



# Impulse

A periodic newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission  
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## BEHIND THE SCENES

### 'A MOMENT OF RESONANCE' – NEW COMMISSION EMPLOYEE JOINS COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

For as long as I can remember, I've been obsessed with larger-than-life tales of heroism and adventure. I read *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* as a teenager and dreamt of the crystal-clear water and white sand beaches of the Aegean, replaying battles of note in my young, burgeoning mind. Into adulthood, I've retained that fascination with heroes and the stories that unite us around our common understanding of selflessness and altruism.



Colin Cavada

I majored in creative and professional writing at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg. While there, I continued to unearth stories of heroism in novels and magazines and newspapers. As I grew older, my love for larger-than-life characters faded. In its place, a new love for the characters that were as normal as you or me took its place, bringing with it an appreciation for those people who, when faced with an obstacle, rise to meet and overcome it. It is those stories that consume my imagination today.

When I applied for the open communications assistant job, I did not know about the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission. I investigated its website, perused the Deed of Trust, read ► p. 14



Grandsons Don and Jeremy Reynolds mount the Carnegie Medal grave marker on Carnegie Hero **Albert E. Johnson's** headstone in Powell, Wyoming, while Jeremy's family – from left, daughter Trinity, wife, Kathy Coleman, and son Ezekial — look on in the background. Also present was Don's wife, Brenda.

## Heroic ancestors honored over Independence Day weekend

Although more than 1,000 miles and nearly 100 years apart, the graves of two more Carnegie heroes were marked this past Independence Day weekend with a bronze medallion honoring their extraordinary heroism thanks to research done by their descendants.

In Powell, Wyoming, the Reynolds family started researching their family tree during the COVID-19 lockdown, eventually discovering their ancestor **Albert E. Johnson**, who posthumously received the silver Carnegie Medal in 1911.

Despite warnings, Johnson, a 47-year-old farmer of Powell and father of seven children, insisted on being lowered to the bottom of a 50-foot well, where Frederick A. Herbaldsheimer, 28, had been overcome by gas and collapsed on Feb. 14, 1910, in Powell. With those gathered at the top of the well unable to see the activity at the well's bottom, they hoisted the rope about 15 minutes later. Apparently, Johnson had untied the rope from his own body and tied it around Herbaldsheimer to be pulled to safety, but Herbaldsheimer died before he could be brought to safety. Johnson was later retrieved from the well, revived, but he also died that evening. ► p. 3



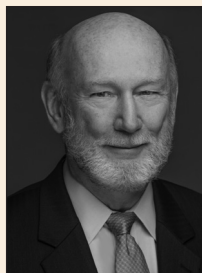
## BOARD NOTES

### COMMISSION BEGINS NEW CHAPTER

By Mark Laskow, Chair  
Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

And so it goes ...

There are big changes underway at the Hero Fund. "Good governance," complete with all associated "best practices," has caught up with us. In June



Mark Laskow

I completed my last year as Chair of the Hero Fund and the Commission elected Hero Fund President Eric Zahren to serve in that additional role. This is a big change in my life, and one that carries a lot of emotional impact.

For the Hero Fund it is part of larger, carefully planned changes that will prepare us to pursue our mission with even more energy. I have served as President or Chair of the Hero Fund (same job, different titles) since 2001. Those 21 years represent about 18 percent of the Hero Fund's history, and I've been a member of the Hero Fund Commission for almost 25 percent of its history. Long, lovely, and just enough!

When I say that my retirement has had an emotional impact on me, I mean a good impact. It has been the experience of a lifetime to know and work with the Hero Fund staff, the members of the Hero Fund Commission and, most of all, the Carnegie heroes themselves. I will write specifically about the personal aspects of this in a later *Impulse*, but first let me describe the changes at the Hero Fund and what they mean for the organization.

During the last year the Hero Fund Commission has discussed, debated, and adopted a policy limiting reelection of board members after age 75. This has become very common for the boards of America's businesses and nonprofit organizations, and 75 might be the most common age limit among nonprofits. For us, though, this move went beyond theories of governance and was an effort to tune up the organization for continued growth in the way we do our job – the mission Andrew Carnegie laid on us in 1904. That core mission never changes, but we constantly search for ways to do it better. ►



From second from left, Hero Fund Commission members Ann M. McGuinn, Frank Brooks Robinson, Sybil P. Veeder, and Robert J. Cindrich display their emeritus pins received from Vice Chair Nancy L. Rackoff (far left) and President Eric P. Zahren (far right) at the Hero Fund's 118th annual meeting held June 21 at the Duquesne Club in downtown Pittsburgh.

## Commission elects new chair, celebrates emeritus board members

After serving at the helm of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission for the past 21 years, Chair Mark Laskow stepped down at the Hero Fund Commission's annual meeting, held June 21. Elected to a newly created position, chair emeritus, Laskow was replaced with Hero Fund President Eric Zahren as Board chair, while retaining his position as president.

Laskow became the head of the Commission in December 2001 as president (2001 to 2014) and then chair (2014-2022). The change in Commission leadership is the first in more than 20 years, and Zahren becomes only the eighth leader of the Commission in its 118-year history. Laskow, who will remain a member of the Commission, was unanimously elected Chair Emeritus, the first to hold the title.

Laskow was elected to the Commission in 1992. He oversaw the Commission's centennial observance in 2004, largely conceived the Carnegie Hero Funds World Committee, on which he served as co-chair, and led the Hero Fund in its celebration of 10,000 heroes in 2018. During his years of service, 2,612 Carnegie Medals have been awarded to individuals who risked death or severe injury to save the lives of others.

Zahren joined the Commission board in 2015 following a 25-year federal government career as a member of the U.S. Secret Service. He became the Commission's Executive Director in 2016 and President in 2017.

In addition, at the annual meeting, six Commission members were lauded for their years of service as Commission members and received emeritus member status.

Together, A.H. Burchfield, Robert J. Cindrich, Priscilla J. McCrady, Ann M. McGuinn, Frank Brooks Robinson, and Sybil P. Veeder served 194 years on the Commission, "fulfilling Mr. Carnegie's vision for the Fund," stated a resolution of the Hero Fund. Cindrich was elected to the board in 2012; McGuinn and Veeder in 1992; McCrady and Burchfield in 1989 and 1987, respectively; and Brooks Robinson in 1966 — serving 56 years on the Commission.

"These board members have contributed wisdom and guidance to the Commission for many decades, and we are grateful for their service all these years," said board chairman Eric Zahren. "Their status as emeritus members will keep them close to the Commission, so we may continue to benefit from their institutional knowledge and kinship." ❀



► from p.1

## Heroic ancestors honored

Only 617 silver medals were awarded by the Commission before the conclusion of the gold, silver, and bronze medal program in 1980. The Commission provided a monthly grant to Johnson's widow and children until 1914. Johnson is buried in Crown Hill Cemetery in Powell.

The Reynolds – great, great, great grandson Jeremy Reynolds, his partner Kathy Coleman, and their children Ezekial and Trinity; and great, great grandson Don Reynolds and his wife Brenda – traveled about 110 miles from their hometown in Sheridan to Powell to mount the grave marker on Johnson's headstone.

For them, discovering their ancestry in Wyoming validated why they feel drawn to the Cowboy State.

"Wyoming has always been my home. But it's also in our DNA. It's in our blood," Don Reynolds told the *Powell Tribune* for a [July 7 article](#).

"I've always felt at home in Wyoming," Jeremy Reynolds added.

More than 1,000 miles away in Haskell, Texas, family of Carnegie Hero **Burnell Gilleland** placed a grave marker on his headstone located in Willow Cemetery.

"We just wanted to honor my dad with that on his headstone," said Sheila Griffin, Gilleland's daughter. "Whenever the grandkids return to visit they'll be able to see it and remember the honor."

Gilleland died in 1997 attempting to save his 23-year-old grandson from suffocation at the bottom of a water well. Griffin's son, Walter H. McMeans, was helping his grandfather remove a pump from the well and lost consciousness inside. Gilleland immediately climbed into the well to try to remove McMeans, but also lost consciousness. According to the Hero Fund's 1999 investigation, the family did not know that the well's atmosphere had been contaminated by gas. Other family members summoned help, but by the time rescue workers removed the two men from the well, they could not be revived.

With Griffin in mounting the grave marker was her husband Luke, daughter Misty Gibson with her husband Paul and step-son Will, and sister Susan Blanks with her husband Terry.

Griffin said son-in-law Paul Gibson found out about the Hero Fund's grave marker program through its website.

The Hero Fund offers grave markers to the families of Carnegie Medal recipients who have died. The 3.75-inch medallions are cast in the likeness of the Carnegie Medal and can be mounted onto a headstone or urn.

For more information, see <https://www.carnegiehero.org/heroes/resources-for-awardees/grave-markers/>. ☼

—Jewels Phraner, communications director



*Family members of Carnegie Hero **Burnell Gilleland** gather around Gilleland's Haskell, Texas, headstone after mounting the Carnegie Medal grave marker on it. Kneeling is granddaughter Misty Gibson with Gilleland's daughters Sheila Griffin and Susan Blanks standing behind the headstone.*

► from p.2

### BOARD NOTES

When I got involved with the Hero Fund in 1993, it was just finishing up changes intended to deal with two problems that threatened its mission. A very conservative investment policy had limited its financial resources and changes in the American workforce had made it too expensive to investigate cases using its traditional traveling field investigators.

The Hero Fund Commission recognized the seriousness of these problems and brought aboard two individuals who turned it all around. First, the Commission elected Bob Off, a banker, as president. Bob in turn hired Walter Rutkowski who eventually became executive director and later president.

Walter revamped the investigation process, using modern communications tools to conduct high-quality case investigations from the office. Bob also installed a younger member of the Commission, Tom Wentling, as chair of the investment committee. Tom quickly revamped the investment approach and produced excellent results over several decades. Today the Hero Fund enjoys adequate and safe financial resources to carry out its mission. I cannot emphasize enough how the work of these individuals made possible all that followed.

When I succeeded Bob Off as president, Walter Rutkowski effectively functioned as chief executive with broad freedom to act. Walter expanded the public exposure of the Hero Fund. He created *Impulse*, and during his tenure the Hero Fund ► p. 16

I am happy to step aside for the next wave of leadership, and I am confident they will do well because they will be energized by the same thing that drove their predecessors – the awesome spirit of the Carnegie heroes.





## PRESENTING



Photo by Tom Bratton/Bergman's office.

From left, U.S. Rep. Jack Bergman, on June 29, presents the Carnegie Medal to heroes **Justin Leland Perry** and **Jason Hadfield** for their role in the July 25, 2020, rescue of a 5-year-old girl from drowning in Lake Michigan after the floatie she was on drifted several hundred feet away from shore and then flipped, tossing the girl in the water.

Both taking children's flotation devices, Perry, a 33-year-old musician from Interlochen, Michigan, and Hadfield, 42, a creative director of Kingsley, Michigan, swam to the girl and then brought her to shore.

"Good men stepping up to help others," Bergman later posted in a [Facebook post](#) about the presentation.

The presentation was held at Bergman's Traverse City, Michigan, office. Bergman represents Michigan's first district.



LEFT: From left, Hero Fund President Eric Zahren presents the posthumous Carnegie Medal for **Ricky Lee Sneve** to his mother, Nicole Eufers, and father, Chad Sneve, at a ceremony on July 23 at the Hudson Community Center in Hudson, S.D. Ricky Lee, 10, drowned while rescuing his 5-year-old sister, Chevelle, after she struggled in the Big Sioux River in Hudson on June 12, 2021.

"In honoring someone so young, we hope to add some comfort - while knowing full well that it cannot replace a lost loved one or fill the hole that is created by their loss," Zahren said during the presentation. "In Ricky Lee's case, he started our healing process himself by providing hope through his selfless sacrifice, but the faith part is up to us."

BELOW: Ricky and his sister Chevelle.





PRESENTING



Lenny and Kristi Gravois, parents of **Layne Paul Gravois**, hold his Carnegie Medal as the young hero's siblings, Addison and Collin, look on during a ceremony at the Bayou Country Club in Thibodaux, Louisiana, on July 5.

State Rep. Beryl Amedee was among those who gathered to honor Gravois, of Gray, Louisiana, who died attempting to save two children from drowning in the Gulf of Mexico off Miramar Beach, Florida, on April 8, 2021.

Gravois, a 21-year-old student at Louisiana State University, was with a group of friends when they learned of distressed swimmers in the turbulent gulf surf. Gravois and some friends entered the water and soon a human chain was formed from shore in an attempt to reach those who were struggling. Buffeted by heavy waves, Gravois was removed from the water by others and was taken to a hospital, where he died the following day.

Further information about the children was not confirmed following the incident, in which 11 people needed medical attention on the beach.

"It's one thing when someone will jump in on behalf of a family member, a loved one, a friend, but when somebody will jump into waters and it's just to try to rescue people that they've never even met, I mean, that's just completely selfless," Amedee [told a reporter](#) for WGNO in New Orleans.

Photo courtesy of Louisiana state Rep. Beryl Amedee.



U.S. Rep. Tom Emmer, left, is pictured with Carnegie Hero **Marena L. Kouba** and Hero Fund President Eric Zahren, at her award presentation on July 22 at Fire Lake Grill House in Bloomington, Minnesota. Kouba was awarded the Carnegie Medal for her July 19, 2020, act in which she rescued Eric E.J. Benac and two children from drowning in Lake Superior in Marquette, Michigan.

"Love is the greatest power in the universe," said Zahren during the presentation, while referring to the verse from John 15:13 that appears on every Carnegie Medal. "Risking one's own life to save another human life is the full and greatest possible exercise of that love."

Benac, an 11-year-old boy, and a 10-year-old girl were wading atop a shoal in Lake Superior when a swift current carried Benac and the girl into deep water. The boy swam toward them and also became caught in the current. The boy and girl screamed for help. Despite rough water in the lake, Kouba, 21, college student, dived from the shoal and swam several hundred feet to Benac, and told him to hold onto her. Kouba, with Benac holding her hand, then swam to the boy and girl who were nearby. As they floated supine atop the water's surface, Kouba told the boy and girl to take hold of her hand, and she swam, using one arm and kicking with her legs, toward shore. Kouba yelled out for someone to bring rescue equipment, and others on shore swam about 100 feet to reach them. They assisted Benac, the boy, and the girl to the beach.

Emmer represents Minnesota's sixth district.





## PRESENTING



Maura Rosengren, left, accepts the Carnegie Medal posthumously awarded to her husband, **Peter Rosengren**, from Corinne Pierog, chairperson of the Kane County, Illinois, Board on July 12 at a ceremony held at the Kane County government center in Geneva, Illinois.

On March 28, 2021, Rosengren, of Batavia, Illinois, died after helping to rescue a 9-year-old boy from drowning in the Gulf of Mexico near Miramar Beach, Florida. After the boy was carried away from shore and into deeper water, Rosengren, a 42-year-old newspaper executive who was in the boy's party, left the beach and swam to him. Although Rosengren reached the boy, he was unable to tow him to safety before they separated. Others brought the boy and then Rosengren, who was unresponsive, back to the beach. While the boy was treated at a hospital, attempts to revive Rosengren were unsuccessful, as he had drowned.

Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke and Scott Stone, president and chief operating officer of the *Daily Herald*, where Rosengren worked, joined Kane County officials in recognizing Rosengren. "Pete loved life, and he was bigger than life," Stone said, according to the newspaper. "He was a great man, and he'd be honored by what you're doing here today."

Photo courtesy of Kane County.

Lynn Deutsch, mayor of Dunwoody, Ga., far right, presents the posthumous Carnegie Medal to the family of **Kim A. McGrady**. From left, McGrady's son Colton, daughter Kayleigh, and wife, Leigh Anne, wait to accept the medal at a ceremony on July 25 at Dunwoody City Hall. McGrady drowned April 8, 2021, while attempting to save people struggling in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Miramar Beach, Fla.

"Kim's life was dedicated to his family, his friends, his faith, and service to others," said Deutsch. "His act of heroism came as no surprise to those who knew him best."

After turbulent water conditions off the coast of Miramar Beach, Fla., swept a group of children away from the shore, several onlookers entered the water to rescue them. The waves crashed with tremendous force and required a human chain to save some of the swimmers in distress. McGrady told his wife that he saw someone struggling away from the chain before running into the water to assist. The son stated that he saw McGrady aiding a man at a point about 145 feet from shore, but ultimately his family lost track of him and he was pulled from the water by others. He was unresponsive and could not be revived.

At the ceremony, Kayleigh McGrady represented the family in expressing gratitude.

"I want to thank the Carnegie Hero Fund for their dedication to research and for granting this award to my dad," she said. "Thanks to them we get to continue talking about my dad's story and raising awareness for ocean safety. As much as it is an honor to have a hero as a dad, we want to use the visibility of this award to make sure that other people like my dad can continue to live and enjoy life without having to risk it to become a hero."







From left, **Robert K. Barth**; Lindsey, Cameron, and Melissa Bauer; and **Terry R. Pease** pose for a photograph at Cameron's high school graduation party. Melissa was four weeks pregnant with Cameron at the time of a highway accident, in which Barth and Pease rescued her and daughter Lindsey from burning.

## Families remain close decades after traumatic rescue

It's been nearly 20 years since the accident in which Carnegie heroes **Terry R. Pease** and **Robert K. Barth** rescued a woman and her 3-year-old daughter from a burning vehicle in Cambria, Wisconsin, but Pease still gets choked up when he thinks about that night.

"Our families remain close," Pease wrote in an email to the Commission. "It has been almost 19 years but seems like only yesterday, and the accident remains vivid in my mind. Although the memories are haunting, we are proud that we can get together, and share our love for each other, as we watch the children reach milestones in their lives."

Recently the group gathered to celebrate the graduation of Cameron Bauer, who was in utero at the time of the accident.

Barth said his dad had died two days earlier, and that he and lifelong friend Pease were on their way to a hardware store on Aug. 25, 2003, to pick up supplies to fix some items at the house before the wake when they came across the accident.

Melissa M. Bauer, 26, and 3-year-old Lindsey were inside a car that had left the highway and caught fire. Bauer's legs were trapped in the wreckage and flames had entered the car through the broken-out windshield, setting the visors and ceiling of the car's interior on fire. Bauer was four weeks pregnant with Cameron at the time.

Pease said he didn't have much time to think before jumping in the car, but his mind did flash to a burn victim whom he came to know on his childhood paper route, and the memory of her made him fear for Bauer's life.

"We're not going to let her burn," he remembers shouting to Barth as they worked on freeing Bauer and Lindsey.

As they approached the car, Pease opened the back door to remove

### OVERHEARD

We saw the knife, and me and Marvin, we went quick to take it right away – **Jose L. Casanova**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10089

I knew that with these old trailers, they're just bonfires in waiting. – **Phillip H. DiLuca**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10104

I saw one cop trying to bash the window to get to her, so I stopped, ran across to give him a hand. Flames were coming right over the dashboard, burning her legs. – **Robert M. Hosey**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10113

I just wanted her to stop. I just didn't want her to hurt anybody. – **Nathan Scott Wanhala**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10114

The smoke was just howling back at me. – **Steven W. Fitzpatrick**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10120

My husband literally BENT the truck door getting him out. With the power of God. – wife of **Danny Lee Tiger**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10135

I thought, you know, if I get burned or catch on fire, I can always get out of the way of the fire or whatever. But you know, she was stuck. She was hanging upside down. She had no way to get out. So I thought to myself, 'I'm going to do whatever it takes to get her out of there.' – **Jason J. Hahn**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10263

Going into this, I didn't think I was going to come close to losing my life, and towards the end of this fight, I realized the dog had the better of me. – **Evan Daniel Townsley**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10274

I looked down, he just had a revolver pointed at them. I wish I could say what I was thinking but I don't know what I was thinking when I did it. – **Wyatt Tucker Shields**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10296

Someone had said out loud, 'Does anybody know how to swim?' And I was just like, 'Oh, I guess that's me.' And then I jumped in. – **Anthony Stephen Capuano**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10300

I knew it was close, but I couldn't leave him on the tracks. There was no way. I had to get him out. – **Lewis A. Medina**, Carnegie Medal awardee #10302





#### LATEST AWARDEES OF THE CARNEGIE MEDAL



*Since the last issue of Impulse, the following 16 individuals have been awarded the Carnegie Medal, bringing the total number of recipients to 10,307 since the Hero Fund's inception in 1904. The latest awards were announced June 28. The next announcement will be made in September.*

On May 22, 2019, **Jacob M. Smith**, a 27-year-old real estate professional, escaped his burning Arlington, Washington, home through a second-floor bedroom window. After reaching safety, he learned that his 51-year-old mother, Wendy Smith, was still inside the home. Smith reentered the house through the garage, where he was forced to the floor due to heavy smoke and blistering heat. Crawling, he moved toward the stairs and found Wendy unconscious in a coat closet. Smith entered the closet, held Wendy under her arms, and stood, but was burned by nearby flames. He went back to his hands and knees and moving backward toward the garage, he dragged Wendy with him. At the garage, another man helped move Wendy to the yard. Wendy was hospitalized for one month with serious burns to the left side of her body and her airway. Smith was hospitalized one week for smoke inhalation and second-degree burns to his nose, ears, arms, and hands. He also suffered a corneal abrasion. He recovered.



**William Werts, Jr.**, 56, of New Castle, Delaware, a maintenance worker for a Wilmington, Delaware, apartment complex, rushed to the scene of a Nov. 25, 2020, fire in a second-story unit as intense flames issued out the front windows. Bystanders told Werts that a 58-year-old woman remained inside, and Werts rushed to the front door of the unit, where he was immediately repelled by intense smoke. As he retreated outside for air, debris fell on him. Werts then ran to the back of the building and ascended a fire escape, entering the unit's kitchen through an open door. There he crawled with a fire extinguisher toward a bedroom, calling for the woman, who responded that she could not move to him. As he continued toward the bedroom, the woman stopped answering. At the door to the bedroom, Werts sprayed the extinguisher at flames in the door frame, but conditions worsened and smoke intensified. Werts backed toward the door; another man who had entered the kitchen assisted Werts to safety. Firefighters extinguished the fire; the woman did not survive. Werts sustained an inhalation injury and a burn on his head. He was hospitalized overnight and recovered.



Restaurant owner Evangela Stanley, 53, was getting ready to lock her Rochester, New York, restaurant on the night of Dec. 23, 2019, when a 27-year-old gunman rushed into the business. Stanley fled and repeatedly screamed for her friend, **Darnell J. Wilson**, a 32-year-old fast food clerk, who was still inside the restaurant. Wilson saw Stanley run past him and turned to confront the assailant who was following her. Wilson punched, kicked, and pushed the assailant back toward the front door, where the assailant stumbled onto his back and twice shot the .40-caliber pistol he was holding. During the struggle, Wilson pushed the assailant through a plate glass window to the outside sidewalk. Wilson followed and was joined by a worker

from the back of the restaurant who had heard the struggle and rushed out the front door to help. Wilson picked up the gun from the sidewalk, and the two men chased, punched, and beat the assailant until he fled the scene. The assailant was arrested later and charged with robbery and possessing the gun. Stanley was not injured. Wilson suffered lacerations from the broken window and was treated at the hospital.



When a 39-year-old, Kitchener, Ontario, man and his 12-year-old daughter struggled on Aug. 27, 2020, in Lake Erie off of Port Colborne, Ontario, **Katelynn Saengdala**, a 32-year-old manufacturing ►



*Photo by John Randolph/Wilmington Fire Department. Flames grew and spread to engulf the entire unit of a Wilmington, Delaware, apartment complex. Maintenance worker for the complex **William Werts, Jr.**, attempted to enter the apartment multiple times, eventually ascending the rear fire escape and entering the apartment there, but flames and smoke made the rescue of the 58-year-old woman inside impossible. Werts was awarded the Carnegie Medal on June 21.*





**Jacob M. Smith**



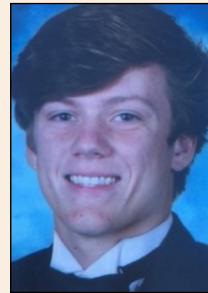
**William Werts, Jr.**



**Darnell J. Wilson**



**Katelynn  
Saengdala**



**Wyatt Tucker  
Shields**



**Jason R. Milks**

worker of Kitchener, immediately responded, despite being in recovery from a spinal fracture suffered in a car accident one month earlier. A rip current had carried the pair away from shore and Saengdala swam after them, reaching them at a point about 50 feet from shore. There the father, Jeremy D. Figueroa, struggled to stay afloat while keeping daughter Laila M. Zorychta from submerging. Saengdala grasped each of them by one arm and kicked to move them toward shore. Towing both of them was taxing and at a point about halfway to shore, where water was still more than 6 feet deep, Saengdala struggled to keep going. She was nearly exhausted. A man with a child's flotation toy arrived and aided Figueroa and Laila the remaining distance to shore. Saengdala exited the water on her own. Figueroa had swallowed

water, was nearly exhausted and short of breath, and was taken by ambulance to the hospital. Laila was checked at the scene by medics but did not need further treatment. Saengdala suffered back pain for the following month after the incident, but she recovered.



A man harassed Kevin Alkinburg, 24, who was walking on a public street with his female partner, 23, in Washington, District of Columbia, July 31, 2021. The man demanded the couple kiss and followed them for about 50 feet, eventually aiming a fully loaded revolver at Alkinburg's midsection. A 22-year-old law firm intern, **Wyatt Tucker Shields**, of Atlanta, saw the assailant aim the gun at Alkinburg and ran toward the assailant, tackling him to the

ground as the gun discharged. The gun clattered away and was removed from the assailant's reach. Alkinburg and Shields held the assailant to the ground until police arrived. Shields chipped some teeth and cut his lip in the altercation, and he lost hearing in his left ear for a month from the gunshot, but he recovered. The assailant was arrested, pled guilty to several related crimes, and was sentenced to about a year in prison.



A 35-year-old woman was swimming on May 26, 2020, in the 50-degree Pacific Ocean off of Seaside, Oregon, with a kickboard when she was pulled away from shore and shouted for help. Clam-digging nearby, **Jason R. Milks**, 40, responded. He ran 300 feet down the beach, removed his chest-high waders ►



The fiery wreckage of a pickup truck that left a Westmoreland, New York, highway, struck a utility pole, and overturned onto its roof. **Andrew Parent** and **Roger Combs** stepped over a sparking and smoldering, downed electrical wire and pulled the burning 72-year-old driver free of the truck, dragging him away from the fire.





## LATEST AWARDEES

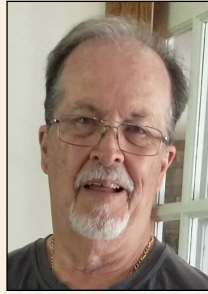
and other outer clothing, grabbed another kickboard and entered the water. Milks swam 450 feet to the woman, and instructed her to balance her chest on her kickboard and grab his ankles. Milks released his kickboard, and it floated away. He swam toward shore towing the woman, but every time a wave crashed over them, he stood upright in the water and held to the woman so they would not get separated, before he began swimming again. The woman was taken to the hospital and treated for hypothermia; she recovered. Milks was cold and nearly exhausted.



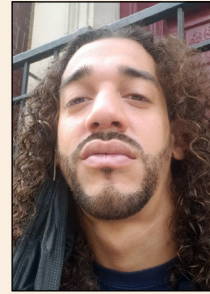
A 72-year-old man was driving a pickup truck on June 21, 2021, when it left a Westmoreland, New York, highway, struck a utility pole, overturned onto its roof, and came to rest with the top portion of the utility pole on its undercarriage. A fire broke out engulfing the truck's undercarriage and a downed electrical wire along the grass shoulder sparked and smoldered. A passing motorist in a tow truck, **Andrew Parent**, 65, business owner, found Jack H. Pylman, whose upper body was severely burned, screaming for help



*Andrew Parent*



*Roger Combs*



*Anthony Stephen Capuano*



*Antonio Raul Rivera*

at the driver's window, where his lower body was pinned inside the truck. The fire was intense. Parent stepped over the wire and approached the truck but, despite his best efforts, was unable to pull Pylman free or put out the fire with extinguishers. As Parent called for help from bystanders, **Roger Combs**, a 74-year-old retired information technology specialist, approached the truck despite popping sounds. He stepped over the wire, and, with Parent and Combs each grasping Pylman's arms and hands, they pulled Pylman free and dragged him about 15 feet. Arriving medics tended to Pylman, who was taken to a hospital. He died one week later.



A 68-year-old man remained in the driver's seat of his car after it plunged into Newark

Bay near Bayonne, New Jersey, on Nov. 10, 2020. As Joseph M. Kadian screamed that he didn't know how to swim, **Anthony Stephen Capuano**, a 29-year-old aquatic program administrator, responded. Removing his prosthetic lower leg, Capuano climbed a fence, scrambled over large rocks at the water's edge and entered the 50-degree water, swimming to the driver's door of the car. With water up to Kadian's waist, Capuano grasped Kadian under the arms and pulled him through the opened driver's window, as water entered the passenger compartment, sinking the vehicle's front end. Capuano positioned Kadian on his back and swam toward shore. By then, another man had entered the water and swam to them to assist Capuano. Other bystanders on the rock helped lift Kadian from the water. Capuano was nearly exhausted, dizzy, and cold after the rescue, but he recovered. ►



*A sports utility vehicle comes to rest after a collision with a train threw it 1,000 feet from the Aurora, Illinois, tracks on Oct. 9, 2021. Five seconds before the train struck the vehicle, Carnegie Medal recipient **Lewis A. Medina** pulled the 72-year-old, unresponsive driver from the car, clearing him from the tracks.*





**Lewis A. Medina**



**Anthony Peterkin**



**Jaden DeShawn Peterkin**



**Ross C. Johnson**



**Adam Layman Thomas**



**Brandon Bair**



A 64-year-old man fled his home April 21, 2021, after his 26-year-old son stabbed him in the head. Collapsing in his Bolingbrook, Illinois, front yard, the man screamed for help. The assailant followed him and repeatedly stabbed at the man's upper body as they struggled on the grass. Neighbor **Antonio Raul Rivera**, a 50-year-old nonprofit organization executive, responded. He rushed the assailant, grabbed his arm to prevent him from stabbing the man again, and tackled him to the ground. Rivera secured the assailant to the ground while another neighbor removed the knife from the scene and others applied first aid until police and other first-responders arrived. Arriving police took the assailant into custody. The man was hospitalized for about three weeks as he recovered from wounds to his head, neck, and back and the partial amputation of a finger.



**Lewis A. Medina**, a 60-year-old construction driver of Aurora, Illinois, was driving in Aurora on the night of Oct. 9, 2021, when he spotted a sports utility vehicle on a train track. Parking, he called 911 to report the vehicle, but shortly a train, traveling at 40 m.p.h., approached on the same track. Medina ran to the SUV and shouted for the driver to leave the vehicle, but the 72-year-old man was unresponsive. As the crossing alarms sounded and the gates at a nearby intersection descended, Medina pulled open the driver's door, unbuckled the driver's seat belt and, bear-hugging him, pulled him from the car. He fell to the track, and Medina tugged at his clothes to clear him from the rails before rolling him down a hill to safety. The train struck the SUV, throwing it about 1,000 feet away.



A father-and-son team sustained injuries after removing an 88-year-old man who had

collapsed in his burning Fayetteville, North Carolina, home on April 11, 2021. Russell D. Cox was lying on the floor of his kitchen after fire broke out at the rear of the home. Neighbors **Anthony Peterkin**, 52, a training technician, and his son, **Jaden DeShawn Peterkin**, a 17-year-old high school student, ran through the home's attached garage to an interior door. From there, the older Peterkin proceeded to the home's kitchen where flames engulfed the floor, ceiling, and walls. Crawling, Peterkin found Cox and dragged him toward the garage door where Jaden assisted. Peterkin and Jaden placed Cox on a small rug and dragged him from the home. Cox sustained smoke inhalation and serious burns to his legs and back; he died the next day. Peterkin was hospitalized for two days for smoke inhalation; he recovered. Jaden, who inhaled smoke and experienced an irritated throat, was examined at a hospital. He recovered.



**Anthony Stephen Capuano** removes his prosthetic leg to swim at the Jewish Community Center in Bayonne, New Jersey, where he administers an aquatic children's program through the British Swim School. In November 2020, Capuano rescued a 68-year-old man from his submerging car after it plunged into the 50-degree Newark Bay near Bayonne. Photo courtesy of CBS New York.





## LATEST AWARDEES

A 13-year-old was carried 450 feet from shore by a rip current in the Atlantic Ocean off of Neptune Beach, Florida, on May 17, 2020. Rough conditions made it difficult for him to stay afloat. Nineteen-year-old college student, **Ross C. Johnson** of Jacksonville, Florida, was at the beach and, upon seeing the boy, entered the water despite 4-foot waves. He swam to the boy, grasped his forearm and towed him back toward shore, but the boy repeatedly submerged him in an effort to keep himself above the surface of the water. Johnson repositioned the boy, to hold him across the chest and then back-stroked toward the beach. At about 75 feet from shore, Johnson was nearly exhausted and struggled with keeping them both above the water's surface, but two men took the boy from Johnson and brought him to the beach.



From a bicycle trail along a Louisville, Kentucky, road, a 36-year-old woman climbed over a railing and entered the swollen, swift-flowing Ohio River on Jan. 13. As the woman swam in the 41-degree water away from the near bank, multiple bystanders congregated on the trail. **Adam Layman Thomas**, a 34-year-old business owner of Louisville, who stopped his vehicle on the road, went to confer with them. Removing his outer clothing, Thomas also climbed over the railing and entered the river. As he swam toward the woman, she continued moving downstream. Shortly, Thomas struggled and ultimately submerged. The woman, who reached the vicinity of an island before witnesses lost sight of her, has yet to be located and is presumed dead. Nearly three months later, authorities recovered Thomas from the river about 100 miles from the scene. He had drowned.



Steven W. Jensen, 25, remained pinned and severely injured in the driver's seat of a semi-truck that, in a May 6, 2021, accident with a train in St. Anthony, Idaho,

overturned onto its driver's side and was propelled about a quarter-mile along the railroad tracks before coming to a stop. As fire burned at the truck's front end by the front of the train and dark smoke issued, Jensen was unable to free himself. Among those who stopped at the scene, retired NFL defensive end **Brandon Bair**, 36, St. Anthony business owner, responded, hearing Jensen calling out. Entering to his waist through the truck's broken-out rear windshield, Bair removed Jensen's seat belt, pushed the steering wheel away from Jensen, and grasped him under the arms. As Jensen used his feet to push off, Bair withdrew from the truck, pulling Jensen with him until he was outside the truck. Bair aided Jensen off the tracks then, with help from another man, moved Jensen farther away as the fire grew to consume the truck. Jensen, who suffered burns to his legs and other injuries, was flown to a hospital and underwent treatment for about three weeks. Bair was not injured. ❄️



*An overturned tractor-trailer burns after being hit by a train and pushed along the track for a quarter-mile. Retired NFL defensive end Brandon Bair responded to the accident and partially entered the burning truck. He released the driver's seat belt, pushed the wreckage away from the driver, and then dragged him from the truck.*

*Inset photo: Defensive end for the Philadelphia Eagles, Brandon Bair jogs onto Lincoln Financial Field for an Aug. 21, 2014, game against the Pittsburgh Steelers on the Eagles' home turf. The Eagles won the game 31-21. Photo courtesy of the Philadelphia Eagles.*



## FRIENDS REMEMBERED

Earl C. Moorman, 79, of Auburn, Illinois, died Saturday, March 30, 2019, at St. John's Hospital in Springfield, Illinois.

In 2015, Carnegie Hero **Ashley Marie Aldridge** pulled Moorman from his motorized wheelchair that had become stuck on the railroad tracks at a crossing near his home. With a train traveling at 78 m.p.h. bearing down on them, Aldridge lifted him from the chair and backed away with him seconds before the train struck the wheelchair destroying it.



*Photo by Ted Schurter/The State Journal-Register. Ashley Marie Aldridge, right, hugs Earl Moorman, whom she saved from being struck by a train days earlier.*

Moorman was born Jan. 27, 1940, in Harford, Kentucky, to Earl and Mildred Hurt Moorman. He married Jean Fish on April 27, 1963.

He is survived by his wife; daughter, Dana Beck; two grandchildren, Wyatt and Stephane Beck; and three brothers, Micky, Donald, and Jerry Moorman.

He was preceded in death by one brother, Ken Moorman; and one sister, Janice Brashears. ☼

**Brenda S. Maw**, 70, of Easley, South Carolina, died Saturday, March 5, 2022.

In 1982, Maw received the Carnegie Medal for saving a police officer from being shot.

Maw, at the time a 30-year-old bank department manager, was held hostage during an armed robbery of her Denver bank on Jan. 12, 1982. An arriving police officer, 38-year-old Edward Brooks, ordered the robber to drop his gun, but the robber instead pointed the barrel at the officer. Seizing the opportunity, Maw grasped the gun with both hands and pushed it away, giving the officer time to seek cover. She was later abducted and threatened by the gunman, but she escaped to safety.

Maw was born Oct. 15, 1951, to Ralph Junior Bryant and Mildred Frances Owens Bryant Fricks. She married Paul Maw shortly after she graduated high school in Easley.

She worked in banks for her entire career, eventually spending 20 years at Cornerstone National Bank where she became the Vice President of compliance. She was a member of 5 Point Church in Easley. Her favorite thing to do was to spend time with her grandbabies. She loved her family and will be deeply missed by them.

Maw is survived by her children, Alisha Johnson and Steven Maw; grandchildren, Seth and Katelyn Thompson and Jaxson Maw; and siblings, Larry Bryant and Kathy Watts.

Brenda was preceded in death by her husband of 52 years, Paul Maw; and sister, Peggy Taylor. ☼



## SUBSCRIBE TO NEWSLETTER'S E-LIST

The Hero Fund's quarterly newsletter, *Impulse*, is available, as an electronic PDF that comes to subscribers' inboxes instead of their mailboxes.

If you would like to change your subscription to the paperless, electronic version, please contact [carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org](mailto:carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org).



*Before refinishing.*

*After refinishing.*

## 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 p.1

### 'A MOMENT OF RESONANCE'

hero cases, and dived deeper into the legacy Andrew Carnegie left behind. I discovered an organization with rigorous standards and a devotion to the facts and figures of every case. I found a rich, storied history that spoke for itself. The Hero Fund has lasted for more than a hundred years. It has tirelessly considered tens of thousands of cases and awarded more than 10,000 medals. When I came across that iconic first sentence in the Deed of Trust: "Gentlemen, we live in a heroic age," I felt an intense feeling of recognition – of resonance – that this was where I was supposed to be.

Stories like **John Hooley**, a resident of my hometown of Jeannette, Pennsylvania, who saved two children and attempted to save a third from drowning in a pond near Delmont, Pennsylvania. Hooley, a member of the church where I was baptized, discovered a group of children struggling to tread water nearly 25 feet from the pond's edge and reacted instantly, removing his shoes and shirt and wading into the pond. After successfully reaching the three kids, Hooley obtained a grip on 14-year-old Samuel F. Stephenson, to whom 8-year-old Robert J. Toomer clung, as a third unidentified boy hung onto Hooley's trousers. He swam the three children 10 feet toward safety before being repeatedly dragged under the water. Near exhaustion and short of breath, Hooley was dragged to the bottom of the pond by the weight of Samuel. Soon after, the boy released Hooley, but Hooley struggled to find his footing after the ►

“When I came across the iconic first sentence in the Deed of Trust: 'Gentlemen, we live in a heroic age,' I felt an intense feeling of recognition – of resonance – that this was where I was supposed to be.”



### FRIENDS REMEMBERED



**Joseph W. Alderman**

**Joseph W. Alderman**, 90, of Winchester, Virginia, died Saturday, June 4, 2022, after an arduous battle with Alzheimer's Disease.

In 1966, Alderman, then a 35-year-old engineer-geologist, saved a 16-year-old girl who struggled in a water-filled gravel pit in Piketon, Ohio. Alderman swam, fully clothed, 150 feet to the girl who struggled with him before fainting. He towed her to the bank where she was revived.

Alderman was born in August, 1931, in Wooster, Ohio, to Ovid A. and Ruth Alderman. He graduated in 1949 from Wooster High School. He was a Boy Scout and pitched for the school baseball team. After high school, he served in the Air Force from 1953 to 1955, where he attended weather school. After marrying Barbara Frederick in 1960, he earned a B.A. in geology from the College of Wooster in 1961. Joe worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a geologist for 45 years and retired in 1996.

Flying was Joe's passion. He racked up many hours in small private planes, towing banners over football games, and sharing ownership of planes with friends at the Winchester airport. He was also a flight instructor. He was also an accomplished nature photographer.

Alderman is survived by his wife; children, Karen Todd, Fritz Alderman, and Mark Alderman; grandchildren, Ashley Alderman, Kevin and Ivy Todd; and step-grandchildren Julianna and Samantha Clark. ☹



**Kristian F. Falkenstein**, 44, of Newtown, Pennsylvania, died Monday, June 27, 2022.

In 2017, Falkenstein, then a 39-year-old university development officer, responded to a 32-year-old struggling in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of



**Kristian F. Falkenstein**

Belmar, New Jersey. Despite turbulent ocean conditions, Falkenstein swam about 300 feet to the man and kept him above the water's surface. Although several others with flotation devices, including a police officer and two life guards, swam out to assist Falkenstein with the man, ultimately, they could not leave the rip current and were rescued by a Coast Guard vessel. Falkenstein was later treated at a hospital for effects of near-drowning, but he recovered.

Born in Abington, Pennsylvania, to Karl Jr. and Maria Magri Falkenstein. He attended Chapin School, Grey Nun Academy, Newtown Friends School, and Council Rock High School. A graduate of Villanova University with a bachelor's degree in finance, he went on to earn his master's in education from Holy Family College. According to his family, Falkenstein was successful in many different jobs, but in particular, he was awarded top salesperson for





## FRIENDS REMEMBERED

the Philadelphia territory for the Grand Canyon University. He also modeled and acted, including roles in “The Artist,” “Rush Hour 2,” and “The Last Airbender.”

Falkenstein enjoyed sports and spending time with his friends. He loved animals, nature, music, the outdoors, and any adventure. He was most proud of being a father.

In addition to his parents, Falkenstein is survived by fiancée, Mariya Nikonova; children, Skyler Falkenstein and Alexa Poberezhskaya; and brothers, Karl III, Rick, and Kyle Falkenstein. ☘

**R**yan B. Phillips, 55, of St. Petersburg, Florida, died Wednesday, June 29, 2022.

In 2011, Phillips, then a 43-year-old construction worker, saved his 3-year-old neighbor from burning in her Cincinnati, Ohio, home. At night, fire broke out in the boy's two-story house. Phillips ran to the scene and entered the house through the front door with a blanket. Ascending the stairs, Phillips found the boy sitting on the floor of a bedroom, where the walls were burning. Phillips went to his stomach and reached out for the boy, pulling him to him, and then covering him with a blanket. They fell down the stairs, but at the bottom, Phillips regained his footing and took the boy to safety. The boy was treated at a hospital for smoke inhalation, and Phillips recovered from smoke inhalation and a bruised back.

He received the Carnegie Medal in 2012. 



*Ryan B. Phillips*

## OBITUARIES SOUGHT TO COMPLETE HERO FUND'S HISTORICAL RECORD OF AWARDEES



**Act Details**  
January 13, 2002  
Louisville, KY  
Type of Act: Drowning  
Posthumous Recipient: Yes  
Press Release

**Adam Layman Thomas**  
Louisville, KY

**Adam Layman Thomas** died attempting to save a woman from drowning, Louisville, Kentucky, January 13, 2022. From a bicycle trail along a city road, a 36-year-old woman climbed over a railing and entered the swollen, swift-flowing Ohio River. As the woman swam in the 41-degree water away from the near bank, multiple bystanders speculated on the boat. Thomas, 34, business owner, who stopped his vehicle on the road, went to confer with them. Removing his outer clothing, Thomas also climbed over the railing and entered the river. As he swam toward the woman, she continued moving downstream. Shortly, Thomas struggled and ultimately submerged. Thomas, who reached the vicinity of a brand name wheelchair (out sight of her, was not to be located) and is presumed dead. Three months later, authorities recovered Thomas' body after about 1300 yards from the scene, 200 feet downriver.

## Obituary

**Obituary**

**Adam Layman Thomas**, age 34, a native of Louisville, Kentucky, lost his life on Thursday, January 13, 2022, when he tried to rescue a woman in the Ohio River. He died a hero while trying to save another woman's life from drowning. His actions were a true act of heroism and courage to place himself in harm's way to help another and ultimately sacrificed his life in doing so.

Friends and family said, "Adam's smile was infectious. His heart was huge, and his outlook to help others was bigger." People often said, "He had the biggest heart."

His generosity ran deep, and he was not scared of anything. People might think this heroic act was a random act of

His daughter, Ayla, was his entire world. She has a Daddy she will always look up to in life. He can rest easy knowing his family will make sure she will be very well taken care of while she grows up.

He is survived by his beloved daughter, Ayla Thomas, loving mother, Elizabeth "Betty" Thomas, father, Ricky Thomas, brothers, Andrew and Griffin Thomas (Natalie), beautiful nieces, Harper and Mimi Thomas, nephew, Wyatt Thomas (Dadson), grandparents, Gene and Betty Layman, grandmother, Marge Thomas, and many wonderful aunts, uncles, cousins, and dear friends.

In lieu of flowers, Adam's mother, Elizabeth "Betty" Thomas, and brothers, Andrew and Griffin Thomas, are raising funds for Adam's daughter, Ayla Thomas. Please consider a donation to this GoFundMe at <http://www.gofundme.com/ayla-thomas>

Written accounts of the awardee's life, such as what is contained in an obituary, are sought for addition to the awardee's page on the Commission's website. Please send to the Hero Fund at [carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org](mailto:carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org).

▶ from p.14

## 'A MOMENT OF RESONANCE'

muddy floor of the pond enveloped his feet. Hooley released Samuel in an effort to free himself and after clawing his way off the pond's floor, he resurfaced and grabbed Robert and the unnamed boy and swam them to safety in shallower water where they were attended to by others who had arrived at the scene.

Hooley didn't know those children, but he acted anyway. As the children were crying out for help, he knew that others would arrive soon to help, and in that moment he made the choice to dive into the pond, fearing the kids would drown before help arrived.

My definition of heroism has evolved in my short time here at the Hero Fund. I have read case after case of ordinary men and women who bravely charged toward the sounds of danger, often without a second thought, knowing full well that they too could find themselves in harm's way. Reading stories of these kinds showed me that the better angels of our nature, more often than you would imagine, reign supreme.

I have learned that communities are bonded together by their heroes. While national heroes can, and do, unite entire countries, it is the common man, that most unlikely of heroes, that serves as the glue necessary to adhere small communities together.

I grew up down the road from where Hooley saved those children but no mention of him was ever made to me. Looking back now, I take great pride in knowing that the Hero Fund picked up the case and exhaustively investigated Hooley's rescue before awarding him the Carnegie Medal. I'm honored to be working alongside my fellow Commission employees, sorting through hundreds of nominations so that civilians like John Hooley are recognized for their courage and selflessness in the face of imminent danger.

Those individuals willing to risk life and limb for their fellow man should be recognized, celebrated, and supported. That was Andrew Carnegie's intention when he founded the Hero Fund and to be a part of that tradition of excellence as a storyteller is a privilege unlike any other. 🌟

– Colin Cavada, communications assistant



► from p.3

## BOARD NOTES

hosted very successful celebrations of its centennial in 2004 and the Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy in 2007. For the centennial celebration – largely coordinated by Doug Chambers – the Hero Fund produced a written history, *A Century of Heroes*, and a companion video that took our ability to explain our mission to a new level.

A second wave of change began when Walter announced he would retire in 2017, and we recruited Eric Zahren as his successor. Eric has already touched off a quantum leap in our outreach. He promoted two in-depth features about the Hero Fund on national TV, the first on *CBS Sunday Morning* and the second on *60 Minutes*. Both did a great job capturing what is special about the Carnegie heroes. We also mounted a celebration of our 10,000th Carnegie Hero Medal – and, to point to our future, our 10,001st Medal – that was every bit as spectacular as our centennial and Medal of Philanthropy events. Our video was updated as well, and next year *A New Century of Heroes* will be published – an updated second edition of the centennial book.

Eric also staked out the ambitious goal of arranging for every Carnegie Medal to be presented in person. It is a lot of work, but we are approaching that goal. Once again, our programs have moved to a new level.

Our recent governance changes are part of an effort to set the stage for further progress in our program. As every organization does, we struggled to find the right balance between experience and fresh energy. In our case, we are encouraging retiring members of the Hero Fund Commission to participate as emeritus. This will give us access to their experience and allow us to tap the fresh energy of new members.

It is exciting how far the Hero Fund has come over the last three decades, but the prospects for the future are even more exciting. I am happy to step aside for Eric Zahren and the next wave of leadership, and I am confident they will do well because they will be energized by the same thing that drove their predecessors – the awesome spirit of the Carnegie heroes, themselves. ☼

*Editor's note: We're pleased to share that Chair Emeritus Mark Laskow will continue as the Hero Fund's Board Notes columnist.*

► from p.7

## Families remain close for decades

Lindsey from her car seat while Barth attempted to open the driver's door. Unable to do so, Barth entered the car from the backseat, while Pease entered the front seat area through the passenger door. Together, they freed Bauer's legs from under the dashboard and maneuvered her into the backseat. Melting plastic was dripping on them as they removed her from the car.

Lindsey and Bauer required hospital treatment for injuries sustained in the accident, but neither of them was burned. Pease sustained minor burns to his head and hands, but he recovered. Barth strained his back muscles during the rescue, and he recovered.

"For as bad as it was, the outcome was as good as it possible could be," Barth said. "They're a really nice family with really good kids, and it's been fun to watch those kids grow up."

Pease said the group gets together a couple of times a year and that the relationship is important to him.

"I think for other people going through long-term PTSD, like me, it's important to focus on the positive outcomes instead of thinking of the tragic accident. Staying in touch with the family has helped me deal with it."

Barth said they often don't talk about the accident itself, but everything else instead. ☼

“Although the memories are haunting, we are proud that we can get together, and share our love for each other, as we watch the children reach milestones in their lives.”



### ATTENTION GRADUATING CHFC SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

The Carnegie Hero Fund now provides honor cords representing the Tartan plaid of Andrew Carnegie. The tri-color cord of red, green, and gold also features a tassel tag engraved with "CARNEGIE HERO."

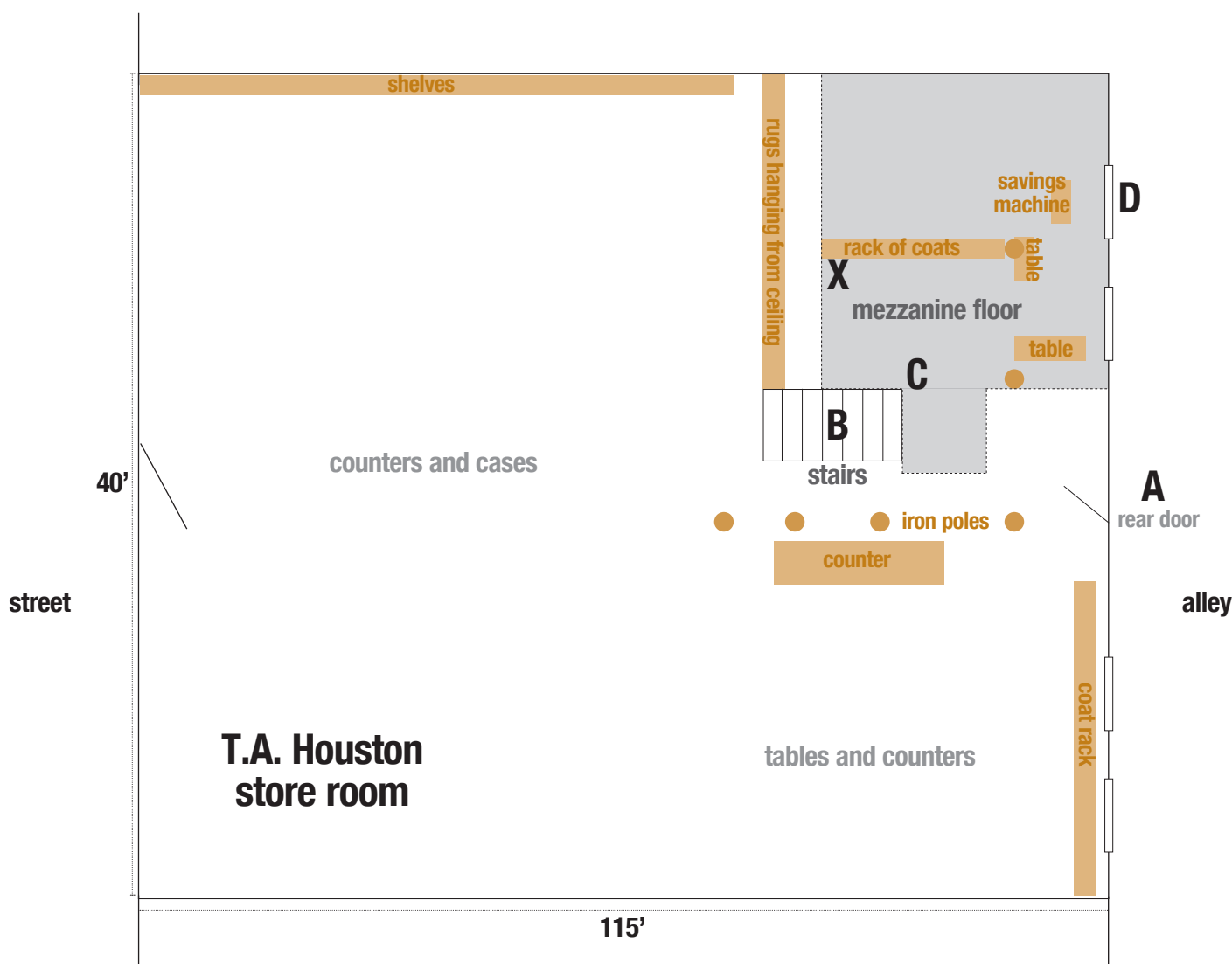
Contingent upon individual university policy, the honor cord can be worn at graduation.

If you are a graduating scholarship recipient, please contact the Hero Fund at [carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org](mailto:carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org) for more information.





A map of the United States with state boundaries outlined. A brown dot is placed in the eastern part of the country, specifically in Pennsylvania. To the right of the dot, the text "Mercer, Pennsylvania" is written in a bold, brown, sans-serif font.



hand. Despite pleas from others to remain outside the building, Boyd affixed the gas mask to his face, and, ingeniously, wrapped a rope around his torso so that, in the event he located Gillette, the men outside could pull him to safety through the dense smoke.

With the rest of the men looking on, Boyd stooped down near the rear entrance of the building and proceeded inside. Crawling on his hands and knees, he hoped he would avoid the noxious smoke swirling above. Boyd crawled through intense heat toward the basement stairs and descended two or three steps before he was forced backward by the temperature of the floor and surrounding walls.

As he retreated, the mouthpiece to his gas mask dislodged and he inhaled smoke, causing him to cough violently. Seconds later, the firehose that lay on the stairs writhed about and struck Boyd in the back. He attempted to wrangle the hose and remove it from the hallway, but it overpowered him. Disoriented, his lungs filling with smoke, he once again returned to his hands and knees. He crawled northeast, accidentally wrapping the rope he was tethered to around an iron pole just a few feet from the basement stairs. As he tried to untangle the rope, the nose clip holding his gas mask in place fell off,

allowing even more smoke to enter his body.

Firemen outside felt the rope tugging as Boyd unwrapped it from the pole. They quickly pulled him from the fire. Overcome with grief, the store owner urged him to remain outside, fearful that another attempt to retrieve Gillette would be pointless.

His clothes steaming and his eyes bloodshot, Boyd lay in the alley coughing before a fireman who had entered the building with Gillette mentioned that he ran into someone moving north, away from the stairway on his way out. Boyd, now convinced that Gillette wasn't in the stairway, but rather one floor up, said that he would make another attempt. Boyd ignored anyone who tried to dissuade him in an effort to save his friend.

After readjusting his mask and reattaching the rope to his midsection, he was helped back to the building. Crawling toward the north side of the doorway to the basement, he continued on about another 3 feet and reached out, searching for Gillette's body, but could not locate him. Smoke seeped into the gas mask and Boyd was forced to remove it, which caused him to cough violently as the temperature of the room climbed as the flames in the basement spread.

**Battered, beaten, and exhausted, Boyd lay in the alley behind T.A. Houston's department store frantically gasping for air. He had attempted to retrieve Gillette several times but was pushed back by smoke and heat.**



- George P. Boyd arrives at the T.A. Houston dry good store after hearing a volunteer firefighter alarm with other volunteer firefighters.
- Upon seeing the smoky conditions inside the building, Boyd implores other firefighters to return home to obtain gas masks.
- Boyd drives home to retrieve his own gas mask.
- Two firemen and Claude W. Gillette descend the stairs to the basement of the building with a fire hose, stopping at **B**.
- Gillette retreats up the stairs and exits the building after smoke conditions worsen.
- Gillette takes gas mask from a fellow firefighter and rushes back inside the building as the other two firemen retreat bumping into Gillette somewhere between the stairs and the rear entry.
- Gillette stumbles and disoriented in the smoke, enters the mezzanine floor of the building and makes his way to **X**.
- Boyd arrives back at the scene with gas mask and enters building at **A** with rope tied around waist. He crawls to **B** searching for Gillette. Intense heat forces his retreat to **A**, his gas mask become dislodged and the fire hose hitting him in the process.
- After receiving more information, Boyd re-enters building at **A** and crawls to **C** searching for Gillette.
- Boyd enters a third time through broken-out window at **D** and crawls to **X** where he finds Gillette. He carries Gillette toward the window, collapses, and then tugs on the rope to alert firefighters to pull him from the building.
- Others entered and retrieved Gillette's body under Boyd's direction, but he could not be revived.

Still unable to find Gillette, Boyd turned south and tugged on the rope that was tethered to safety. With the help of firemen outside the building, he crawled back through the smoke-filled room. Outside, he yanked off the gas mask and coughed repeatedly as another firefighter slapped his back, causing him to scream out in pain.

Battered, beaten, and exhausted, Boyd lay in the alley behind T.A. Houston's department store frantically gasping for air. He had attempted to retrieve Gillette several times but was pushed back by smoke and heat. All this in spite of repeated pleas that he abandon the mission. Moments after his last unsuccessful attempt to rescue Gillette, he was alerted that a fireman had broken the north window of the east wall with a pike, and recognizing one final opportunity, Boyd returned to his feet, adjusted his gas mask once more, and entered the building through the smashed window.

Within seconds, firemen outside lost sight of Boyd. Crawling west, he fanned his arms out hoping to bump into Gillette. After covering 18 feet, he reached out once more and finally found Gillette, who was lying flat with his gas mask still in place. Crouching next to Gillette, Boyd put his right arm between the man's legs and his left arm beneath his neck and shoulder. Boyd stood up with Gillette in tow and moved toward the window. He spit out the gas mask mouthpiece and yelled out, "I've got him."

As he attempted to exit the room with Gillette, Boyd's right foot was tangled in burlap, causing him and Gillette to collapse to the floor. Boyd tugged on the rope and firefighters outside yanked the two men across the storeroom floor. Finally, within

a few feet of the window sill, Boyd released his grip on Gillette and stumbled to his feet, laying his upper body across the windowsill before being pulled out into the alleyway by firemen eagerly awaiting their return.

A large piece of burlap wrapped around his foot, Boyd collapsed to his knees outside the building and yelled, "he's in there," as he pointed toward the window. Firemen retrieved Gillette's body and attempted to resuscitate him, but he could not be revived.

Gasping for air and steam rising from his clothing, Boyd fainted momentarily before being rushed to the hospital for smoke inhalation. He valiantly reentered a building on fire in order to save a friend against all protestations and warnings to the contrary. After inhaling significant amounts of smoke, Boyd recovered several weeks later and was awarded the silver Carnegie Medal and a monetary grant of \$1,000. ☼

— *Colin Cavada, communications assistant*

“Recognizing one final opportunity, Boyd returned to his feet, adjusted his gas mask once more, and entered the building through the smashed window.”



**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 death or serious injury 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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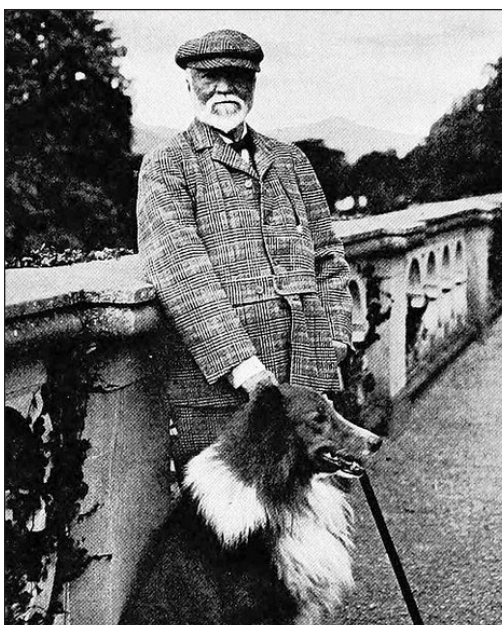
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**THE QUOTABLE A.C.**

*Let us pity those who haven't ancestors  
of whom they can be proud, dukes or  
duchesses though they be.*

*— An American Four-in-Hand in  
Britain, 1899*

**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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