



Impulse

A periodic newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

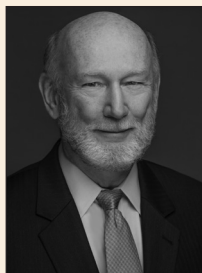
ISSUE 73 • SPRING 2023

BOARD NOTES

QUIET RIVER, QUIET HEROES

*By Mark Laskow, Chair Emeritus
Carnegie Hero Fund Commission*

In your last *Impulse*, we discussed two Canadian fishermen who made a dramatic rescue in the turbulent December waters off Newfoundland. Now I'd like to take you



Mark Laskow

to a stretch of water that couldn't be more different: the quiet, carefully controlled Schuylkill River where it flows through Philadelphia's Fairmount Park. Carnegie heroes have made seven water rescues since 1908 on this stretch of river, just a few miles long. I'd like to tell you about some of those, and finish with a rescue that, while outside the scope of a Carnegie Medal, remains very important to me personally.

This stretch of the Schuylkill is a study in contrasts. Fairmount Park buffers the river from the roiling urban life that surrounds it. Philadelphians make heavy use of the park and two major roadways follow the Schuylkill through the area. The river itself is part of the park's architecture, and for some distance upstream from the Philadelphia Museum of Art – remember "Rocky?" – both banks of the river are lined with stone walls, hard to climb. The city's historic boathouses sit along the river below the Art Museum and from there the numerous racing shells of the "Schuylkill Navy" practice and race. The rowers are a dedicated bunch who often venture out in nasty weather, but in every way, ► p. 2



Harold Nickens, Sr., 93, holds the replacement Carnegie Medal he received from his son after the original was lost in the Great Flood of 1993 in the St. Louis area. Nickens' son, Randy, contacted the Hero Fund for a replacement for Nickens' birthday.

Hero reunited with Carnegie Medal 30 years after loss in devastating flood

A son went to extraordinary lengths to reunite his 93-year-old father with the Carnegie Medal he earned 58 years earlier.

Harold Nickens, Sr., was 34 when he saved a 49-year-old woman from being shot. The woman was walking down a dimly lit St. Louis street when a man wearing a stocking over his face and carrying a gun accosted her, grasping her and threatening to shoot her. As she struggled to break away from the assailant, he struck her on the head twice with the gun. Nickens, a machine operator who was 150 feet away, heard the woman scream and he approached. The woman called out a warning that the assailant was armed.

Nickens continued approaching and the man shouted that he would shoot Nickens if he came closer. The woman tried to break away, but the man held her by the neck and struck her on the head with the gun a third time. When Nickens was within 20 feet of them, the man shot twice, missing Nickens. The gunman dropped the woman to the sidewalk and fled. Nickens aided the woman to safety inside a nearby building. The woman recovered.

Nickens' son Randy Nickens said his dad was always extremely proud of his Carnegie Medal, but it was lost in a flood in 1993.

According to the National Weather Service, the Great Flood of 1993 has been considered the most costly and devastating flood to ravage the U.S. in modern history. ► p. 4



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the river is more refined, cultivated, and controlled than the wild winter waters of Newfoundland. And yet, things happen ...

These were serious rescues. Two of the seven Carnegie heroes died attempting to rescue small children, **Adolph Arnholdt** in 1908 and **Joseph E. Mander** in 1952. In 2011 **Christopher DeFelice** was rowing along the river on a chilly April day when a car veered off a roadway on the bank above him and plunged into the river, about 30 feet from the bank. DeFelice alone among the others on the scene, acted. He slipped from his boat, swam to the victim, located him underwater, and brought him up. The victim was struggling with Defelice and pulled them both back under water, but Defelice got him to the bank where bystanders pulled them up the wall.

Garrett Raymond Cuppels took the idea of "stepping out of the crowd to act" even further in his 2000 rescue. A crowd had gathered along the Schuylkill watching a man, standing on a bridge, threatening to jump. He did finally jump and then struggled to stay afloat in the river. The large crowd included many emergency personnel, but no one moved to help the victim. When the victim submerged and no one else helped, Cuppels, a medical student, acted. He ran to the river, shedding clothes as he went, jumped in, and swam 350 feet to the victim. He found the victim on the bottom, got him to the surface, and began mouth-to-mouth resuscitation in the water! Maybe someone of this competence could have swum back and forth across the river several times without risk of tiring, but there was no escaping this fact: of the many dozens of onlookers, including emergency personnel looking on, Cuppels was the one and the only one to step out of the crowd and act. That is a real Carnegie hero.

Let me finish with the story of a Schuylkill River rescue that did not earn a Carnegie Medal. I have a very personal reason for including it, but it also illustrates a broader, and very important, point about the Medal.

On a pleasant June morning in 2022 Paul Laskow and a friend were out for a row. This was normal as Paul had spent much of his life on the Schuylkill. In 1965 he won the national high school championship in an eight-oared "shell." This enabled him to work his way through college pulling on an oar for St. Joseph's University, where his eight won the largest collegiate regatta. ►



FRIENDS REMEMBERED



ROGENE A. VARTANIAN



Rogene A. Vartanian

Carnegie Hero **Rogene A. (Vartanian) McCorquodale**, 79, of Santa Rosa, California, died Wednesday, Feb. 22, 2023.

She was born March 2, 1944, in San Francisco to Jack and Lorraine Vartanian, and graduated from Ursuline High School in Santa Rosa, California.

On May 31, 1964, in Bodega, California, Vartanian entered the Pacific Ocean to rescue 9-year-old Steven R. Wilson from drowning. In an area posted as too dangerous for swimming because of treacherous currents, Steven had waded into the rough surf fully clothed. He was submerged briefly by a breaker and then carried away from shore. Vartanian, then a 20-year-old student, ran 150 feet to the water's edge, kicked off her shoes, and waded 10 feet into the surf before swimming 90 feet in waves 5 to 6 feet high. Impeded by her clothing, which included a heavy sweatshirt, she towed Steven shoreward. At a point about 12 feet from shore, most of her strength was spent, and she swallowed some water when a breaker submerged them and another rolled them along the bottom. Others, who meanwhile had formed a human chain extending from shore, were able to grasp them when Vartanian surfaced with Steven, nearly exhausted.

She later married Donald McCorquodale at Saint Eugene's Cathedral on April 10, 1965, taking his last name. They had three children.

McCorquodale was active in the lives of numerous friends and family throughout her life, in particular, she was especially fond of motherhood, describing the time in her life as a stay-at-home mother as "heaven." She enjoyed cooking, playing sports, and making crafts with her children.

McCorquodale is survived by her husband of 58 years; three children, Douglas III, Heather, and Stacy; grandchildren, Julia, Adam, and Charlotte; and nieces and nephews.



CHARLES NOLAND PIERCEALL



Charles Noland Pierceall

Charles Noland Pierceall, 89, of Washington, Illinois, died on Sunday, March 5, 2023.

Pierceall was born to Carl and Martha Pierceall in Fancy Farm, Kentucky, on Nov. 24, 1933.

Pierceall received the Carnegie Medal for attempting to save the lives of two men from suffocation in Fancy Farm on Aug. 19, 1953. After a rescuer called out that he needed assistance removing a man who was overcome by lack of oxygen, Pierceall, then 20, entered a 16-foot cistern. The duo grasped the man, but the first rescuer suddenly collapsed. Pierceall, who was dizzy and nauseated, climbed to the top of the ladder and was pulled from the opening. He was helped to a nearby house, but he refused to rest, despite pleas from bystanders. He returned to the cistern, tied a rope to himself, and descended the ladder. He fastened a light chain around one man's chest and climbed 10 feet before becoming so weak that he was pulled out of the cistern four minutes after his second entry. As the man was being pulled from the cistern, his body was inverted, with his head dangling downward. Pierceall requested to be lowered once more. He grasped the man by the hair and they were pulled from the cistern. Neither of the other men could be revived. Pierceall recovered after being rushed to the hospital and administered oxygen. ►

FRIENDS REMEMBERED

Pierceall worked as a supervisor in the dietary department at a hospital for 42 years, where he was fondly remembered for taking a personal interest in his employees, driving them to and from work when the weather would make it difficult for them to walk or take the bus. He was also respected for his mechanical skills at the hospital. He applied those skills in his retirement, buying and refurbishing rental properties.

He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Dorothy Sue; two sons, Bob and Ken; two daughters, Donna and Paula; eight grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his son, Joe; and great-grandson, Skyler; and nine of his 12 siblings.

JOSEPH B. COLEMAN

Joseph B. Coleman of Ashland, New Hampshire, died Monday, March 6, 2023.

Coleman was born Sept. 10, 1928, in Providence, Rhode Island. He was the son of George V. and Anna (Burns) Coleman.

He attended LaSalle Academy in Providence, Rhode Island, and St Mary's University in Baltimore. Following graduation, he attended St. Mary's School of Theology. He was ordained a Roman Catholic priest on June 4, 1955.

Coleman served as a clergyman for numerous churches from 1955 to 1984.

Coleman received the Carnegie Medal for saving two young girls, ages 7 and 11, from being shot after being taken hostage by a gunman in their Providence, Rhode Island, apartment, on March 27, 1966.

After the man had fired at responding police officers at least 15 times, Coleman approached the dwelling and talked to the man. He pleaded in vain for the man to release the girls, and after firing again at police, the gunman said he would surrender the children to Coleman only if he entered the house to get them.

Almost blinded by tear gas, Coleman entered the building alone and ascended the stairs to the apartment door. The gunman moved a furniture barricade and opened the door. When Coleman asked for the pistol, the man handed it to him. It still contained ammunition.

Coleman carried the 11-year-old down the stairs as the man followed, carrying the 7-year-old. The gunman was taken into custody by the police and later was sentenced to prison.

During his priesthood, Coleman received many civic awards. In 1962, the East Greenwich Jr. Chamber of Commerce chose him as 'Man of the Year' for "outstanding community service through loyal and unselfish efforts resulting in lasting contributions to community and nation." In 1974, the Newport City Council cited Coleman for his service to the community. In 1978, the Rhode Island House of Representatives recognized his courage and selflessness in saving more than a dozen lives on the Newport Bridge. Coleman was often called to the Claiborne Pell Bridge that connects Newport, Rhode Island, with Jamestown, Rhode Island, to deter desperate people from jumping to their death. In the case cited in the congressional award, Coleman had climbed a cable 400 feet above Narragansett Bay to lead a woman to safety.

In 1984, Coleman left the priesthood to marry Sandra Carlson.

At that time, he said, "I love the priesthood, I love the church. I have struggled to be a good priest for the last 29 years. I wasn't always successful. I could not always live up to the high standards the church demands of her priests. For me, it was a daily struggle. When I married Sandra, the struggle was over."

Coleman is survived by his beloved wife, Sandra; three nephews; and five nieces. He was preceded in death by his sisters Margaret and Constance; and a brother, George. ▶ p. 4

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BOARD NOTES

The weekend before this 2022 incident he won a Masters race in a four-rower shell and finished second in an eight. Paul and his friend were enjoying themselves until Paul pulled up, said something to his friend, then collapsed and rolled out of the boat, sinking quickly beneath the water. This rolled the ultra-narrow racing shell as well, which dumped Paul's rowing mate into the water after him.

It was a typically busy morning on the Schuylkill, and James Hughes, also out rowing with a friend, diverted to see if someone needed help. Before his boat even came to a stop, Hughes rolled into the water and swam under to retrieve Paul. Meanwhile, several motor launches carrying rowing coaches detached from the rowers they were training and converged on the site. When Hughes got Paul to the surface, there were arms waiting to lift him out of the water so the coaches could begin CPR.

This was as smooth a water rescue as you could imagine, as the river community improvised a coordinated, efficient response. Alas, it was for naught. Paul probably died in the water before he returned to the surface. If you have guessed by now that I am related to Paul, you'd be right. He was my brother, just 14 months younger. We were virtually twins.

As I have written before, "unsuccessful" rescues can still bring great benefits. Paul's family is greatly comforted by the efforts of Hughes, Paul's boatmate and the coaches who made this effort. And if Paul had any consciousness remaining when Hughes grasped him, how wonderful it must have been to know another human being had come to help him in the dark, dangerous waters that enveloped him.

The standards for the Carnegie Medal are very tight, and rightly so, to select the best of the best for the honor. Yet these exceptional rescues are part of a web of assistance we all provide to friends and strangers. These can range from a kind word to roadside assistance to a free meal to a water rescue. This web of voluntary good deeds is a key element of a decent society. The extreme sacrifices of our Carnegie heroes are very strong threads in that web, but every thread contributes, every thread counts. Let us all weave as we can. ☸



INSIDE THE GALLERY

2 CARNEGIE MEDALS FROM THE 1970S TELL THE STORY OF 2 HARROWING FIRE 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. These are the stories of Carnegie heroes whose Carnegie Medals are displayed in the Hero Fund's offices in Pittsburgh. The bronze medals of **Edward P. Hendrix** and **Richard R. Dergousoff** tell the harrowing stories of two fire rescues from the 1970s.

Edward P. Hendrix

On a warm Wednesday night in July 1968, Theresa Bentrovato, 25, was riding in the passenger seat of a brand-new Mercury Cougar, a two-door, hardtop convertible in the Bronx neighborhood of New York City. The Mercury Cougar came to a stop amid heavy traffic on the Cross Bronx Expressway, behind a vehicle driven by Edward P. Hendrix, a 27-year-old wrestling coach from Highland Mills, N.Y., Hendrix's vehicle contained several passengers, including his wife.

Meanwhile, another vehicle, approaching at high speed, collided with the Mercury, rupturing its fuel tank and splashing gasoline into the car's cabin. Propelled by the force of the other car, the Mercury struck Hendrix's vehicle – the impact causing the the gasoline inside the cabin to ignite – before it spun and stopped in the northernmost lane of the expressway.

The passengers inside Hendrix's vehicle were stunned but unharmed. Flames appeared at the filler tube of Hendrix's vehicle; everyone inside exited the car to safety. Meanwhile in the Mercury, flames 3 feet high issued from the cabin.

Stating later that he wasn't worried about an explosion, Hendrix ran to the driver's door of the Mercury where he saw the driver, unconscious and covered entirely in flames. Bentrovato sat in the passenger's seat, her clothes and body on fire, screaming for help.

Hendrix reached through the driver's window, over the man's motionless body, and grasped Bentrovato. He ▶ p. 5

FRIENDS REMEMBERED

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DAMION DEROBBIO



Damion DeRobbio

Damion DeRobbio, 43, died on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at his home in Poland, Ohio.

DeRobbio was born in Pittsburgh on March 29, 1979, to Philip Anthony and Margaret Caitlyn Gill DeRobbio.

He was awarded the Carnegie Medal for helping to rescue a 6-year-old girl from burning after her family home in Pulaski, Pennsylvania, caught fire on April 22, 2004. A neighbor, DeRobbio entered her bedroom through a broken-out window, crawled through the smoke-filled room to her bed, carried her to the window, and handed her to safety to an off-duty police officer outside.

DeRobbio owned and operated Alley Cat Guide Services, which organized and directed fishing trips. He was an avid outdoorsman and fisherman. He was a member of the Steelhead Valley Fishing Club. He raised and bred reptiles. DeRobbio liked music and enjoyed playing the guitar. A loving father, he enjoyed time with his children and was active in their upbringing.

DeRobbio is survived by his father and stepmother, Susan A. DeRobbio; children Donovan, Isabella, Julian, and Hunter DeRobbio; his brother, Patrick DeStefano; and former wife, Sophia DeKant DeRobbio. ❀

▶ from p.1

Hero reunited with Carnegie Medal

In St. Louis, the Mississippi River was 20 feet above flood stage, cresting at 49.6 feet. St. Charles, Missouri, nearer to where Nickens lived, was underwater for 94 days.

Nickens and his family fled their West Alton, Missouri, home during the flooding and could never return to their home to retrieve their belongings.

"When we left, we thought we would be coming back, but the flooding damaged too much and it wasn't safe for anyone to come back home," Randy Nickens said.

St. Charles County Senior Planner Ellie Marr wrote the Hero Fund Commission confirming the later destruction of the Nickens home.

"The Great Flood of 1993 was not only economically devastating to St. Charles County with catastrophic damages to property but it also caused emotional distress with the loss of real and personal property," she said.

Marr said West Alton was under 10 to 15 feet of water for about three months.

In the letter she confirmed that the county purchased the Nickens home and about 1,300 other homes through Community Development Block Grant Disaster and Federal Emergency Management Agency funds.

"Subsequently Mr. Nickens' property was purchased and demolished by the county," Marr said.

Twenty-eight years to the day that the Mississippi River crested in St. Charles, Nickens contacted the Hero Fund.

"I just really want to surprise my dad with a replacement Carnegie Medal," he said.

The Hero Fund does not replace the Carnegie Medal except in rare cases of documented theft or destruction – a policy which applied in this case thanks to documentation from St. Charles County.

Although it took several months for the Medal to be produced, once he received it Randy Nickens traveled last spring to his father's home in Florida to deliver the Medal to his dad for his birthday.

"He was just absolutely tickled," Randy Nickens said. "He never thought he would see it again." ❀



BEHIND THE SCENES

Admin. assistant finds 'place' at Hero Fund

I FOUND MY PLACE. When I walked through the doors here at Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, I KNEW.

I started at the Carnegie Hero Fund as a temporary employee in August 2022. Aside from being a retired teacher in two Pittsburgh-area public school districts, I've had vast experience working with non-profit organizations and community services. Community work has been an underlying theme throughout my entire life.



Sharon Terry

I was the first African American woman electronic court recorder for the Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania in the early '80s. Bankruptcy Court was extremely popular and the electronic court recording system had just been established. I was there for 10 years.

In the 10 years following, I worked at Mercy Community Programming, starting out as a prenatal outreach worker and working my way up to eventually fiscal manager for the pediatric department until being asked by the principal of a charter high school to establish a new program. I became the school's adult literacy coordinator and career teacher. While there I decided graduated Cum Laude from an online program at Jones International University in Colorado with the purpose of demonstrating that no matter what obstacles are in your path, if you really want to obtain a dream, DO IT ... and I did. While, I felt extremely accomplished, I still had the call of community in my blood.

Constant community involvement was a daily occurrence, even in my personal life, having been married for 26 years to an African Methodist Episcopal church pastor, which made me the First Lady, and with our family of two children, we were the First Family where ever my husband served for 20 years. Service followed me wherever I went.

Community, administrative work, and teaching have always been my life but finding the right fit truly seemed to be the challenge. I was working with a temp agency when I came across a notice for a part-time administrative assistant position at the Hero Fund. Once I read and researched about the organization, I felt like this was the perfect place for me. Of all the work that Andrew Carnegie had accomplished, his establishment of this Commission was what I believed in — people that gave of themselves without any regard to their personal welfare to help another human being, and unselfish service of the highest level to ensure the safety and security of others.

When walking through the doors at the Hero Fund, I knew I was where I was supposed to be. I knew all the years of teaching, studying, organizing, and administrative work would come together and be of benefit here. I truly believed I had found my work home, work family, and a place where I belonged and would want to stay!

Working at the Hero Fund has allowed me to still be a part of a nationwide outreach. The work here is beyond satisfying, important, and enlightening. I could finally see the big picture. I am able to use my expertise, knowledge, and skills to help ensure a smooth working environment for the entire office staff.

On Feb. 18, 2023, I started another new life chapter, I turned 70 years old! Seventy years of living, and I couldn't think of a better place, way, or people with which to begin this new course in my life, than the Hero Fund. The possibilities are endless. The opportunity for me to be able to utilize my abilities for the good of this office, the Commission, and my work family, puts a smile on my face and a song in my heart EVERY DAY. The motto I live by is: Stay Safe, Be Blessed and Always Grateful. The Carnegie Hero Fund Commission has helped to make that possible for me. I FOUND MY PLACE. ❁

► from p.4

INSIDE THE GALLERY

pulled her through the vehicle and out the window. Bentravato's hair had burned off and her clothes smoldered as Hendrix dragged her 20 feet north, away from the burning Mercury. He removed his jacket and extinguished any remaining smoldering clothes.

Hendrix went back to the vehicle to aid the young man. He returned to within 2 feet of the driver's door, but by then the man had been extensively burned and Hendrix presumed him dead. Hendrix returned to Bentravato, and with the help of a bystander, dragged her 50 feet farther. Responding fire fighters extinguished the flames on the vehicles and Hendrix and Bentravato were taken to the hospital for treatment of injuries sustained during the incident. Both recovered.

Hendrix received a bronze Carnegie Medal and a grant of \$750.

Richard R. Dergousoff

On Jan. 15, 1971, 4-year-old Shane R. Stevens and his 12-year-old brother were in the basement of their Vancouver home. Working with a chemistry set, Shane's brother set a burner atop a trunk and filled its fuel canister with fuel from a gallon container of lighter fluid and lit the wick. He then attempted to place the uncovered canister on a shelf, but it slipped from his grasp. The canister dropped, spilling the lighter fluid on his arm, the furniture nearby, and the cement floor, which immediately ignited.

Shane dropped to the floor, opened the door of a nearby cupboard, and attempted to crawl inside. His brother extinguished the flames on his arm and ran upstairs to alert his sister, 14, of the accident. It was then that Richard R. Dergousoff, a 25-year-old salesman, and his wife arrived at the home to pick up the brother. Learning that Shane was still in the basement, he ran outside to the west side of the house where there was an outside door to the basement.

Dergousoff forced open the locked basement door with his shoulder and entered the home. He went about 10 feet inside before he choked on the dense smoke. He retreated, took a fresh breath of air, and reentered the building. Crouching and holding his breath, he reached an interior door that was also ► p. 10



LATEST AWARDEES OF THE CARNEGIE MEDAL

Since the last issue of *Impulse*, the following 15 individuals have been awarded the Carnegie Medal, bringing the total number of recipients to 10,355 since the Hero Fund's inception in 1904. The latest awards were announced March 27. The next announcement will be made in June.

Terrance A. Dea, a 70-year-old retired sales manager of Louisville, Tennessee, drowned June 5, 2021, attempting to rescue an 18-year-old woman who was thrown from her jet ski into the Little River in Louisville. Emma R. Fila was negotiating a curve in the waterway and hit a concrete bridge support. The impact rendered her unconscious and threw her facedown in water that was 24 feet deep. In another party on a nearby boat, Dea responded, entering the river and swimming to Fila. Dea then became unresponsive in the water. Four others from another boat responded and brought Dea and Fila to Dea's boat, where they performed CPR. They drove Dea's boat to a nearby dock and continued attempts to revive them. Paramedics arrived and pronounced them dead; they had drowned.

A 93-year-old woman, Shirley Treadwell, and her caretaker were inside an SUV that was stuck straddling a train track on Nov. 10,

2021, in Forsyth, Georgia. **Christopher K. Burkett**, 47, a production line supervisor who lived nearby, and his friend were repairing a fence when they heard the car kicking up gravel and the approaching train. They ran to the car's front, passenger door, and with difficulty heaved it open. Due to a curve in the track, the 170-car freight train, which was approaching at 39 m.p.h., could only be spotted at a point 300 feet from the car. As the train neared, the friend moved away from the track, but Burkett stayed, working to free the 93-year-old. The train struck the vehicle, propelling it 100 feet. The women and Burkett suffered fatal injuries in the collision.

A 15-year-old boy, who was autistic and nonverbal, drifted with the outgoing tide about 300 feet from a Burrard Inlet beach in West Vancouver, British Columbia, on Sept. 9. **Emilyn Golden**, a 34-year-old local artist, was at the beach when she learned of the boy's struggle. Golden removed an outer layer of clothing and entered the dangerously cold water, swimming to the fully-clothed boy, who initially resisted



Terrance A. Dea



Christopher K. Burkett

Emilyn Golden

her rescue efforts. Golden quickly formed a rapport with the boy and together they swam back toward shore, but the strong tide prevented them from making much progress. As the boy tired, Golden helped him remove some clothing and held to his shirt with one hand, keeping him above the surface of the water. A rescue boat responded and plucked the two from the waves, bringing them to safety at a nearby pier. The boy went to the hospital and was released later that day. Golden was treated at the scene for shock and hypothermia. She recovered without further medical treatment.

A father drowned June 26, 2020, saving his toddler daughter from the same fate. Kinzlee R. Gardner, 21 months, was wearing a life jacket in a kayak with her mother, about 10 feet from the bank of the Spokane River near Post Falls, Idaho,

when an undertow upset the kayak, dumping Kinzlee and her mother into the water. Kinzlee's mother pushed Kinzlee to the water's surface, before the current submerged her and carried her away from the bank. It was like being sucked down a drain, the mother told the Hero Fund's investigator. Kinzlee's father, **Gabriel Lucas Gardner**, a 35-year-old laborer of Spokane Valley, Washington, immediately ►



Photo by Kathy Shannon

Carnegie Hero **Emilyn Golden** and the mother of the 15-year-old boy she saved share an embrace after Golden, on Sept. 9, prevented the boy from drowning in Burrard Inlet in West Vancouver, British Columbia.



Carnegie Hero **Christopher K. Burkett** posing with one of his dogs Kiah. Burkett died Nov. 10, 2021, while attempting to save two women from being struck by a train in Forsyth, Georgia. His other dog Lucy is not pictured.

LATEST AWARDEES

entered the 60-degree water and swam to the toddler. Grabbing her life jacket, he first attempted to hand her off to another man who had entered the water with him, but, struggling in the water, the man was returning to the bank. Gardner then swam 70 feet to another kayak piloted by Kinzlee's 12-year-old brother, who took Kinzlee into his kayak. Gardner submerged and did not resurface. His body was found more than an hour later about 900 feet downriver.

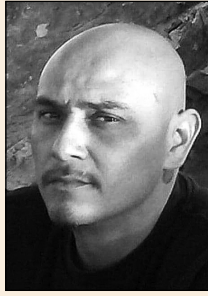
A local high school student was hospitalized after attempting the Aug. 4, 2020, water rescue of a 6-year-old boy who was playing in a flooded 5-foot ditch at a Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, park and was swept into a 25-foot-long drain pipe that extended beneath a two-lane road. **Kevin Conklin**, 16, was nearby when the little boy submerged. Kevin immediately waded into the flood water, submerged, and tried to feel for the boy. After failing to find him, he entered deeper water, and in many attempts, submerged to try to find the boy. He, too, was swept into the pipe. Both boys tumbled into the stream at the other end of the pipe, the current carrying them downstream, where others helped them exit the water. The boy sustained bruising and recovered. Kevin was taken to the hospital by ambulance for bruises, pain to his wrist, and exposure to the cold water. He, too, recovered.

Roberto Y. Longoria, a 42-year-old tanker technician of Phoenix, died Aug. 29, 2021, while attempting to save his 32-year-old co-worker from suffocation inside a chemical tanker trailer in Avondale, Arizona. Jose Perez entered the trailer to try to fix a slow drain and became unresponsive. Longoria started to enter the trailer from its ceiling hatch, but then called 911 to report the incident, handed his phone to the truck driver to continue the call, retrieved a respirator mask from nearby, and then entered the trailer. Soon, he too, collapsed. Firefighters removed the men from the trailer; they died from exposure to hydrogen sulfide gas.

When shots rang out at a June 16, 2022, church potluck in Vestavia Hills, Alabama, **James W. Musgrove, Jr.**, did not hesitate to subdue the shooter, a 70-year-old man armed with a semi-automatic handgun. The man fired three shots, killing three of the more than 20 senior citizens attending the potluck. Sitting closer to an exit, Musgrove, a 79-year-old Birmingham, Alabama, retired investigator, lifted a banquet chair and held it in front of him like a shield and ran toward the assailant. Musgrove released the



Kevin Conklin



Roberto Y. Longoria



James W. Musgrove, Jr.



Chad W. Chichester



Paul Galotti

chair and grabbed the assailant's hand holding the gun and forced him to drop it. Holding the back of the assailant's neck, Musgrove retrieved the gun and struck the assailant until he was subdued. He restrained the assailant until police arrived. At the time of the investigation, the assailant was awaiting trial for capital murder.

A 52-year-old engineer of Midland, Michigan, responded to a burning all-terrain vehicle on April 3, 2022, in Sherman Township, Michigan. Passenger Karleigh M. Zmiky, 23, remained inside the ATV as flames entered the passenger compartment and lit her clothing on fire. **Chad W. Chichester** was in Zmiky's party in another ATV, when he witnessed the accident that resulted in the ATV overturning onto the driver's side. Initially, flames and smoke precluded him from seeing Zmiky, but as he circled the ATV he saw her standing on the driver's door reaching up toward the passenger's window opening. At 5'1", she could not reach the passenger's door

of the 6-foot-wide vehicle. Chichester reached through flames, grasped her under her arms and attempted to lift her out of the vehicle, but the synthetic material of his gloves was melting in the blistering heat causing his hands to slip. He stepped back from the vehicle, shook the gloves off his hands, and returned. While flames burned his hands and wrists, he reached into the vehicle again, grasped her in the same manner and pulled her from the ATV. Laying her on the ground, others at the scene instructed her to roll on the ground to extinguish the flames on her clothing. Others packed snow from the ground to put out the fire and moved her farther from the burning vehicle. Zmiky was flown by medical helicopter to a hospital for treatment of severe burns, requiring multiple surgeries. Chichester was taken by ambulance to the hospital for treatment of severe burns to his hands, which also required surgery.

Derek Winemiller, a 38-year-old union ▶



*A still from an Aug. 4, 2020, video taken of Carnegie Hero **Kevin Conklin** after he was helped out of floodwater in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, after entering a ditch to save a 6-year-old boy who was swept into a 25-foot-long drain pipe. Both boys were swept through the drain pipe and tumbled into the stream on the other side of the pipe and then helped to safety by others. Photo courtesy of Qiang Conklin.*



LATEST AWARDEES

carpenter from Kansas City, Missouri, was left paralyzed from the chest down after intervening in a Feb. 9, 2020, armed robbery at a neighborhood store. A man pointed a handgun at the store's cashier, 38, and believing the man's life was in danger, Winemiller, who was nearby, confronted the assailant, jammed the weapon and pushed the man against the wall. As they struggled, the assailant broke free and continued to shoot at Winemiller, who was ultimately shot at least seven times and sustained injuries to his bowels, heart, ribs, pelvic bone, scapula, thoracic vertebrae, and spinal cord. The assailant and a potential accomplice fled the store and have not been identified. Winemiller was hospitalized 19 days and underwent emergency surgery before spending two months in a rehabilitation hospital. At the time of the investigation, he had ongoing outpatient therapy and hoped to walk again.

Sixty-one-year-old David Martinez, who uses a wheelchair, was trapped in his Easthampton, Massachusetts, burning apartment after his bedroom caught fire and blocked his exit. A neighbor, **Paul Galotti**, 38, environmental coordinator, was alerted to the May 15,

2022, fire and responded to the three-story apartment building. Galotti entered the structure through the front door and opened the door to the basement shouting for anyone inside to respond. Through dense black smoke pouring from the doorway, Galotti heard Martinez respond that he was in a wheelchair and needed help. Galotti descended the stairs, but quickly could not breathe and returned outside to take in air. Galotti pulled his shirt over his mouth and nose and returned to the stairs, which he descended and then searched for Martinez, who was 12 feet from the stairs. Galotti lifted Martinez from his wheelchair, hoisted him over his shoulder and left the building.

A passerby on July 11 suffered from smoke inhalation, first- and second-degree burns, and a serious laceration to his arm, after jumping from a second-story window holding a 6-year-old girl to escape spreading and growing flames.

Nicholas L. Bostic, a local pizza delivery man, 25, was driving in

a residential neighborhood in Lafayette, Indiana, when he saw a burning home. He entered the home through the back door, calling out to determine if anyone was inside. Hearing nothing, he went upstairs and saw an 18-year-old woman with two 13-year-old girls and a toddler, 20 months old. Leading them outside, they told him the 6-year-old remained inside. He reentered the home and frantically searched the upstairs bedrooms as conditions worsened inside the home. As smoke filled the main level of the home, Bostic considered jumping through a window, but then heard the girl's cries. Following them, he returned to the main level, which was filled with smoke and blistering heat. With no visibility, he found the girl, picked her up, and retreated to the upper level. He entered a burning bedroom and punched through a window with his fist. With the girl in his arms, he jumped through to the ground. The girl suffered ►



Photo by Emily Thurlow/gazettenet.com

Left: A firefighter investigates the remains of David Martinez's Easthampton, Massachusetts, basement apartment that caught fire May 15, 2022. Photo courtesy of Easthampton Police Department.

Right: Carnegie Hero Paul Galotti shakes the hand of Easthampton Fire Chief Christopher Norris while chatting with Martinez, whom he carried out of his burning apartment last May. Martinez was trapped in the apartment as conditions worsened. On Galotti's first entry into the building, smoke was so thick that he retreated outside for a breath and then returned, wearing his T-shirt over his nose and mouth, found Martinez and carried him outside to safety.

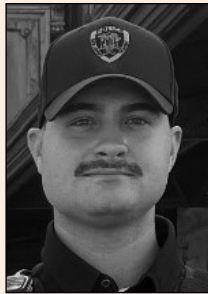
an injury to her leg from the broken glass, but she recovered. Bostic was hospitalized for three days, but he too, recovered.

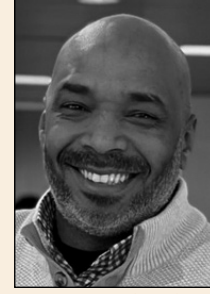
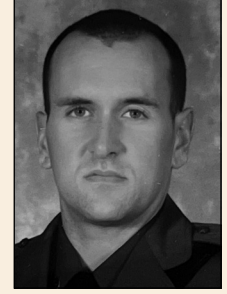
Three men fishing on Sept. 13 in the Atlantic Ocean at a beach in Island Beach State Park in Seaside Park, New Jersey, encountered trouble when a rip current pulled two of them into deeper water. The men drifted apart and struggled to keep their heads above water. The third man, off-duty police officer **Zachary Sjosward**, 25, of Clifton, New Jersey, saw his friends struggling, and after collecting a bodyboard from a truck, entered the water with the board's strap secured to his wrist. As he swam toward the closer man, who was about 85 feet from the beach in water at least 6 feet deep, a wave crashed over him and broke the bodyboard's cord, ripping the board from him. Continuing without it, Sjosward reached the man and guided him into wadable water, where he went to the beach on his own. Sjosward swam to the second man, who by then, was motionless. Sjosward brought him to wadable water and then dragged him onto the beach. Arriving first responders took both men to a hospital, where they recovered.

Kortnie Balls, a local 25-year-old delivery driver, on March 23, 2022, entered a burning Pocatello, Idaho, mobile home amid exploding oxygen tanks, dense black smoke that precluded visibility, and spreading flames to find 76-year-old Richard G. Sergi, who was badly burned. Despite Sergi outweighing Balls by more than 100 pounds, Balls pulled Sergi to the front door. Exiting the home as flames burned above their heads, Balls dragged Sergi partially outside where another man helped move Sergi fully onto the porch. Sergi's injuries were extensive and he died the following day. Balls inhaled smoke, but she recovered.

A 97-year-old woman was saved Oct. 1, 2021, from her burning home thanks to a passerby who responded. **Jose M. Pichardo**, a 41-year-old car salesman in Nashua, New Hampshire, was driving in a Nashua neighborhood when he saw flames issuing from the back of Shirley M. Buder's home. Pichardo kicked down the locked, front door and crawled toward the sound of Buder's voice, where he found her sitting in a chair in her living room. Telling her to remain in the chair, Pichardo dragged the chair to the front door and onto the home's porch where another man assisted Pichardo in carrying Buder in the chair away from the house. Buder inhaled smoke, was hospitalized, and recovered in two days. The day after the fire, Pichardo had recovered from smoke inhalation.

On April 7, 2022, the driver of an SUV remained inside his car after it left a highway and struck a rock wall that separated the road from a reservoir in Carmel, New York. The accident left the car


Zachary Sjosward

Kortnie Balls

Jose M. Pichardo

Daniel Franz

straddling the wall, which was about 1 foot tall at the road, but dropped 7 feet to an embankment adjacent to the water. A 31-year-old conservation officer was patrolling the area and came upon the wreckage with driver Stan R. Pelletier, 68, inside. Leaking fuel ignited and flames burned on the undercarriage. Officer **Daniel Franz** of Mahopac, New York, fully entered the car and grasped Pelletier under his arms and pulled, but one of his legs was trapped. Pulling again with more force, Pelletier's leg came free and, backing out of the car, Franz dragged him across the center console and out the front, passenger door. Flames engulfed the vehicle and Franz attempted to block Pelletier from the intense heat by

standing between the car and Pelletier. Other responders arrived and helped the man to the road, where he was taken by ambulance for treatment of severe injuries incurred in the accident. Franz was not injured. ❄️



*An SUV completely engulfed in flames in Carmel, New York, seconds after Carnegie Hero **Daniel Franz** rescued its driver on April 7, 2022. Franz entered the car while flames burned on the undercarriage, and pulled hard to free the driver's leg and removed him to safety.*



*The remains of the Pocatello, Idaho, mobile home after fire destroyed it. Carnegie Hero **Kortnie Balls** entered the home as it was burning and dragged a 76-year-old man to safety. Photo courtesy of the Idaho State Fire Marshal's office.*



► from p.4
INSIDE THE GALLERY

locked.

He forced open the door with his shoulder. Inside that room, heat and smoke were more intense. Dergousoff said later that he saw the glow of flames in the corner of the room and heard Shane's cries from that direction, but he couldn't see the boy. Overcome by smoke again, Dergousoff exited the building and gasped for air.

Because his entries into the building only got him within 20 feet of where he thought Shane was located, Dergousoff decided he might be able to reach Shane through an exterior window that was a few feet closer to Shane. He kicked out the glass and extended himself to the waist through the opening. He could hear Shane crying, but he could not see him. Returning to the door, Dergousoff entered the basement a third time. He ran to the south room as conditions inside worsened. He got about 5 feet farther before the smoke caused him to cough violently. He retreated to the outside and cleared his lungs of the smoke.

Dergousoff entered again. He closed his eyes and moved toward Shane's cries. Visibility was inches and the smoke burned his eyes. He closed his eyes and groped for Shane, finally locating him. He grasped the boy as his clothing ignited. Dergousoff picked up Shane, turned, and ran outside to safety.

Shane and his brother were taken to the hospital. His brother was treated for first-degree burns to his arm and released. Shane was hospitalized for three months for treatment of second- and third-degree burns to his hands and lower arms. Three of his fingers were amputated.

Dergousoff was not burned, but his clothing was scorched. He received a bronze Carnegie Medal and a grant of \$750. ☒



PRESENTING



Carnegie Hero **Darby Bicking** poses with Hero Fund Director of Operations Melissa Brock after Brock presented her the Carnegie Medal in an April 13 ceremony held at the Coatesville (Pennsylvania) Country Club.

In 2020, Bicking, then 15, saved a young girl from an attacking dog at horse-riding camp in Coatesville.

"Darby has been awarded the Carnegie Medal from the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission," Brock said in an interview after the presentation. "It's for people who risk their own personal safety to save a life, to help another person, and that's what Darby did."

On August 18, 2020, a 95-pound English Mastiff dog bit the 60-pound 8-year-old. Bicking, who was 4'11" and 110 pounds, separated the dog from the girl, but the dog turned to attack Bicking, biting her left arm and then latching onto her leg and dragging her to the ground.

"He was basically playing tug-of-war with my leg," Bicking, now 18, told reporters.

The center's director pulled the dog away from Bicking and secured it, and both she and the girl were taken to the hospital for stitches.

Bicking said she was at Disney World when she got the call that she would receive the Carnegie Medal.

"So it is the happiest place on earth, I will say that" she said.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



*A photograph that appeared in The Register-Guard of Robert Ryker wiping his son's brow while he's rested in the hospital. Ryker's son, **Jacob Russell Ryker** disarmed a 15-year-old gunman who had opened fire in a high school cafeteria. Jacob was hit by bullets twice in the altercation — once in the chest and again in the hand. Photo by Paul Carter/The Register-Guard.*

17-year-old disarms high school shooter in Oregon

Before classes began at Thurston High School in Springfield, Oregon, on May 21, 1998, between 100 and 200 students were milling about in the cafeteria, including 17-year-old student **Jacob Russell Ryker**, who was sitting at a table with friends. As Jacob stood to leave the table, a 15-year-old Thurston High student entered the cafeteria and opened fire.

Jacob later said he thought the gunfire was fire crackers, but as he processed what was happening, he pushed his girlfriend onto a nearby table before falling to the ground; though he didn't yet know it, he had been shot in the chest.

Chaos erupted as students fled, trying to escape or hide as the assailant continued to shoot -- one 17-year-old was struck and killed.

From the floor, Jacob said later that he saw the assailant point a rifle at the head of a female student. The assailant pulled the trigger, but the gun did not fire.

As the assailant attempted to reload his weapon, Jacob got off the floor and ran 20 feet toward the assailant. He tripped and fell, but immediately returned to his feet and charged the assailant. He took the boy to the floor, causing him to drop the rifle. They struggled on the floor and other students joined in to assist Jacob, including his younger brother.

The assailant reached for a 9 mm, semi-automatic pistol in his waistband. Jacob grasped the gun with his left hand. The boy attempted to point it at Jacob's face, but Jacob pushed the barrel away. Someone nearby yelled, "gun!" The pistol fired, shooting Jacob through the top knuckle of his left index finger. Jacob and the other students continued to wrestle with the gunman before a teacher arrived and pulled Jacob off the assailant. At this point, Jacob realized that he had been shot twice.

Police arrived and took the assailant into custody. All told, the boy had brought to school a sawed-off, semiautomatic .22-caliber rifle, two

semiautomatic handguns, a knife with a 6-inch blade, a pocket knife, and 1,177 rounds of ammunition. He had shot two students outside the school prior to entering the cafeteria – killing one and injuring the other. He had also shot and killed his parents at home. Dozens of students were injured by gunfire, in addition to the two students who were killed.

Following the shooting, Jacob was hospitalized for four days for treatment of his injuries, which included a gunshot wound to his chest that caused significant blood loss and resulted in a fractured rib. The second gunshot wound fractured his left index finger, which required surgery. Jacob spent months in physical therapy healing from his injuries following the rescue.

The Hero Fund awarded Jacob the Carnegie Medal, as well as a \$3,500 financial grant.

Additionally, according to a San Jose Mercury News report on Sept. 12, 1998, Jacob, a Boy Scout, received the organization's highest honor, the Honor Medal with Crossed Palms. The award, which was established in 1938, is reserved for the rare Scout who puts his life at extreme risk while trying to save another's life, demonstrating unusual heroism and extraordinary skill. The medal is the organization's second most prestigious medal.

After graduation Jacob enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. Three years after the shooting, he and his girlfriend – the one he threw onto a table that day – married and they raised two children. They divorced in 2017.

"We went from sharing bullets to sharing kids," Jen Ryker said in a 2018 *Oregonian* article.

The assailant pled guilty to four counts of murder and 26 counts of attempted murder. He was sentenced to 111 years in prison without the possibility of parole. ☒

— Colin Cavada, Outreach assistant



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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, such as scholarship aid and continuing grants to the heroes and 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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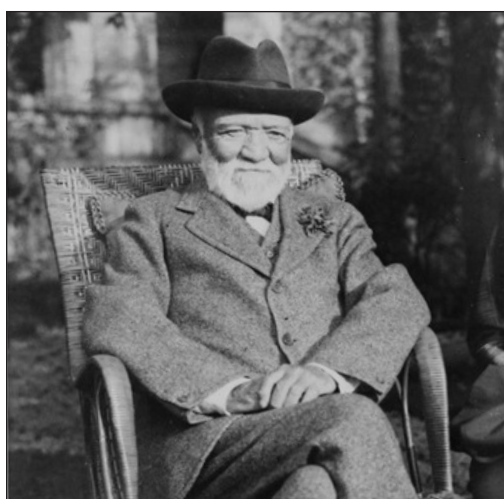
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THE QUOTABLE A.C.



In this world we must learn not to lay up our treasures, but to enjoy them day by day as we travel the path we never return to. If we fail in this, we shall find when we come to the days of leisure that we have lost the taste for and the capacity to enjoy them.

—From *An American Four-in-Hand in Britain*, 1883

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.

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