles “Ray” Pelton.



PRESENTING



Allen Linder, Jr., right, accepts the Carnegie Medal posthumously awarded to his father, **Allen Robert Linder**, from Huron County (Ohio) Commissioner Terry Boose on Jan. 6. The elder Linder, 65, a truck driver from Milan, Ohio, died in Cleveland on February 20, 2020, attempting to rescue a woman from suffocating in the chemical tanker trailer she was cleaning. Inside the oxygen-deficient trailer, the 30-year-old woman fell and was unresponsive. Alerted, Linder responded to the trailer without a respirator or air supply. He climbed the ladder at the trailer's side, reached the top, and entered the trailer through the small hatch. Shortly, Linder, too, was unresponsive. Firefighters later removed both Linder and the woman. Both had suffocated.

Boose said it was "a true act of heroism," according to the Norwalk (Ohio) Reflector newspaper. "It doesn't surprise me, knowing your dad, that he would not hesitate to help anyone," Boose said. "In that sense, it doesn't shock me at all that he did that, but he was not only a hero but a great American." Photo courtesy of Norwalk Reflector.



Charles County (Maryland) Sheriff's Cpl. **Eric C. Keys** holds his Carnegie Medal after a Nov. 30 presentation at the sheriff's department in La Plata, Maryland. While transporting a prisoner, Keys rescued an unconscious woman from a crashed and burning vehicle that he saw by the side of the highway on March 13, 2019. Also pictured, left to right, are Keys' brother, Brandon Keys, and his parents, Sylvia and Gary Keys.

Capt. David C. Kelly, the sheriff's commander of executive services, presented the medal, along with Sheriff Troy Berry and Brandon Foster, director of the Charles County Detention Center. Photo courtesy of Charles County Sheriff's Office.

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FRIENDS REMEMBERED

Beaumaris Yacht Club and president of the Beaumaris Fishing Club. He also co-founded the Pittsburgh Muskoka Foundation which provided a way for summer visitors to support year-round residents.

Walton valued time with his children, their spouses, and his grandchildren, often voicing how proud he was of all of them. His family remembers his humor, love of laughter, intelligent heart and mind, as well as his propensity to shed tears easily – especially for dear friends he hadn't seen in a while.



Ernest Lee Krueger

He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Ellen; his four children, Joe (a member of the Hero Fund Commission since 2011), Rachel, Jimmy, and Mary; seven grandchildren; and his dog, Zeus. Walton is also survived by his sister Mary, numerous cousins, nieces, and nephews. He was preceded in death by his sister, Farley; brother, Jack; and son-in-law, Franny.

Ernest Lee Krueger, 72, of Spokane, Washington, died Wednesday, Sept. 22, 2021, after a tough battle with stomach cancer, with his beloved dog Piper by his side.

Krueger was born in Gordon, Nebraska, on Aug. 12, 1949. During adolescence he lived in Oregon, California, Wisconsin, and Washington. He attended high school in Yakima, Washington, and went on to join the Navy.

Krueger was stationed on the USS Independence and was a skilled helicopter rescue swimmer. During his years in the Navy,

Krueger also enjoyed traveling to Europe. After serving, he graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a degree in landscape architecture. Krueger's family still flies the Badger flag on Wisconsin game days.

In 1985, 36-year-old Krueger, 36, and his brother **Nicholas P. Provost**, 38, were traveling in Leavenworth, Washington, when they came upon the scene of a fatal accident involving two cars. Flames spread over both vehicles while a 2-year-old girl remained fastened in her car seat inside one of the cars.

Amid intense flames, the brothers pulled the vehicles away from each other. Then, Provost threw a rock through the passenger window of the car containing the toddler, which allowed them to unlock and open the passenger door. Flames entered the car as Krueger used a pocket knife to cut the toddler out of her car seat. The men pulled the girl from the car moments before its fuel tank exploded.

In addition to being awarded the Carnegie Medal, Krueger was also honored with the Washington State Patrol merit award for the heroism he demonstrated.

Krueger owned Coyote Construction, which maintained grounds and parks of Grand Coulee, Washington, and other areas. He finished his career as a financial advisor at Wells Fargo and retired in December 2020.

Krueger's family described "Ernie" as a vibrant person who enhanced the lives of those lucky to have met him. He was a loyal, respectful friend, free of judgement, who was always entertaining others with jokes and stories.

Krueger was also enrolled as a tribal member of Oglala Sioux.

He found enjoyment in a variety of activities including basketball, scuba diving, sailing, mountain climbing, hunting, fishing, biking, and running. He was a passionate, self-taught chef who had a talent for pairing wines with his gourmet meals and desserts.

Later in his life, Krueger traveled to Japan, Canada, Tonga, the Caribbean, and Puerto Rico. One of Krueger's and his partner of 35 years, Kay Sneva's favorite travel activity was sailing in the San Juan with their friends.

OVERHEARD

He jumped up there and did something that is courageous. I'd like to say we'd all do the same thing, but I can't even say that I would.

— Eyewitness to actions of **Richard R. Krul**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10023

I realized it was a life-or-death situation.

— **C. Kemp Littlepage**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10083

I dove down and grabbed him like I'd been trained. I did a hip carry, pulled him out. At this point, my legs are numb, I've never felt so weak and vulnerable in the water myself. — **Rebecka Blackburn**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10100

I'm amazed with the courage. — Great-grandmother of 2-year-old boy rescued from burning by **Philip L. Hall**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10130

If Kenny wasn't brave enough to step in and help us I think that perpetrator would have killed us, as evidently he wasn't afraid to use his knife.

— Wife of assault victim saved by **Kenneth Alfred**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10144

The fact that there were three men close by and willing to risk their lives is a miracle. Two or one could not have done it. — Husband of woman saved by **Eric Andrew Staten**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10230, **Mark Pierce**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10231, and **Nathan Hammond**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10232

I'm awestruck that people came out from the community and risked their own lives to save others. That's what Fairhaven is all about.

— Town official speaking of burning building rescue enacted by **Ernest Beauparlant**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10252, and **Ronald Rock**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10253

He knows how dangerous the lake can be and to look out for other people, he's that kind of person. — Mother of **Shane Morrison**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10257

My only concern at that moment was to incapacitate the attacker, to stop that attack from going any further. It wasn't until later that I was more concerned for my own safety as far as being stabbed myself. It was the only thing to do. — **Sean P. Conaboy**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10265

He didn't hesitate. He came to save me. I know 100% he didn't think for a second about saving me. — Kristine Kempf, daughter of **John D. Colter**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10246

Christian showed courage, bravery, and a genuine concern for his fellow citizen. — Battalion Chief responding to the scene in which **Christian W. Smith**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10254



LATEST AWARDEES OF THE CARNEGIE MEDAL

Since the last issue of *Impulse*, the following 17 individuals have been awarded the Carnegie Medal, bringing the total number of recipients to 10,273 since the Hero Fund's inception in 1904. The latest awards were announced Dec. 20. The next announcement will be made in March.

A 15-year-old boy was atop a rocky breakwater with friends on June 24, 2020, when he noticed a younger boy drifting into deeper water in Lake Erie off of Mentor, Ohio. After shouting at the boy and receiving no response, **Shane Morrison** of Concord Township, Ohio, jumped in and swam to 13-year-old Donovan Conwell. Donovan had already struggled to remain afloat for several minutes, and as Shane approached, he panicked and submerged Shane repeatedly as Shane kept him afloat in the water. Shane attempted to swim back toward the breakwater, but he made little progress due to a strong current pulling them farther into the lake. Donovan was in and out of consciousness, as Shane trod water. Authorities arrived in a boat, picked the boys up and took them to safety. Donovan, who ingested water, received treatment at a hospital; he recovered. Although nearly exhausted, Shane was not injured.

A 71-year-old man was mortally wounded after a man armed with a machete entered a home containing 70 people and swung it indiscriminately, slashing anyone near him. Those in the Monsey, New York home had lingered there after a Dec. 28, 2019, religious

ceremony. **Josef Gluck**, 32, of Monsey, who managed the synagogue next door, fled the home with others and while many took shelter in the synagogue, Gluck reentered the home. Seeing the wounded man, who was recovering from recent heart surgery and had mobility issues, in the dining room, Gluck shouted for him to flee or hide, but the badly injured man couldn't move. As the assailant entered the dining room, Gluck shouted at him, intending to goad him into following him outside. When the assailant failed to follow, Gluck entered the house again and threw a small table at the assailant, striking him. The assailant chased Gluck outside, and Gluck ran toward the synagogue, warning those inside to lock the doors. The assailant fled the scene, Gluck following to record his license plate number. Police used that information to find and arrest the assailant two hours later. The 71-year-old



Shane Morrison



Josef Gluck



Randy Wilkinson, Jr.

man died from his injuries three months later. Four others who were injured recovered.

Randy Wilkinson, Jr., was visiting a friend on Oct. 7, 2019, when he heard screaming from the nearby Old Brazos River near Freeport, Texas. An 11-year-old boy with a severely injured leg clung to the base of a pier more than 200 feet from the nearest river bank and was screaming for help. Wilkinson, a 31-year-old electrician of Lake Jackson, Texas, drove to the opposite bank, parked, and went to a dock, where he could pinpoint the boy's cries to the middle of the river. Removing his shoes, he jumped into the river and swam about 300 feet to the boy, ►

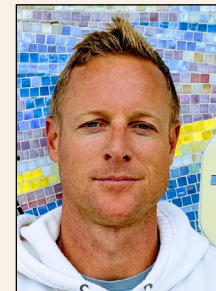


Photo by Amber Garrett.

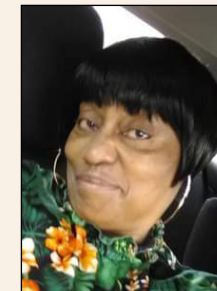
Carnegie Hero **Neil Andrew Garrett** and his children, talking to San Diego lifeguards after he rescued a young girl from the waves at La Jolla Shores on May 14, 2020.



The 10-foot alligator suspected to have attacked **Carol S. DeLillo** in a pond in Okatie, South Carolina, on the evening of July 3, 2020. Carnegie Hero **Kenneth Brian McCarter** dove into the pond and wrestled DeLillo from the mouth of the alligator, then swam her to shore about 70 feet away. Photo courtesy South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.



Neil Andrew Garrett



Gwendolyn Theus



Kristoff Jaleel Murray

who he directed to climb onto his back. Towing the boy, he returned to the dock, and a police officer helped lift the boy to safety.

An unconscious, 10-year-old girl was floating in the Pacific Ocean about 375 feet from shore off the coast of San Diego on May 14, 2020. The 62-degree water was turbulent with large and frequent waves and a strong rip current. **Neil Andrew Garrett**, a 39-year-old aviation electrician of Santee, entered the water and swam to the girl. Hugging her to him with one arm, he sidestroked back toward shore, but made little progress in the rough conditions.

They were repeatedly struck and submerged by waves, and at one point, Garrett lost his grip on the girl, but quickly recovered her. A surfer approached them, and they placed the girl on the surfboard, the surfer moving her to shore while Garrett swam behind them. The girl was revived on shore and taken to a hospital; Garrett was nearly exhausted after the rescue, but both of them recovered.

A 64-year-old caregiver died trying to save her charge – a 71-year-old paraplegic woman – after a fire broke out in the woman's Delhi, Louisiana, home on Nov. 23, 2020. **Gwendolyn Theus**, also of Delhi, became aware of the fire and entered the woman's bedroom on the opposite side of the house to alert her. Choosing to stay inside the home as the flames intensified and spread, Theus attempted to push the woman's hospital bed through the bedroom doorway,

but, when it did not fit, she dragged the woman off the bed and pulled her toward a bedroom window, which she had partially opened. The woman slipped from Theus' grasp and they both fell to the floor beneath the window. Firefighters responded and removed both women, who were by then unresponsive, through the bedroom window. The 71-year-old woman was revived and taken to a hospital. Theus could not be revived, and she died of smoke inhalation.

A 37-year-old man and his 3-year-old son were wading on a sandy shelf off an Apollo Beach, Florida, beach on June 11, when a strong tidal current carried them into the deep water of a channel that flowed toward Tampa Bay. Janosh Purackal called for help as he clung to his son while being carried to a point about 440 feet from the beach. **Kristoff Jaleel Murray**, 27, of Tampa, Florida, entered the water and swam toward Purackal and son Daniel. Murray swam at least 150 feet toward them, but was unable to reach them. At some point he was seen swimming back to the beach, but he submerged. Purackal and Daniel became separated as the current carried them farther from shore. Rescue authorities recovered them about a mile west of where ►



After an April 5 accident in Mason City, Iowa, flames grew and spread to engulf the overturned pickup truck. As flames melted the dashboard, Carnegie Hero **Jason J. Hahn** removed driver Donna K. Rench from the backseat area. Photo courtesy of Corey Nichols.



LATEST AWARDEES

they had last been seen. Murray's body was found three days later on a beach about 1.5 miles west of the scene. Purackal, Daniel, and Murray drowned.

Jason J. Hahn, a 48-year-old business owner of Mason City, Iowa, stopped at the scene of an overturned pickup truck on April 5 off a rural Mason City road. The truck's driver, 61-year-old Donna K. Rench, was suspended by her seat belt inside the truck that had come to rest on its passenger side. Smoke filled the cab making it impossible to see Rench. Hahn broke out the truck's windshield with the help of another man. Flames by then had spread to the truck's engine and entered the cab on its dashboard. After

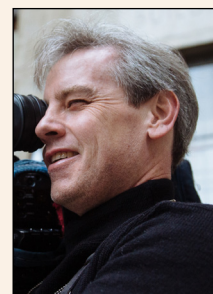


Jason J. Hahn



Kenneth Brian McCarter

retrieving a knife, Hahn partially entered through the windshield and cut the seat belt, causing Rench to fall into the cab's back seat. With the other man grasping Hahn's belt, Hahn felt blindfolded around the back seat area until he found



Sean P. Conaboy



D'Angelo Cordero Jenkins

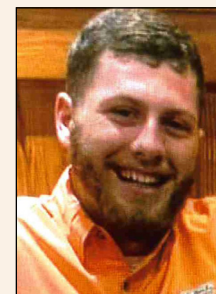
Rench, then held to her as the other man pulled Hahn and ultimately Rench to safety. Rench sustained fractures, lacerations, and contusions to her body, but she was not burned. Hahn, who had inhaled smoke, was treated at a hospital for an injured right shoulder and a laceration that required sutures. He recovered.

A 73-year-old woman, Carol S. DeLillo, was tending her Okatie, South Carolina, backyard on the evening of July 3, 2020, near the bank of an 8-foot-deep pond when an alligator, weighing 275 pounds and measuring 10 feet long, emerged from the pond, bit down on her leg and dragged her into the water. Neighbor **Kenneth Brian McCarter**, a 44-year-old plant operations manager, was nearby when he saw her splashing in the water and calling for help. He entered the water and swam about 70 feet to DeLillo. He grabbed her around her waist and attempted to pull her up to the surface of the water, but he could not. They were then both pulled under the water. McCarter attempted again to pull her to the surface, yanking her free of the alligator's jaws. McCarter dragged and pushed DeLillo, who was heavily bleeding, back toward the bank where McCarter's teenaged son was waiting to assist them from the water. DeLillo underwent multiple surgeries but regained the ability to walk with a cane. McCarter was not injured.

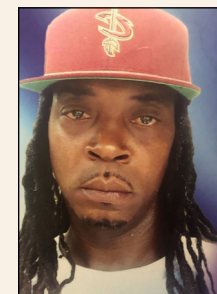
Kelli A. Daley, 54, was standing on a subway platform in New York City, on May 19 waiting for a train home when a 22-year-old man with a knife ambushed her from behind and repeatedly stabbed her, even after she fell to the ground. Another subway rider, 52-year-old cameraman **Sean P. Conaboy**, of Brooklyn, New York, shoved the assailant to the ground, briefly separating them as Conaboy also fell. The assailant returned to his attack on Daley. Conaboy regained his footing, wrapped his arm around the assailant's neck and pulled him off of Daley, as the assailant continued to attempt to stab Daley. Conaboy pinned the assailant to the floor. Police responded and arrested the assailant. Daley was taken to a hospital where she was treated for wounds to her neck, shoulder, and chest. ►



After hitting a ditch and rolling four times, a burning sedan came to rest on its roof atop a chain link fence and a bamboo tree in a August 23, 2020, accident in Winter Garden, Florida. Its back end was about 4 feet off the ground. Carnegie Hero **Corey A. Purinton** was working nearby and pulled driver Richard J. Broccolo, who was badly injured, through the rear windshield opening, both of them falling to the ground. Purinton patted out flames on Broccolo's clothing and dragged him away from the car to safety. Photo courtesy of Laura Broccolo.



Corey A. Purinton



Terrell Miller, Sr.



Jonathan Bauer



Matthew Ryan Kihlstrand

An Oct. 3, 2020, fishing outing in Huntersville, North Carolina, turned tragic after a 2-year-old boy entered the swift-flowing Catawba River. With the boy was his mother and her partner, 34-year-old cable installer **D'Angelo Cordero Jenkins**, of Rock Hill, South Carolina. Jenkins immediately jumped in, fully clothed, after the boy and reached him in the river, but then had difficulty swimming with the boy. Hearing the mother's calls for help, Michael Byers, a 65-year-old retired business operator of Lexington, North Carolina, entered the river fully clothed, and swam to Jenkins and the boy. He grasped the boy's arm and took him from Jenkins, towing him to the boat ramp where the boy safely exited the water. Byers was nearly exhausted and could not return to assist Jenkins, who was floating in the river. The boy was treated overnight at a hospital; Jenkins drowned.

In a Aug. 23, 2020, single-vehicle accident, a sedan left a Winter Garden, Florida, highway, struck a fence, rolled several times, and came to rest on its roof at an angle on a chain-link fence, with its back end about 4 feet above the ground. Nineteen-year-old **Corey A. Purinton**, a Homosassa, Florida, laborer, was working nearby and responded to the accident. Flames broke out at the front of the car, and its driver, 62-year-old Richard J. Broccolo was seriously injured and moved toward the back of the car. Seeing Broccolo's hand reach out through the broken-out rear windshield, Purinton partially entered the car through the rear windshield and pulled Broccolo toward him. As he came free, they both tumbled to the ground and Purinton patted out flames that were on Broccolo's shorts, and dragged him away from the burning



Carnegie heroes **Austin Michael Stahly** and **Cameron Meade** pose after one of their outdoor adventures. The two were camping near Sodus, Michigan, when they spotted an 8-year-old boy struggling in the swift current of the St. Joseph River. **Matthew Ryan Kihlstrand**, a man in the boy's party, had also entered the river, but as he and the boy drifted downstream, Kihlstrand submerged and did not resurface. Stahly and Meade, who entered the river from farther downstream helped the boy safely exit the water.

car. Broccolo sustained third-degree burns to his body as well as several broken bones and a head injury from the impact. Purinton inhaled smoke and suffered burns to his hands; he recovered.

Despite not knowing how to swim, **Terrell Miller, Sr.**, 33, a marine industrial tank cleaner, of Houma, Louisiana, entered the Gulf of Mexico near Grand Isle, Louisiana, on June 5, 2020, after three children, ages 8, 9, and 13, in his party were pulled away from shore into deeper water. The mother of two of the children entered the water as well and briefly grasped the youngest child, but they were separated. Miller reached the 13-year-old girl and towed her 25 feet back to shore before they became separated. Miller submerged. Other bystanders and first responders pulled Miller from the water, and then rescued the mother, and three children. The mother and the 13-year-old girl were treated by paramedics. The 8- and 9-year old boys could not be revived, and Miller died two days later of medical complications related to near-drowning.

A May 2 multi-vehicle accident on an Ocean City, Maryland, bridge spanning Assawoman Bay ejected a toddler from her family's pickup truck, causing her to land in the cold water of the bay. **Jonathan Bauer**, a 51-year-old IT executive of Berlin, Maryland, was involved in the

accident, and after learning what had happened to the girl, 23 months, he climbed over the bridge's guide rail and jumped 30 feet into the shallow water. He swam to the girl, who was unresponsive. Holding her over his shoulder, he tapped her back until she coughed, spit up water, and opened her eyes. Bauer held her above the surface of the water until a pontoon boat arrived to take them to shore. The toddler was airlifted to the hospital and was released the following day. Bauer was sore, but he did not require medical treatment.

A June 19, 2020, family fun day on St. Joseph River near Sodus, Michigan, turned deadly when an 8-year-old boy struggled to swim in swift current near where his boat was anchored. On the boat, 45-year-old sales rep **Matthew Ryan Kihlstrand**, of Baroda, Michigan, entered the water and swam after the boy, the current carrying them both downstream. Kihlstrand ultimately submerged and did not resurface. **Austin Michael Stahly**, a 30-year-old manager of South Bend, Indiana, and **Cameron Meade**, a 31-year-old courier of South Bend, were camping nearby and responded, entering the water and helping the boy safely exit the river. Water-rescue crews searched the scene that night and the following day for Kihlstrand, who was found about 1.5 miles downstream. He drowned. ❄️



GRANDDAUGHTER ARRANGES MARKING OF HERO'S GRAVE

The family of Carnegie Hero **Fred Alsmann**, who saved a 1- and 2-year-old from their burning home in 1967, will place a Carnegie Hero grave marker on his headstone this spring. Anna Hayes, granddaughter to Alsmann, requested the grave marker from the Hero Fund in 2021.

Alsmann saved Lonnie and Larry Bedwell from suffocation in Dugger, Indiana, on April 10, 1967. The children were asleep in their bedroom in a one-story frame home, when their mother, who was outside doing farm chores, saw smoke and flames in the kitchen. With flames blocking her access to the kitchen, she went to the home's front door and crawled into the living room. Deteriorating conditions inside the home forced her to retreat. She then ran to a point beneath the boys' bedroom window, but its sill was 6 feet from the ground, and she could not reach it. Hysterical, she screamed for help.

Alsmann, a 35-year-old jig and fixture hand at the time, lived nearby and responded with his wife. Standing on his wife's shoulders, he climbed to the windowsill, where he knocked out a pane of glass, and entered the bedroom. Avoiding the smoke, he crawled on the floor to the bed, where he found a non-responsive Lonnie. He carried him to his wife at the window before crawling back to the bed to search for Larry. By this time, flames had spread to the adjoining room. The smoke and heat had increased, and Alsmann coughed. It was at this point, he told Hero Fund investigator Edward F. Bracken, he first feared for his life. Nevertheless, he continued to search. He felt under the bed and then, turning toward the door, saw him lying behind the half-open door to the bedroom. He crawled to within 3 feet of flames outside the bedroom door and took hold of Larry, who also was unconscious. Taking Larry to the window, Alsmann handed him through the opening and then climbed out. After a couple breaths of fresh air, Alsmann alternated giving each boy rescue breaths, until they were revived. By the time firefighters arrived five minutes later, both Lonnie and Larry were revived. They were taken to a hospital, where they were treated for smoke inhalation and recovered after three days.

Fred Alsmann was a Navy veteran, farmer, and member of the Fellowship Baptist Church in Linton and Dugger American Legion. He was 72-years-old when he passed away on February 6, 2005.

At the time of his death, he was survived by his wife Rosemary Robert Alsmann, four sons, Floyd Alsmann and wife Mary, Dennis Alsmann and wife Cheryl, Tony Alsmann, and Mike Alsmann; daughter Terry Bishop and husband Paul; eight grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; and four step great grandchildren. His wife, Rosemary Alsmann, died in 2020 at the age of 83.

Gravemarkers can be requested from the Hero Fund website.

from p.7

FRIENDS REMEMBERED



John G. Dicken, Jr.

Kay and her two children, TJ and Shelby, enriched Krueger's life tremendously. Their shared family was a source of strength for all of them.

Krueger is survived by his partner, Kay; her children TJ and Shelby; three granddaughters; three brothers; two sisters; and many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

John Garner Dicken, Jr., 79, of Goshen, Indiana, died Tuesday, Dec. 14, 2021, at home.

Dicken received the Carnegie Medal for saving a 64-year-old woman whose car was stuck on a railroad track as a freight train approached in 1975. Paralyzed by fear, the woman remained in her seat as the train continued toward her.

Dicken, who was 32 at the time, ran onto the railroad track and reached the vehicle when the train was about 300 feet away. He quickly opened the door, grasped the woman, and pulled her from the car. She fell and Dicken dragged her to safety before the train struck the sedan.

He was born on Sept. 14, 1942, in Indianapolis, Indiana, to John G. and Evelyn D. Dicken, Sr.

On February 15, 1964, he married Sandra Hudson. Together they had five children: Michael, Rachel, David, Laura, and Elizabeth.

Dicken received his Doctorate of Ministry from Arizona Christian University. In 1970 he was ordained in Spiceland, Indiana. He served as a minister in the Baptist Church for more than 58 years before retiring.

Dicken's wife Sandra and their five children survive him, along with 29 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; his brother, Steve; and other extended family members.



Gerard Jansen

Gerard Jansen, 89, of Guelph, Ontario, died Jan. 11, 2022, at Hospice Wellington.

Born in Zevenaar, Netherlands, Feb. 10, 1932, to Frank and Dina Jansen, Jansen immigrated to Canada in 1953, and eventually settled in Guelph, where he worked for Owens Corning/Fiberglass for more than 25 years. He embraced his faith and was devoted to God. Jansen loved farming and raised Black Angus cattle. He was proud of his success winning Grand Champion Female at the National Western Stock Show in Denver.

In 1998, Jansen helped rescue an airplane pilot that crash-landed in Guelph and caught fire. A 66-year-old retired farmer, Jansen ran to the plane, under the wing which contained the fuel tanks, and forcefully pulled Nancy J. Kozlovic from the pilot's seat. Jansen and co-rescuer **James R. Munro**, 54, patted out the flames on Kozlovic and guided her to safety.

Jansen is survived by his children, Eve-Lynne Smith and Jocelyn Jansen-Burt and husband Don; surrogate children Anita Cole and husband Dean, and Nicola Curtis and husband Derek; step-children Jennifer Fischer and husband Ed, Neil Hudman and wife Robin, Judy Aitchison and husband Wayne, Steve Hudman and wife Julie, Ian Hudman and wife Val, Sheila Smith and husband Al; grandchildren, Lauralee, Jeremy, Zachary, Evan, Olivia, Brady, Logan, Jaden, Dawson, Christopher, Doug, Julie, Bethany, Karensa, Janelle, Dan, Josh, Meighan, Tyler Harris, Trevor, Angie, Ryan, Tyler Artuso, Kyle, Shane, Collin, Melanie, Monica, Joel, Troy, Travis, and Dylan; 30 great-grandchildren; brother John Jansen; sister Maria Colaizzi and husband Dominic; sisters-in-law Diane Jansen and Fran Jansen; and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by wife Isobel Jansen; brothers Louis Jansen and Frank Jansen; and sister-in-law Denise Jansen. ❀

FROM THE ARCHIVES



A screenshot from video of the 1982 rescue of Air Florida Flight 90 that crashed into the Potomac River in Washington, D.C., depicts Carnegie Hero **Melvin E. Windsor** holding Patricia Felch to the skid of the helicopter as pilot and fellow Carnegie Hero **Donald W. Usher** turned the helicopter slightly so that the skid supported a portion of Felch's weight. With Windsor and Felch delicately positioned on the skid, Usher returned to the bank where rescue personnel received Felch.

40th Anniversary: Rescue on the icy Potomac

On January 13, 1982, cold temperatures and snow plagued the Washington, D.C., area so much so that, by the afternoon, businesses and schools had closed for the day. The great exodus from the city resulted in a major traffic jam.

Roger Olian, a 34-year-old sheet-metal worker for St. Elizabeth Hospital, and **M.L. Skutnik III**, 28, an office services assistant for the Congressional Budget Office, were among those trying to return to their suburban neighborhoods – Olian to Arlington, Virginia, and Skutnik to Lorton, Virginia.

By 4 p.m., Olian was stopped on the 14th Street Bridge as his car's gas tank depleted and the battery waned. Snow continued to fall and the air temperature was about 25 degrees. Skutnik sat in another vehicle on the bridge, accompanied by four members of his carpool.

Meanwhile, **Donald W. Usher**, 31, chief pilot from Gambrills, Maryland, and **Melvin E. Windsor**, 41, rescue technician from Monrovia, Maryland, were stationed at the hangar of the Aviation Section of the U.S. Park Police, waiting for the winter storm to pass. Earlier in the day, as chief pilot, Usher decided that no routine flying would be permitted because of the inclement weather.

At Washington National Airport, now Ronald Reagan Airport, flight

delays abounded. Air Florida Flight 90, which was headed for Fort Lauderdale, Florida, was scheduled for takeoff at 2:15 p.m., but weather delays and the process of de-icing the plane delayed departure until 4 p.m. Seventy-nine people were aboard the Boeing 737 jetliner.

Trouble prior to lift off did not end once the plane was airborne. Almost immediately, the 102,000-pound plane lost altitude. Less than a mile from the end of the runway, the jetliner crashed into the traffic-clogged 14th Street bridge, where it struck seven occupied vehicles. Four people were killed and four others were injured.

The plane descended past the damaged bridge wall and railing, breaking through the ice-covered Potomac River. The wreckage sunk in 25-feet of water. About 73 people aboard lost their lives.

In the next 20 to 30 minutes, the six survivors of the crash would be shown selflessness and bravery by four men who came to their aid in multiple ways from the ground and air. Kelly L. Duncan, stewardess, and passengers, Priscilla K. Tirado, Bert D. Hamilton, Joseph Stiley, Patricia Felch, and another man, surfaced amid remnants of the plane's tail. They were surrounded by debris and sheets of ice about 120 feet from the Virginia bank of the Potomac River. The brutal cold crept into their bodies as they cried for help. ▶



Back on the bridge, Olian learned of the crash from another motorist. Abandoning his car, he ran to the riverbank as the cries of the survivors sounded.

In a later interview for the centennial celebration of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, Olian said, “If I did nothing, I couldn’t have lived with myself. But I knew I could live with myself if I tried and failed, even if I died.”

On the snowy, rock-covered bank, about 60 individuals had gathered. Some of them were fashioning a makeshift line from rope, belts, battery cables, and pantyhose. They threw these improvised lines out to the victims, but the strands fell short.

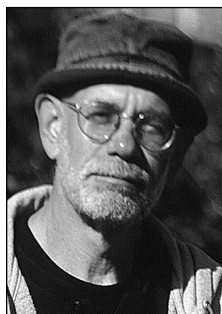
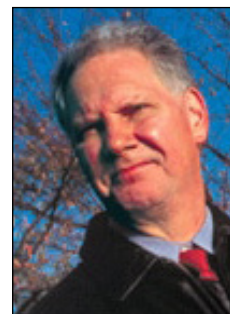
Olian, seeing these futile efforts, wanted to give the survivors hope through action.

At 4:07 p.m., Olian descended the steep, 10-foot bank and entered the glacial water. People in the crowd handed him the end of one of the lines they assembled from rope, a plastic clothesline, and a battery jumper cable. He fixed the line to himself and waded into the freezing water dabbled with broken sheets of ice. Meanwhile, Skutnik’s party had learned of the crash, and arrived on the bank. They brought a length of rope, which was added to the line tethering Olian, who had made it to chest-deep water.

Unable to swim, Olian used his arms to propel himself between ice slabs, climbing on top of the ice when directed by those watching his movements on the bank. Olian continued this laborious effort while shouting words of encouragement to the survivors of the plane crash.

Stiley, one of the six plane crash victims, later stated that seeing Olian gave him a “wonderful psychological feeling.”

On the bank, bystanders continued adding to the line as more supplies arrived. When

**Roger W. Olian****M.L. Skutnik III****Donald W. Usher****Melvin E. Windsor**

Olian was halfway to the victims, the line snagged on a fragment of ice. By now, he had been in the water for 20 minutes. However, in an effort to free himself from the line, Olian pulled himself closer to shore. Then, as he directed, the crowd pulled and released the line. Olian was free to resume his trek toward the six survivors.

As Olian approached the men and women clinging to fragments of the plane, albeit focused, he became increasingly physically tired. The pieces of ice to which he could cling or climb onto became smaller and there was jet fuel seeping from the area of the crash.

At 4:20 p.m., the sound of a U.S. Park helicopter, piloted by Usher, gave Olian the reassurance he needed.

Eleven minutes earlier, Usher and Windsor received a radio call from headquarters notifying them of a possible plane crash in the area. Despite the current weather conditions and Usher’s previous no-fly edict, the men decided to respond to the call. The duo readied themselves and the chopper, a Bell 206, and were off by 4:16 p.m.

Poor visibility meant Usher kept visual reference through the helicopter’s floor windows, using the highway as a landmark to guide him to the scene. During the four-minute trip, Usher and Windsor stayed connected with each other and the U.S. Park Police headquarters over the radio.

Windsor noted the expanse of white snow below them. They encountered freezing rain and combated ice buildup on the windshield by running the heat at full capacity. A brief respite in snowfall, allowed them to see the destruction below, including the wrecked vehicles on the bridge and the debris poking out of the ice-covered river.

When the crowd saw the helicopter arrive on scene, they pulled Olian to safety. He was within about 10 feet of the victims. Near shore, he was taken to a heated ambulance, and later to the hospital.

Taking the chopper over the jetliner’s exposed tail, Usher and Windsor saw six victims clinging to the wreckage, submerged to their shoulders and necks.

Usher circled the scene to appraise the situation at low altitude. He had extensive experience as a pilot in Vietnam and had performed rescues on the Potomac while flying with the Park Service, but the current conditions presented new challenges.

Usher maneuvered the helicopter so the skids were above the plane debris, and Windsor dropped life jackets and the looped end of a secured line to the victims.

The noisy craft prevented Windsor from giving any verbal direction so when Duncan, the plane’s stewardess, took hold of the rope, she followed his motioning to put the

line around her chest, under her arms. On Windsor’s call, Usher took the craft up, and delivered Duncan to the crowd on the bank, which included arriving firemen.

Skutnik’s group handed their rope to Windsor before Usher flew back to the wreckage.

Windsor secured the extra rope to the helicopter, and another line to a life ring. Hamilton took hold of the rope, and Stiley put his head through the life ring, while holding onto Tirado and Felch.

To maintain the helicopter’s equilibrium, Usher did not lift the victims from the water this time, but flew toward the bank, pulling them through the water. Twenty feet from the crash site, Felch fell back into the water and floated. Then, halfway to the bank, Tirado dropped onto a sheet of ice.

With Hamilton and Stiley still in tow, Usher continued to the water line where bystanders took hold of the men.

Three victims remained in the freezing water.

Usher returned to Tirado and dropped a life ring to her, but weak and blinded by jet fuel, she was unable to locate it. Windsor then maneuvered the line so the ring touched her and she grabbed hold of it. In the same manner as before, Usher towed Tirado through the water, to shore.

Twenty feet from the bank, Tirado lost hold on the ring.

After commotion on the bank, Skutnik, unable to watch Tirado’s suffering any longer, removed his boots and coat, and plunged into the frigid water. Although he had no experience in water rescues, his impulse to try outweighed any unfamiliarity he had, he later said.

Tirado was on her back and submerging when Skutnik reached her. He supported her and swam her toward a fireman who met them. Together they took Tirado to shore.

After the fact, Skutnik, interviewed by Time, reflected that his part in the rescue of Tirado was “Something I never thought I would do. Somebody had to go into the water.”

When Usher and Windsor saw that Tirado had been rescued successfully, they took the chopper back to Felch, who was bobbing near the wreckage, too exhausted to grab hold of a rope or life ring. Seeing her fatigue, Windsor unbuckled his seat belt and stood



Carnegie Hero Melvin E. Windsor and wife, Maureen, attend the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission’s Centennial celebration held in 2004, at Carnegie Hall in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Footage of the wreckage of Air Florida Flight 90 and the subsequent rescue of five survivors from the icy Potomac River in Washington, D.C., was highlighted in the ‘Heroes Among Us’ video at the ceremony.

on the helicopter’s right skid, bracing himself against it. He stooped and seized Felch with one arm and supported the back of her head with the other.

Windsor directed Usher to turn the helicopter slightly so the skid would move under Felch and support a portion of her weight. At this point the right skid was under water and the other rested on a sheet of ice.

With Windsor and Felch delicately positioned on the skid, Usher returned to the bank, where rescue personnel received Felch. She was the last survivor out of the water, having endured 30 minutes of its numbing effects, after surviving a deadly plane crash.

“If I did nothing, I couldn’t have lived with myself. But I knew I could live with myself if I tried and failed, even if I died.”

The sixth victim, whose identity could not be conclusively established despite Hero Fund staff’s best efforts, was initially spotted by Usher and Windsor, bloodied and visibly injured; he had twice passed on the rope offered to him, instead passing it along to two of the five other victims. Usher and Windsor flew back to the wreckage to search for him. They scanned the area for several minutes but could not find the man who acted with selfless resolve.

“In a mass casualty, you’ll find people like him, but I’ve never seen one with that commitment,” Windsor reflected in an interview with

Time magazine.

The five surviving victims were hospitalized and treated for hypothermia, internal injuries, and broken bones. All except Tirado were discharged a month later.

Olian took a 45-minute hot shower at the hospital, after which his body temperature rose to 97.5 degrees. He was sore for a few days and somewhat ill from what he suspected was ingested jet fuel. A month after the act he had yet to gain back full feeling in his extremities.

Skutnik was given a hot bath, but he was not detained at the hospital.

Usher and Windsor’s clothing was saturated with absorbed jet fuel fumes. They were not injured.

All four men were awarded the Carnegie Medal and monetary grants.

“I can’t begin to tell you how proud I am to be a recipient,” Usher stated in a letter to then-Hero Fund President Robert Off.

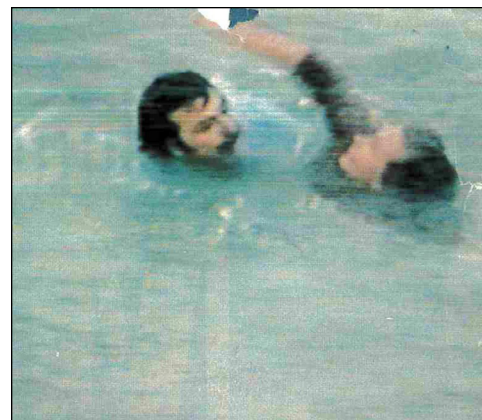
In addition to receiving the Carnegie Medal for civilian heroism, Olian, Skutnik, Usher, and Windsor received other recognition.

Skutnik was invited to sit with Mrs. Reagan during the State of the Union address, and after mention of his act by President Reagan, Skutnik received a standing ovation. He also received the Robert P. Connelly Medal of Service Beyond the Call of Duty award.

Olian gave \$2,000 to the National Hospital in Arlington, Virginia.

In 2004, Windsor and his wife Maureen, attended the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission Centennial celebration at Carnegie Hall in Pittsburgh. The rescue on the Potomac was also featured in the accompanying video, ‘Heroes Among Us,’ and book ‘A Century of Heroes,’ both of which were produced for the occasion. ❄️

— Abby Brady, Operations and Outreach Assistant/Archivist



A series of photos that appeared in Time Magazine depicts the plight of Priscilla Tirado, passenger of Air Florida Flight 90. Left, fellow passenger Joseph Stiley held her to a life ring that was tossed from a rescue helicopter. Center, the helicopter, piloted by Donald W. Usher, dragged her through the icy river, but halfway to the bank of the Potomac River, Tirado lost her grip and dropped onto a sheet of ice. Usher returned to Tirado, maneuvered a life ring to her, and began towing her to shore, but 20 feet from the bank, she lost hold of the ring. Right, Carnegie Hero M.L. Skutnik III, plunged into the frigid water and swam Tirado to shore.

**Carnegie Hero Fund Commission**

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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 includes 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 online 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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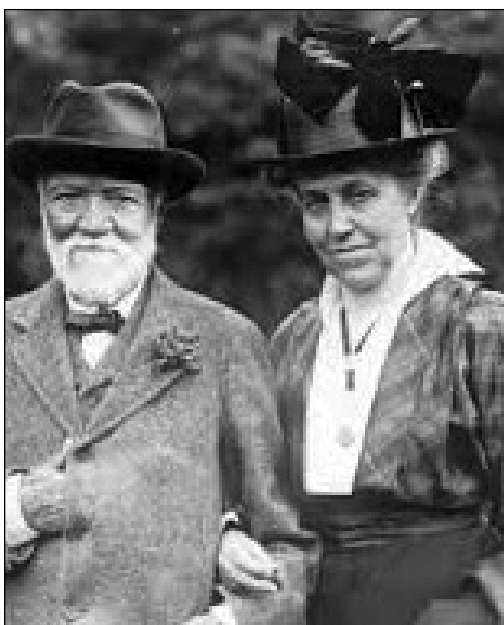
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"A sunny disposition is worth more than fortune. Young people should know that it can be cultivated; that the mind, like the body, can be moved from the shade into sunshine."

— *Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie, 1920*

CONTINUUM

GRAVE MARKERS Bronze grave markers (below), cast in the likeness of the Carnegie Medal, are available at no cost to the families of awardees who have passed. They are designed for mounting on stone or bronze memorials.

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.

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.

ANNUAL REPORTS Copies of the Hero Fund's most recent annual reports (2019-2020) are available online or by contacting the Hero Fund.

IMPULSE ONLINE? Should you wish to receive *Impulse* in PDF rather than in your mailbox, let us know.

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