



# Impulse

A periodic newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission  
ISSUE 67 • FALL 2021



*Robert W. Simpson's Carnegie Medal*

## INSIDE THE GALLERY

### TWO MEDALS TELL HARROWING TALES OF WATER RESCUES

Every year, the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission distributes individually-struck, bronze medals to award recipients or their families, with the hope that they will serve as a lasting reminder of the hero's legacy — passed down generations as a cherished heirloom. Sometimes, however, medals find their way back to us.

A new column in *Impulse* will include telling the stories of the heroic deeds that resulted in the awarding of the Carnegie Medal that are displayed in the Hero Fund's offices in Pittsburgh.

This quarter two bronze medals found their way to the Commission: a 1906 medal awarded to **Robert W. Simpson** and a 1916 medal awarded to **John J. Hutt**. They were sent to our refinisher for a shine and will be displayed among others in the Commission's gallery.

#### Robert W. Simpson

Although the Commission doesn't seek to collect Carnegie Medals being sold, occasionally staff members come across a Carnegie Medal that needs a home. And no better second home than the Commission's offices — apart from the safe haven of the recipient's family. The Commission won the Simpson medal with the highest bid from a Stack's Bowers Auction.

Simpson was awarded the medal for his part of a four-man crew that braved a horrific storm on Lake Erie to rescue six men on Oct. 20, 1905.

The six men were stranded on a sinking schooner about a mile from Ashtabula Harbor, Ohio. The schooner "Yukon" was separated from a ► **p. 3**



*Posthumous Carnegie Medal recipient **Philip Scholz** with his rescue dog, Poppy, on their daily walk. According to Scholz's mother Roberta Scholz, Scholz and Poppy were very close, and is part of the reason the Phil Scholz Memorial Foundation created a trail bearing Scholz's name.*

### Low-income veterinary surgery center bearing Carnegie hero's name to open next year

Carnegie Hero **Philip Scholz** never let his family forget about their beloved dog years after Sparky died. Scholz was 6 when they lost their pet, but Sparky made cameo appearances in almost all of Scholz's childhood drawings and he spoke of the dog frequently. Now his commitment to remember Sparky's legacy has come full circle with others committing the same to him.

The opening of a veterinary surgery center bearing Scholz's name in Pleasanton, California, is scheduled for next year, with nearly 90 percent raised of the \$1.7 million needed.

In 2015, Scholz was posthumously honored with the Carnegie Medal after he died attempting to save a man from being struck by a train. More than a year earlier, Philip was commuting home from work when he saw a man lying on railroad tracks near a train station. As a train approached at 70 m.p.h., Scholz ran to the edge of the platform and extended his arms around the man before the train collided with them both. Scholz died on impact, but the man survived despite significant injuries.

In the wake of his death, Scholz's wife Emily has worked on preserving her late husband's legacy, just like 6-year-old Scholz did with Sparky. ►

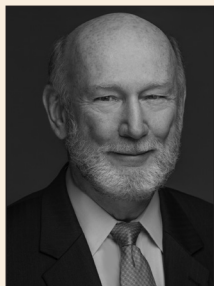


BOARD NOTES

WHERE THE HEART LEADS – AND  
FOLLOWS

By Mark Laskow, Chair  
Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

These famous words of Andrew Carnegie — “My heart is in the work” — sweetly capture the vibrant energy that flowed through his business and philanthropic work.



Mark Laskow

So, I was jarred to read an unsettling variation on these words — “When My Heart Isn’t in the Work” — in an online publication of an American university closely associated with Carnegie.

With this headline, counselors at the university announced an online “space” for students to “share and process” difficult experiences at the school.

On one level, it is nice that the school is concerned about students who come to the university from diverse cultures around world. I know well that college can be stressful. But the decision to twist Carnegie’s own famous words this way invites the same question discussed here in the last issue of Impulse: “What would Carnegie do?” Or “What would Carnegie heroes do?”

Like many of this university’s students, Carnegie faced cross-cultural stresses when his family moved from Scotland to Pittsburgh after his father was unable to adapt to the increasing automation of his handloom weaving trade.

Carnegie also experienced economic stress. His father’s inability to hold a job in America pushed 13-year-old Andrew into the breadwinner’s role, working 72 hours as a bobbin boy in a

In the end, though, we all have to go back to the work to do whatever work of which we are capable. Do that, and you may find out your heart has caught up with you and your work.

► from p.1

Phil Scholz Veterinary Surgery Center to open

“The worst part about losing someone is feeling that they’re going to just be forgotten,” she said.

She and others started the Phil Scholz Memorial Foundation. Its purpose: a “staging ground,” where the money raised in Scholz’s memory could be held; “It gave us time to think thoughtfully about what we were going to do with it,” said Emily Scholz. Raised funds led to the creation of the Phil Scholz Memorial Trail, sponsorship of a memorial tile at Valley Humane Society, and donations to The American Red Cross and Baseball Buddies Foundation, a global organization that donates baseball gear to impoverished communities. These choices were inspired by Philip’s love of hiking, baseball, his frequent blood donations, and his dog, Poppy.

Poppy, a cocker-spaniel, was 8 years old when Emily and Scholz adopted her.

“They were very close,” said Roberta Scholz, Scholz’s mother. A memorial bench and “the trail came about because these were his favorite places to walk with Poppy.”

But the most recent fundraiser was closest to Emily’s heart as well. “Phil had good memories of having a pet as a child,” Emily said. They adopted several pets together, including Poppy, and during their marriage, Emily volunteered with the local humane society. In 2014, after Philip’s death, Emily quit her job as a project manager at a consulting firm to work full-time at Valley Humane Society as the adoption and foster manager.

“It was clear [Emily] was a leader and committed to the cause,” said Melanie Sadek, executive director of the humane society. “She evolved the foster program to the point where we were no longer limited by space in the building.”

According to Sadek, the surgery center is needed in Pleasanton, California.

“With private practice vets overwhelmed with the 67 percent increase in owned pets in 2020, reduced cost services for rescues and shelters became harder to find. In addition, community members who have less than \$950 per month in discretionary income continue to struggle with one-time necessary veterinary surgeries for their pets. This surgery center will provide that option and support rescues and shelters,” she said.

The Phil Scholz Veterinary Surgery Center will increase accessibility to necessary surgeries even for owners that are struggling financially. Scholz’s former employer Nvidia, a Fortune 500 tech company, launched an employee-based fundraiser that received more than \$640,000 in donations —surpassing its \$500,000 goal that allowed them to name the surgery center. The success of the fundraiser was due in part to Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang and his wife Lori matching all employee contributions.

“Many people don’t realize how incredible their culture is,” said Sadek, who wrote to Huang about the surgery center.

She was told that “within a few hours” he sent the message down the line: “We need to do this.”

Valley Humane Society is still receiving donations as it approaches its \$1.7 million goal. The surgery center is planned to open in March 2022.

For Emily, this has been a passion project, “It’s really touching seeing the whole community show that they’re missing Phil also. It’s nice to know I’m not alone,” she said. ☼

— Elijah Lambiotte, outreach intern



Phil Scholz, right, and his wife Emily pose for a photograph. Emily has committed to preserving Scholz’s legacy after he was killed while saving a man from being struck by a train in 2014.



► from p.1

**TWO MEDALS TELL HARROWING TALES OF WATER RESCUES**

steamer that was towing it and it “lay helpless” in the “heaviest gale ever experienced on Lake Erie” at the time, according to the Commission’s 1906 meeting minutes.

The wind was blowing at 58 m.p.h., and waves were 14 feet high.

The crew of another ship, the 73-foot-tug “Thomas Wilson,” left the safety of the harbor to rescue the men. On that boat was Captain **Timothy E. Heagerty**, 41; Steamboat Engineer Simpson, 46; Steamboat Fireman **Michael Sasso**, 22; and sailor **Jeremiah M. Donovan**, 26.

“Life boats could not be used in taking the men from the schooner to the tug, and it was necessary to steer the tug close enough to the Yukon to enable the men to jump from one boat to the other,” the report stated.

Twice, Captain Heagerty maneuvered his large tug to the schooner with success, but on the last attempt, the boats collided, destroying a portion of the Robert Wilson’s gunwales. Despite the collision, all six men aboard the Yukon made it to safety.

“Captain Heagerty is regarded as one of the best navigators of the Lakes,” the report stated.

According to Hero Fund records, Simpson “very faithfully performed his duties at the engine, and shared the common peril with the captain and other crew.”

Supporting a wife and 10-year-old child on a \$50 monthly salary, the Commission awarded Simpson a bronze Carnegie Medal and \$1,450.

**John J. Hutt**

The Carnegie Medal of John J. Hutt was donated to the Commission after a relative found the medal among his deceased mother-in-law’s possessions.

“None of her surviving relatives is aware of any connection to John, and we have no idea how she acquired it,” wrote Joe Trojanowski in an e-mail to the Hero Fund.

It was early evening Jan. 21, 1915, when 9-year-old M. Louise Champoux broke through the ice covering a Cherry Valley, Massachusetts, pond, about 250 feet in diameter. She screamed, which caught the attention of Hutt, 42, a father of three young children, and his wife, 38.

As she struggled to remain afloat in water 12 feet deep, Hutt crawled on and slid over the ice on his stomach toward Louise, who submerged and was carried by a 4 m.p.h. current under the ice, resurfacing in another area of open water. Just about as Hutt reached Louise, the ice broke under him as well.

The Hero Fund’s report states that Hutt felt the bottom of the pond — which was about a foot of mud. He resurfaced, but could not see Louise. He held his breath and dove under the surface of the water, groping for the girl.

Finding her at the bottom, he lifted her to the surface and onto the ice. As he started to climb out of the water onto the ice, it broke again, returning both of them to the water. Hutt grasped Louise, who was then unconscious, again and pushed her ahead of him as he broke a path through the ice. Eventually he was able to push her onto solid ice and climb up himself. He carried her to the bank where others tended to her. She was revived.

Hutt suffered a heavy cold, but he recovered.

Hutt told Hero Fund Special Agent John Benitz at the time that while he did not think he was risking his life at the time of the rescue, “after it was completed, he realized what he had done and thought he had risked his life,” risking frigid water temperature, being heavily dressed and sticking to the bottom of the lake in the mud, or getting carried under the ice.

Hutt was awarded the bronze medal and \$1,000. ❄️



*Carnegie Medal of John J. Hutt*

► from p.2

**BOARD NOTES**

cotton mill for the pay of \$1.20 ... per week, or \$36 in 2020 dollars.

My first reaction to the twisted headline won’t surprise you: I snorted and dismissed it as more evidence of the decline of Western Civilization in general and our universities in particular. But, as much as I enjoy outrage, snorting doesn’t equal thinking.

A little poking around online revealed the staff assigned to the project are trained therapists. You have to give the university the benefit of the doubt and allow that this could be a laudable effort to support students venturing into a wider world.

And yet. Why the headline, “When My Heart Isn’t in the Work”? Instead of delivering a verbal kick to Andrew Carnegie’s shins, why not look to Carnegie’s life for inspiration and uplift?

Do you suppose that Andrew’s heart was in his work as a bobbin boy? Hard to say. What we do know is that he did the work necessary to support his family. We know that he kept at his work year after year until he had built the modern steel industry which, on balance, added immensely to the wealth and well-being of the nation.

Yes, we all have bad stretches in life, and of course it helps to have someone to talk to in the hard times. In the end, though, we all have to go back to the work, to do whatever work of which we are capable. Do that, and you may find out that your heart has caught up with you, and with the work.

Perhaps industrial titan Andrew Carnegie is too big a figure to serve as an example to a modern college student.

If that is the case, consider the everyday heroes who have earned the Carnegie Medal.

Who among them do you suppose got up in the morning wanting to get involved in a life-threatening rescue? A rescue that could, and all too often did, kill them? In a real sense it was unfair that the heroes were suddenly confronted with a fellow human in terrifying danger. The whole thing was an inconvenience on the rescuers’ normal lives. And how did they respond to surprise, unfairness, and imposition? They left their safe spaces and acted, each and every one of them, to share the danger enveloping the victims they encountered. It was hard, all too many of them died, but in the blink of an eye they acted.

These were no titans of industry but ordinary people of every race, religion, occupation, and social status imaginable who acted to rescue people often very different from themselves. What mattered was, in the moment when it counted, their hearts were in the work.

Let’s stick with that as our headline. ❄️



## PRESENTING



For a daring rescue in which he rescued the unresponsive driver from a burning vehicle, rescuer **Antonio Morgan**, of St. Louis, second from right, received the Carnegie Medal, presented by St. Louis County Councilwoman Shalonda Webb, right, in an Aug. 24 ceremony. Also pictured are, from left, Council Chairwoman Rita Heard Days and Keilen Robinson, the driver of the vehicle.


After a July 28, 2020, interstate accident in St. Louis County, Robinson, who was unresponsive, remained in the driver's seat, his door wedged against a concrete median. Flames broke out under the hood and burned against the outside of the windshield. Among the motorists who stopped and responded was Morgan. Morgan entered at the front, passenger door, knelt on the passenger seat, and grasped Robinson's upper body, pulling his torso toward the door opening. Morgan withdrew, re-entered, pulled Robinson, and withdrew again. Smoke issued through the open door. Morgan entered a third time, knelt on the passenger seat, and released Robinson's seat belt, withdrawing upon hearing a loud explosive sound from the car's front end. Robinson's upper body then fell onto the road outside the car, and Morgan dragged him away before flames shortly engulfed the rest of the car.

"I wouldn't be here without him," said Robinson, who has developed a bond with Morgan since the rescue. Although he was taken to a hospital for treatment, Robinson was not burned.

In presenting Morgan's medal, Webb said, "His unselfish love was rare. His sacrifice was rare."



From left, Agawam (Massachusetts) Mayor William P. Sapelli congratulates **Christopher Lanski** on receiving the Carnegie Medal while Officer Lanski's chief, Eric Gillis, waits to do the same. The quiet ceremony was held Aug. 16 at the Agawam Senior Center.

 To see a video of the presentation, visit [carnegiehero.org/cmp-lanski](https://carnegiehero.org/cmp-lanski)

On March 20, 2018, Lanski responded to a burning two-story home in which a 56-year-old woman was trapped in a second-floor apartment. Lanski entered the home and went to her apartment door. Finding it locked, he kicked it several times until it broke open. Heavy smoke filled the apartment, and Lanski retreated twice to the stairwell before returning to the doorway where he spotted the woman on the floor several feet away. He crawled under the heavy smoke to her, grasped her wrist, and dragged her to the door. Another officer met them at the top of the stairs and assisted Lanski in dragging the woman to safety. Lanski suffered smoke exposure, but he recovered.

"Thank you for all you've done for Agawam and continue to do," Sapelli said, citing the extensiveness of the woman's injuries as a testament to the conditions of the fire.



PRESENTING



Officials from Miami-Dade County (Florida) Public Schools on Oct. 4 presented the Carnegie Medal to the family of **Christian Alexander Burgos** who drowned Sept. 30, 2019, after Burgos, 17, rescued a 9-year-old boy, then returned to attempt to rescue the boy's 25-year-old mother, Elvia Venegas, when they were caught in rough surf off a Miami beach in Biscayne Bay. From left, Region Superintendent Michael A. Lewis, Kevin E. Lawrence, principal of Booker T. Washington Senior High School, Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho, and Christian's parents Misael Burgos and Maria Del Carmen Avendano.

"He represented the best of humanity, and today we remember his strong act of courage and present his family with the Carnegie Medal," Carvalho tweeted after the event. Miami-Dade Public Schools now offers a \$2,000 hero scholarship named for Burgos.



Hero Fund President Eric Zahren, Carnegie Medal recipient **Melinda J. Wilms**, U.S. Rep. Bill

To see a video of the presentation, visit [carnegiehero.org/cmp-wilms](https://carnegiehero.org/cmp-wilms)

Johnson, and Salem (Ohio) Mayor John Berlin admire the Carnegie Medal during an Aug. 23 presentation to Wilms, of Salem. Wilms was part of a water rescue of a 12-year-old boy who was struggling in Mosquito Creek Lake near Cortland, Ohio. **Christine L. Beheler** acted first, swimming to the panicking boy, who submerged her. **Mark A. Krempasky** and Wilms then responded, Krempasky towing Beheler back to wadable water and Wilms using a pool noodle to tow the boy back to the beach. Beheler could not be revived.

"We are honored to bestow this Medal and this honor on Melinda," Zahren said. "And also to make sure that her story gets told and stories of her fellow heroes are told, so that, maybe we can create better neighborhoods, better societies and maybe a better world. That was Carnegie's dream."

Wilms concluded the ceremony by asking for more kindness in the world.

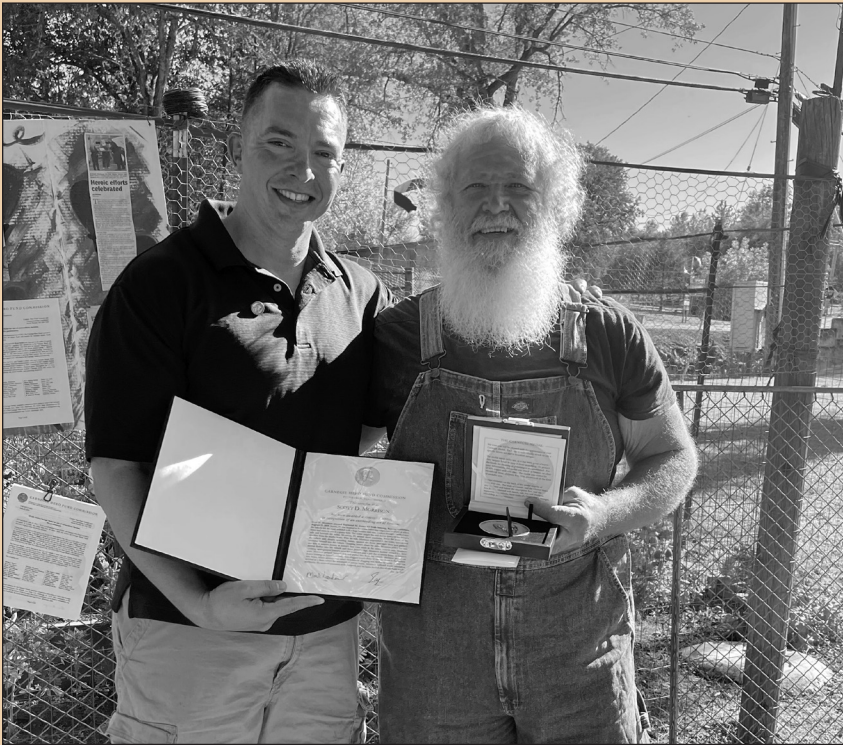
"I would echo everybody's words here to just be kind to each other, be respectful, but certainly look out each other, and help each other when you can," she said.

Johnson represents Ohio's sixth district.





## PRESENTING



In a ceremony held Sept. 18 outside the Rescue (California) Fire Department, Raymond M. Jerrett III, left, presented **Scott D. Morrison** with the Carnegie Medal. Morrison was recognized for rescuing Jerrett from a burning vehicle following an accident in Rescue on Aug. 13, 2019.

From inside his Rescue home, Morrison heard Jerrett's sedan collide with a tree. Dry grass ignited around the car and Jerrett was inside, unconscious. Blocked by fire from accessing the driver's door, Morrison opened the front, passenger door and entered the car. Flames engulfed the driver's side of the car and Jerrett's clothing was on fire. Morrison pulled Jerrett toward him, freed his trapped feet, and removed him from the sedan, patting out flames on his clothing.

"It means everything to me, every day that I have, every happy moment I have, I think that I'm able to have it because of him," Jerrett said as he presented the Medal in front of friends and family.

"We're lucky," Morrison responded. "We're lucky, because if I wouldn't have, it would be worse for both of us."

Jerrett said that despite extensive injuries and scarring, he feels that the accident was a blessing in disguise. "Their family is such a beautiful family and they are part of our family now too," he said. "Thankfully this story has a happy ending."



LEFT: In an emotional ceremony held July 30 in the community room of the Hesperia (California) Police Department, the widow of two-time Carnegie Medal recipient **Michael Robert Keyser**, accepted his second Carnegie Medal in front of an audience of proud, but not surprised, family members. Hero Fund Outreach Coordinator Jewels Phraner, left, presents the Medal to Lorri Keyser.

"Mr. Keyser is one of six people in the Commission's history to have risked his life to an extraordinary degree not once, but twice," Phraner said. "Helping others at whatever cost was clearly in his blood, and I am so humbled to meet those that such a brave and extraordinary individual held dearest in his heart."

Keyser was killed when, while attempting to break the windshield of an overturned tractor-trailer to help its driver to safety, another semi-truck, hauling two trailers containing flammable lighter fluid, hit the overturned truck, pushing it and Keyser off the highway into the desert. The trucks immediately erupted in flames, and Keyser and the man he was trying to save perished.



"This was who Michael was," said Lorri.

Keyser received his first Carnegie Medal 30 years earlier for saving a motorist from being electrocuted after a 1990 single-vehicle accident.

Hesperia Mayor pro tem Brigit Bennington and members from California Rep. Thurston Smith's and U.S. Rep. Jay Obernolte's staffs also presented Keyser with proclamations, including a flag that was flown over the California state capitol.

Smith represents California's 33rd assembly district; Obernolte, California's eighth district.

RIGHT: After the ceremony Phraner met with Keyser's family. Back row from left, Lorri, Phraner, and Keyser's brother Mark Keyser. Second row, daughter, Kayla Keyser, granddaughters, Gia and Alana Keyser, and mother Susan Keyser. Foreground, son Brett Keyser and grandson Blaine Keyser.



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FRIENDS REMEMBERED

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**Theresa E. Leduc**

**Theresa E. Leduc**, 93, of Woonsocket, Rhode Island, died Friday, Jan. 22, 2021, in Sarasota, Florida.

On March 13, 1964, Leduc, a 37-year-old homemaker, was driving in Cumberland Hill, Rhode Island, when she noticed a boy clinging to his Collie dog in an ice-covered pond, 65 feet from the bank. Leduc stopped at the scene, removed her jacket, and walked onto the ice, which soon broke.

Unable to regain her footing on the ice, Leduc lay prone and crawled toward the boy. She then used a scarf to draw him from the water and onto the ice.

Fifteen feet from the hole, she stood up and continued dragging the boy toward safety. Breaking through the ice once more, Leduc held the boy above water and used her feet to break through ice, making a path for them to exit.

The boy's father used a ladder to remove the dog from the water. Leduc was extremely cold and tired after the rescue. She suffered cuts and bruises and recovered in two weeks.

Woonsocket Red Cross Director Anthony F. Lawrence, who nominated Leduc for the award, and U.S. Sen. John O. Pastore, representing Rhode Island, presented her with the Carnegie Medal.

Leduc was born Feb. 14, 1927, to Blanche and Romeo Thibeault of Central Falls, Rhode Island. She was married to her husband Lawrence J. Leduc, Sr., for 59 years.

Leduc worked for UniRoyal in Woonsocket until it closed in the early 1990s. She then went to school before returning to the workforce where she was employed by Amica Insurance until retirement.

According to her loved ones, if you met Theresa, "Terry," you became her friend. She included all her friends and relatives in her daily prayers.

Leduc is survived by her sister Norma; two sons, Lawrence Jr., and Charles; two grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband Lawrence and brother Normand.



**Jason Mitchell Norman**

**Jason Mitchell Norman**, 40, died Tuesday, July 6, 2021, at home in Ronda, North Carolina.

On Oct. 26, 2009, Norman, 28, heating and cooling systems installer, was driving in a North Wilkesboro, North Carolina, neighborhood, when he saw flames issuing from a house.

He stopped at the scene and learned that a 61-year-old woman remained in bed on the first floor. Norman kicked open the front door to find the living room filled with dense smoke and flames. Repelled by the smoke, he went outside to pull his coat over his head before re-entering the home.

He moved forward and located the bed where the woman lay unconscious. Norman pushed the bed closer to the front door and then lifted the woman from it and took her outside. Flames continued to spread inside as Norman and a neighbor removed the woman's husband from a bedroom window at the side of the house. Norman was treated at the hospital for smoke inhalation. He recovered.

In addition to receiving the Carnegie Medal, Norman also received the key to the city of North Wilkesboro, North Carolina.

Norman was born Jan. 26, 1981, to Ervin and Paulette Norman of Surry County, North Carolina.

He grew up in Ronda and attended Elkin City Schools. In 2007 he married Kandace Mullins and gained a daughter, Kaylee. In 2008, the couple had another daughter, Savannah. ►p. 12

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OVERHEARD

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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.

— **Jean-Paul LaPierre**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10244

Sometimes you have to go and do ... I'm a mom and we want to save everybody. You don't even think. You just go and do.

— **Hiedi Johnston**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10239

John Miner is quite a humble man and not used to a lot of attention and honestly believes he was just doing his job.

— **Sheriff of Deputy John Miner**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10256

If I didn't stop where there was somebody alive in a car engulfed in flames, I would have been haunted by that. I had to try. I don't think of myself as a hero. I was just trying to help another person. I had to do something.

— **Jeffrey Johnson**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10191

I am very grateful that I was there at the right time. I have known Ed pretty much my whole life, and he has always been great to my family. It is a blessing to know that this event turned out the way it did.

— **Calvin Parham**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10186, referring to the man he saved from a burning building.

It feels good knowing that I have done something to affect a life. I was doing what I was taught to do.

— **Phillip H. DiLuca**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10104

We ain't losing no soldiers on my watch!

— **Antonio Morgan**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10228

It hurts, and the only thing I will be able to tell my son is that he was a hero.

— fiancée of **Gabriel Cedrik Saechao**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10251

I couldn't get my Foodland uniform wet, so I took everything off and went in with the boxers,

— **Ryan Scott McIlwain**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10087



## LATEST AWARDEES OF THE CARNEGIE MEDAL

*Since the last issue of Impulse, the following 18 individuals have been awarded the Carnegie Medal, bringing the total number of recipients to 10,256 since the Hero Fund's inception in 1904. The latest awards were announced Sept. 22. The next announcement will be made in December.*

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.



**Hiedi Johnston**



**Draven M. Starr-Howell**



**Scott McFarland**



*A slowly sinking pickup truck that, on Jan. 2, entered Humboldt Bay off Eureka, California. **Hiedi Johnston** witnessed the accident and immediately entered the 51-degree water, swam to the truck, and pulled the driver out of the vehicle, before it completely submerged. A boat brought Johnston, the driver, and another man who had responded to safety.*



*Flames engulfed a car after it struck a utility pole Oct. 1, 2020, in a Kingston, New York, neighborhood. **Erich M. Funccius** responded to the scene and, despite electrical lines draped across the car's hood and rapidly spreading fire, pried open the front, passenger door and one-by-one pulled the car's three occupants to safety. The three men were not burned.*

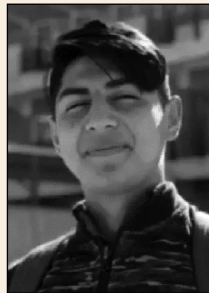
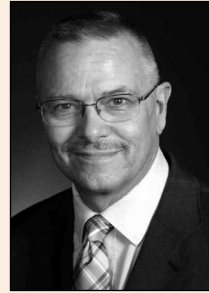
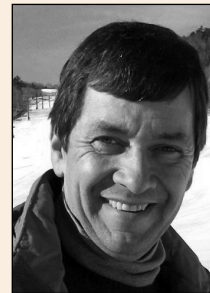
A 14-year-old floating on an inner tube on Lake Ontario on July 2, 2020, was being carried away from shore, and, panicking, she left the inner tube and entered the water with her brother, who was able to swim to safety. The girl was struggling in waves several hundred feet from shore. **Draven M. Starr-Howell**, 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.

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**, 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 ►




**Allen Robert Linder**

**Jean-Paul LaPierre**

**Edgar F.  
Moreno Alba**

**John D. Colter**

**Alan R. Cote**

**Stephen P.  
Carkhuff**

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 ►

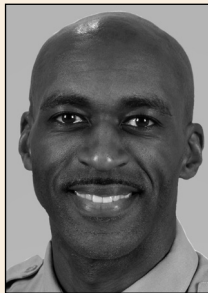


*Crews removed the wrecked and burned vehicle from which Carnegie Medal awardees **Alan R. Cote** and neighbor **Stephen P. Carkhuff** rescued the driver and passenger in Auburn, New Hampshire on Oct. 23, 2019. The car crashed into trees just off a rural road. Cote removed the driver after which Carkhuff crawled into the burning vehicle to remove the passenger, after Cote, reaching through a window, worked to cut her seat belt.*

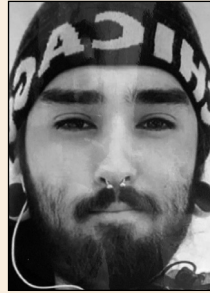


## LATEST AWARDEES

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



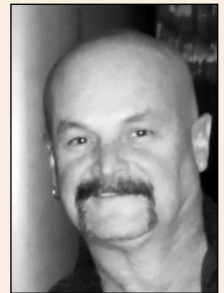
**Sivad H. Johnson**



**Evan Patrick Ishmia**



**Gabriel Cedrik Saechao**



**Ernest Beauparland**

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.

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.

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 Ishmia**, 24, of Florin, California, was hiking in another party when he saw Nguyen submerge. Kneeling at a boulder near the entrance to the chamber, Ishmia 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 Ishmia 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 Ishmia's body 13 days later, and Saechao's, the next day. Nguyen, Ishmia, and Saechao drowned.

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, ►



*Firefighters work to extinguish a fire that trapped an 83-year-old man in his second-floor apartment. As smoke filled the dwelling, **Ernest Beauparland** and **Ronald Rock**, motorists who responded to the building after seeing the fire, carried the man to safety, while flames burned on the ceiling above them.*



*Two expert workers search for the bodies of **Evan Patrick Ishmia** and **Gabriel Cedrik Saechao** in the North Fork Cosumnes River east of Sacramento, California. On May 28, 2020, Ishmia and Saechao drowned after they were drawn into an underwater chamber beneath the boulders of a waterfall while trying to rescue another man who had been sucked into the chamber. The expert crew searched in the chamber after family members dammed up the river with sandbags to restrict the river's flow.*



**Ronald Rock****Eric C. Keys****John Miner**

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 Beauparland**, 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. Beauparland and Rock grasped Jackson under the legs and, backing slowly down the stairs, carried him outside, as fire spread along the ceiling above them. Beauparland and Jackson inhaled smoke, but they recovered.

**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.

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 knelt 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.

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. ❄️



*The fiery scene after a tractor-trailer careened into vehicles that were pulled to the side of a highway with engine trouble. Sheriff's Deputy **John Miner** was already on scene when the Nov. 4, 2020, accident occurred near Long Island, Kansas. Two kids remained in the backseat of a pickup truck that was hit and caught fire in the accident. Miner was burned pulling them out of the truck and bringing them to safety.*



► from p.7

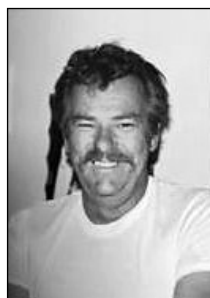
## FRIENDS REMEMBERED

He was a member of Baldwin Baptist church.

A skilled carpenter, Norman installed hardwood floors and was an HVAC technician. His generous spirit ran strong, and Norman helped many people who were unable to pay for his work.

According to his family, Norman loved gardening, deep sea fishing, family time, music, and had a fascination for how things worked. He was also a passionate cook who grew up watching *The Cajun Cook* on PBS. Some family favorites included his broccoli chicken cheddar soup, pumpkin pie, and fried okra.

Norman is survived by his parents, Ervin and Paulette; his former wife, Kandace; his daughters Savannah and Kaylee; three brothers Deidric, Cameron, and Travis; one sister, Nickayla; aunts and uncles; a step-grandfather; nieces and nephews; cousins, and countless friends.



**Roy Hart**

**Roy Hart, 81, died Friday, Aug. 27, 2021, at his home in Dos Palos, California.**

On June 23, 1995, Hart, 55, contractor, was traveling on a highway in Dos Palos, and came upon a burning, overturned van. The passenger, a 37-year-old woman, lay partially extended through the windshield. Using a jacket as a shield against the blistering heat, Hart linked arms with another man, and they approached the van. Pulling the woman's arm, they freed her from the wreckage, but fell to the ground. Regaining their footing, the men dragged the woman farther from the van.

The woman was hospitalized with severe burns and died several hours later. Hart recovered from minor burns to his face and fingers.

Hart was born on Oct. 20, 1939, to Lena Fay Kunkel and William Hershey, in Salem, Oregon. He grew up in Olympia, Washington, with his parents and siblings, Jim, Jay, and Charlotte.

In his youth, Hart worked alongside his father, who was a master carpenter and builder, on many projects including constructing the Olympia brewery. He graduated from North Thurston High School, and left home at 18, accompanied by his brother Jim.

Starting in 1956, Hart served in the U.S. Navy, piloting sky raiders from many ships including the USS Ticonderoga, Kearsarge, Bennington, and Boxer.

Following his four years in the Navy, Hart returned to Olympia and married Judy Lusua. The couple had two sons, Wayne and Travis.

He held many jobs including working as a logger, heavy equipment operator, Olympia police officer and pound master, and commercial fisherman. In 1976, he returned to California and worked in asphalt with a paving and construction company.

In 1980, he married Barbara McDaniel and had two sons, Roy Jr., and Ryan.

Hart went on to get his contractor license and established Hart Paving & Grading in 1988.

Hart loved aviation and owned multiple Cessna aircraft during his life. He often stopped at the Merced (California) airport to fly, or as he put it, 'Punch a hole in the sky.' He loved to fish and cook. Hart especially looked forward to the annual Crab Cioppino Feed fundraiser put on by the Lions Club that supported Merced youth sports. Hart's family spoke of his passion for classic cars, hot rods, and race cars.

Hart was very dedicated to Dos Palos American Legion Post 86 and expressed pride and love for his country alongside fellow legionnaires. His patriotism inspired him to lead the effort to design, fundraise for, and build the Dos Palos Veterans Memorial wall at Marks Elementary School.

He is survived by his wife Barbara; brother, Jay; sons Wayne, Travis, Roy Jr., and Ryan; four grandchildren; three great grandchildren; and many other relatives.

He was preceded in death by his brother, James, and sister Charlotte. ❀



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*Before refinishing. After refinishing.*

## HERO FUND OFFERS CARNEGIE MEDAL REFINISHING

The Hero Fund will, at no cost to the recipient or their families, arrange for refinishing to aged and tarnished Carnegie medals.

The medals will be returned as close as possible to their original luster by the Fund's medal manufacturer.

Send medals via registered mail to:

Carnegie Hero Fund Commission  
436 Seventh Ave., Suite 1101  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Please allow at least one month for the medal's return.



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

*Nurse saves father and son from 1913 hospital fire*

**O**n the cool morning of Sept. 7, 1913, at California's Susanville Hospital, a father and son were residing in adjacent rooms. William D. Minckler, Sr., a 62-year-old civil engineer, was suffering from palindromic rheumatism, which caused inflammation and made it difficult to walk. His son, William D. Minckler, Jr., 25, civil engineer's assistant, had been in a motorcycle accident and was experiencing a severe concussion that caused delusions and outbursts of violence. He had been in the hospital for six weeks and was not expected to live.

**Lillian M. Coburn**, 42, matron of the hospital, requested an orderly fill and light the coal oil stove in the elder Minckler's room while she prepared to give him a bath.

She stepped out of the room located in the northwest corner of the hospital's one-story wing to gather towels from a linen closet and warm water from the bathroom.

During this brief absence, Coburn heard a popping noise. When she turned back to Minckler's room, she saw flames erupting from the top of the door.

The stove, containing about one gallon of oil, had exploded and caught fire. Flames were quickly dispersed throughout the hospital's pine structure, and there were no fire extinguishers available to provide relief. The weather that day was fair and there wasn't any breeze. Hero Fund Special Agent M.H. Floto presented these details about the hospital's structure, weather conditions, and specific risk factors Coburn faced, so Hero Fund officials who would review Coburn's qualifications for the Carnegie Medal had no doubt of the dangers she faced.

Minkler, lethargic from the medicine he had been given, remained asleep. In the room adjacent to the east, his son, William, was oblivious to the peril. It was clear that father and son were in danger of being burned to death.

In addition to the Mincklers, there were at least 15 other patients in the building, including four or five who were considered by staff to be practically helpless.

J.H. Platt, a patient who was faring well, shared a room with William and had been keeping an eye on him while Coburn tended to other duties. He exited to the hallway where Coburn had just witnessed the eruption of flames.

"What can I do?" Platt inquired, wringing his hands.

"Save yourself," Coburn directed. Platt ran for safety.

In the regulation linen uniform of a trained nurse, Coburn, who was assiduously familiar with the hospital, ran into Minkler's room. Flames covered the walls and ceiling and the hospital bedding was ablaze. Fire licked Minckler's head and had spread to his head and shoulders.

Coburn pulled Minckler from his bed, put a bath towel over his



*Carnegie Hero **Lillian M. Coburn** poses for a photograph showing the third-degree burns on her arms she sustained while saving a father and son from 1913 hospital fire.*

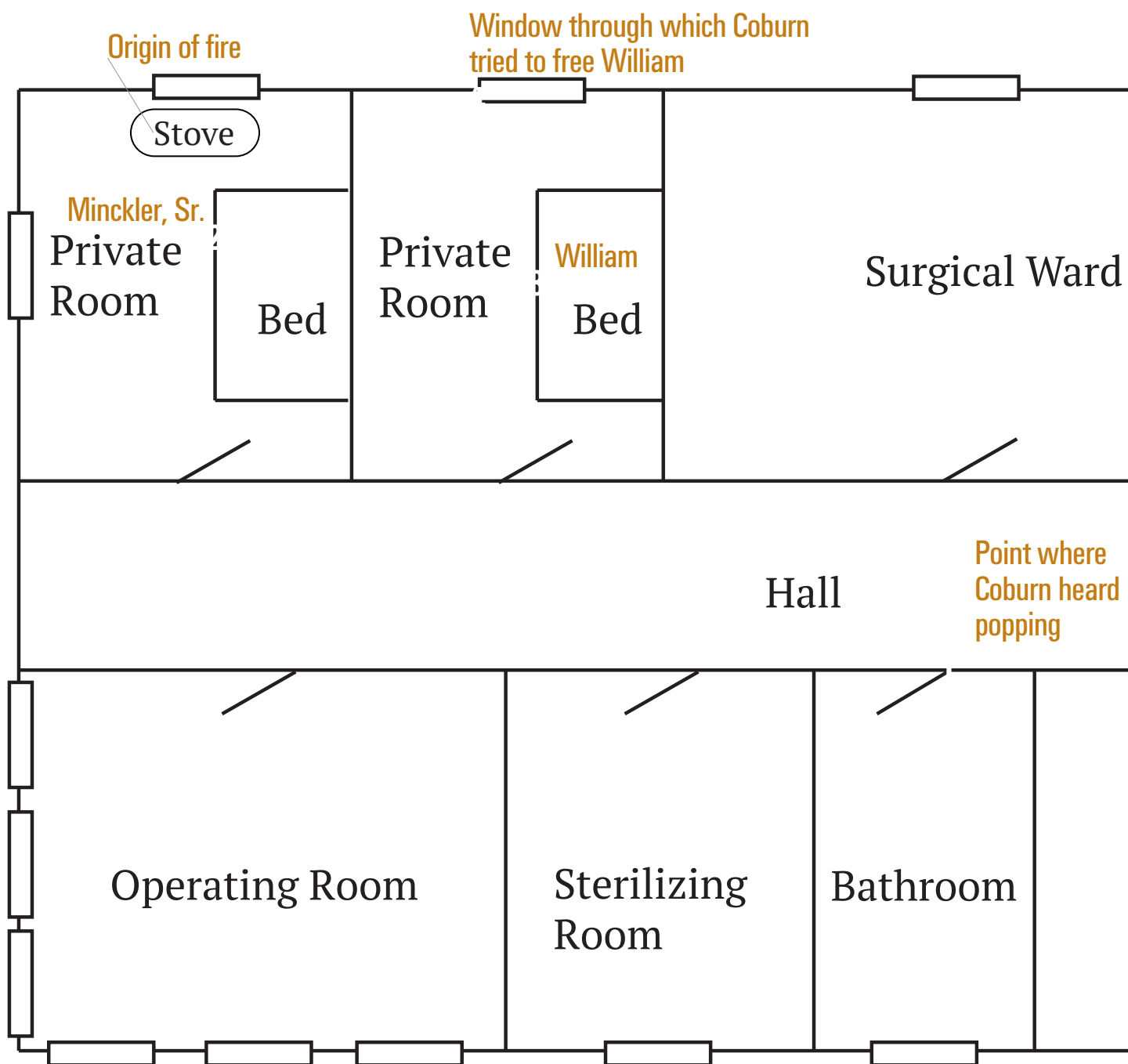
head, and walked him into the hall. She pushed him ahead of her until they reached William's door. Here, she instructed him to stay close to the wall and pushed him in the direction of safety.

By now, fire had spread to the west end of the hall. Flames and upper segments of the walls burned easily as they were full of a cotton material for insulation and covered with wallpaper. Heavy smoke permeated the hallway. A draft from an open transom window pushed the flames east.

Coburn entered William's room. He lay in his hospital bed as flames were beginning to encroach the upper portion of the west wall.

Coburn quickly lifted William in her arms. She attempted to push him out through the first-floor window, but in his concussed state, William kicked and struggled, and Coburn was thrown to the floor. She toiled for a few more minutes before Coburn decided on another method. Using a bath towel, she twisted it around William's neck and dragged him into the hall. ▶

**By now, fire had spread to the west end of the hall. Flames and upper segments of the walls burned easily as they were full of a cotton material for insulation and covered with wallpaper.**



Here, Coburn found Minckler had not gone to safety and was still standing along the north wall, dazed and mumbling to himself.

Smoke weighed down on them ominously and the draft pushed flames to the ceiling of William's room. As conditions worsened, the two other nurses on duty removed patients out through windows.

"Keep your mouth closed," Coburn instructed a murmuring Minkler, before she pushed him forward with one arm and dragged William with the other.

A sharp pain pinged Coburn's neck, shoulders, and arms -- her clothes had caught fire.

Battling the excruciating sensations, and struggling to maintain control of the

disillusioned men, Coburn's remained steadfast in her conviction to get her patients to safety.

She continued toward the kitchen, but the screen door offering exit was locked.

Undeterred, Coburn maintained her hold on the father and son, making her way to the dining room and then out to a screened porch. A man who was never identified met Coburn at the door and threw a coat around her shoulders to extinguish the fire burning on her uniform.

About this time, Coburn became aware that her hair was also burning. She had been wearing a celluloid comb, a decorative hair piece made of synthetic materials prone to combustion, and it had ignited.

Coburn's injuries included third-degree and minor burns on her neck, shoulders, arms, left ear, and a portion of her cheeks, and smoke inhalation. Case investigator Floto noted that she had undergone continuous treatment after the incident

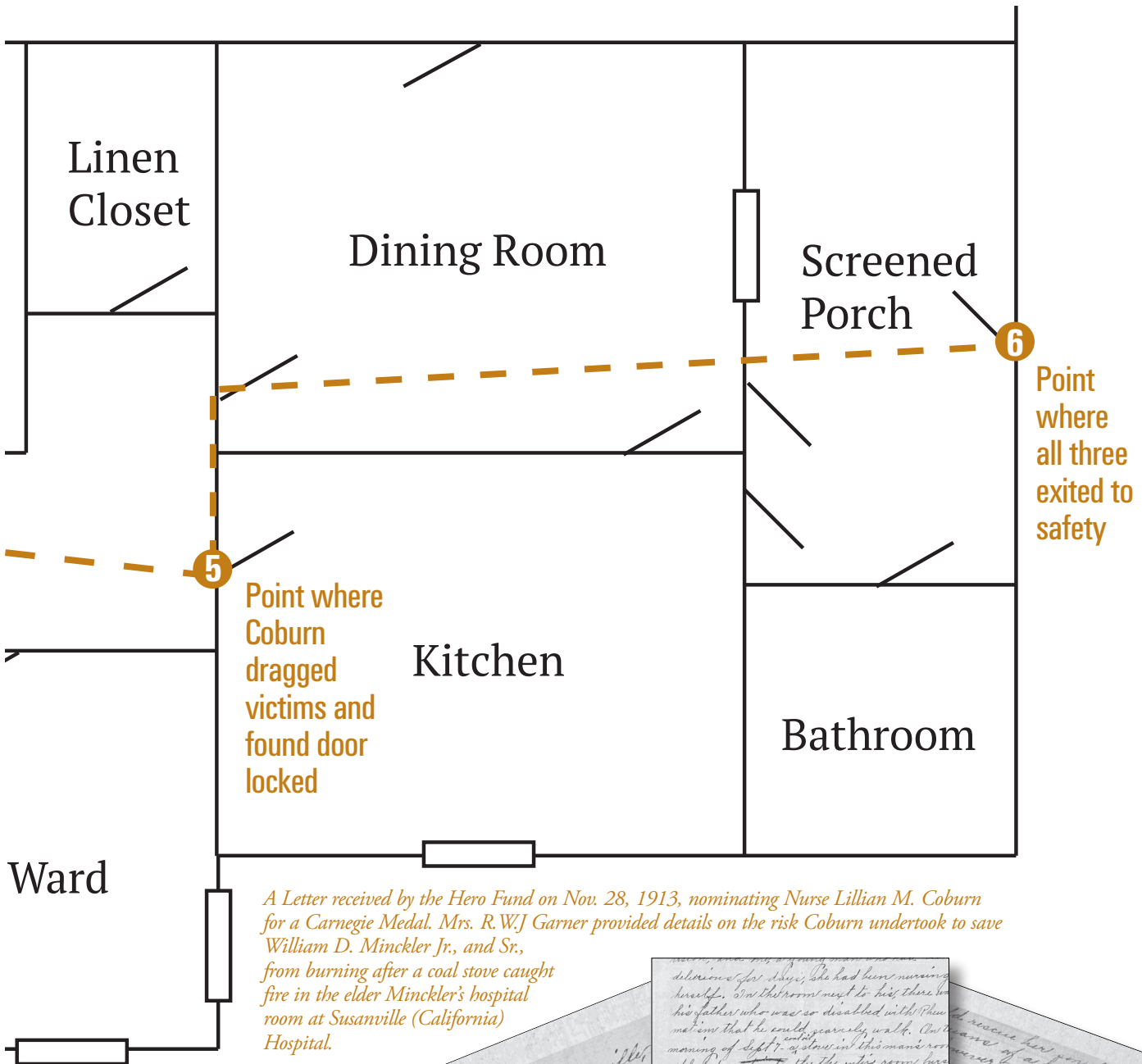
There was no doubt Coburn had risked her life to an extraordinary degree to save the Mincklers, and well beyond her professional responsibility, as Floto's report to the Commission clearly proved.

Coburn was awarded the silver Carnegie medal and a \$1,100 grant. From 1914-1919, the Hero Fund supported Coburn and her son with beneficiary payments.



— Abby Brady, *Operations and Outreach Assistant/Archivist*





*A Letter received by the Hero Fund on Nov. 28, 1913, nominating Nurse Lillian M. Coburn for a Carnegie Medal. Mrs. R.W.J Garner provided details on the risk Coburn undertook to save William D. Minckler Jr., and Sr., from burning after a coal stove caught fire in the elder Minckler's hospital room at Susanville (California) Hospital.*

**WITH HER ARMS, ONE AROUND EACH SHE DRAGGED THESE TWO THRU THE FLAMES TO SAFETY, AT TERRIBLE COST TO HERSELF FOR SHE RECEIVED BURNS FROM THE EFFECT OF WHICH, IT IS NOT LIKELY SHE WILL EVER FULLY RECOVER.**



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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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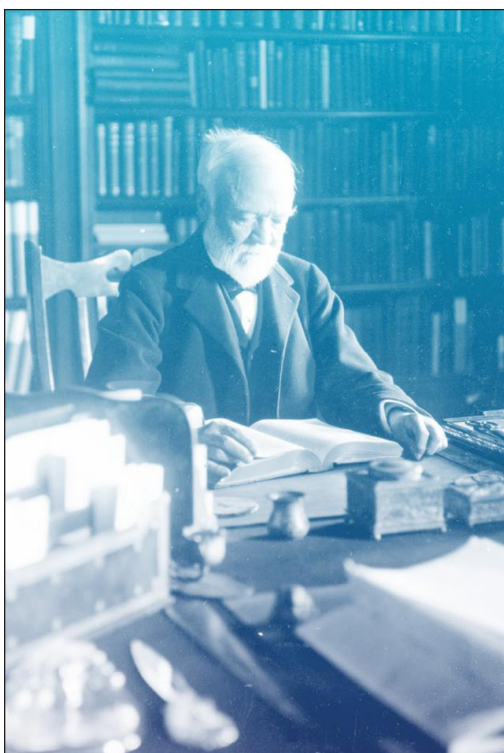
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**THE QUOTABLE A.C.***My heart is in the work.***CONTINUUM**

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**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.

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