

Impulse

A periodic newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission
ISSUE 74 • SUMMER 2023



Photo: Shireen Korkzan/Episcopal News Service
A special altar hanging made from ribbon with prayers and reflections written by people in the weeks after a shooting killed three parishioners on June 16, 2022, at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Vestavia Hills, Alabama, was used during an evening worship service on the first anniversary of the tragedy.

ALABAMA CHURCH OBSERVES ANNIVERSARY OF SHOOTING WITH WORSHIP, MEMORIAL GARDEN

By Shireen Korkzan/Episcopal News Service

June 16 marked one year since three Episcopalians were killed in a shooting at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Vestavia Hills, Alabama, a suburb of Birmingham.

The three victims – Jane Pounds, 84, Bart Rainey, 84, and Sharon Yeager, 75, longtime parishioners of St. Stephen's – were participating in a potluck inside the church's parish hall when an occasional churchgoer opened fire. Two died at the scene and one died later in the hospital. In May, the shooter pleaded guilty to capital murder and was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

"By now, most of the story has been told and forgotten by others in the world who have moved on with their lives, and that is ► p. 4

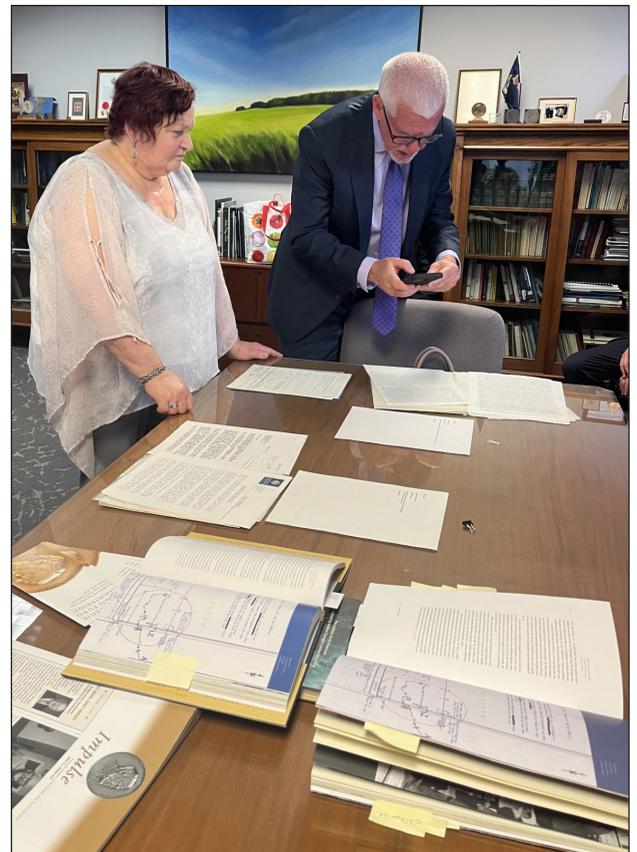
Descendants of 2-time Carnegie Medal recipient visit Pittsburgh, Hero Fund

Although Michael O'Neill knew his father was a Carnegie hero, he didn't know the details. That's why, after seeing a rerun of the 60 Minutes story detailing the Hero Fund's work, he reached out to Fund staff.

O'Neill's father, **John J. O'Neill, Sr.**, is one of six individuals to receive the Carnegie Medal twice for acts of extraordinary civilian heroism. Both rescues undertaken by O'Neill were along the Hudson River in Yonkers, New York, where O'Neill worked as a road maintenance man.

O'Neill's first rescue occurred in 1954 when a 41-year-old waitress fell into the Hudson River and, despite having been advised by a physician to avoid physical exertion due to a heart condition, O'Neill ran 250 feet to a ledge along the river, removed his shoes, and jumped 14 feet to the water. He swam to the woman and encircled her waist, bringing her to the surface of the water, and towed her to the nearest pier support where a ladder had been lowered and others assisted them from the water. The woman was revived and both she and O'Neill were treated at a local hospital for shock and exposure. They recovered.

Two years later, at night, in December 1956, a 62-year-old woman fell from the pier into the water. O'Neill hurried to the same ledge and dropped 14 feet ► p. 14



*Stella and Michael O'Neill examine Hero Fund records that detail the actions of Carnegie Hero **John J. O'Neill, Sr.**, who was awarded the Carnegie Medal two times for water rescues two years apart. Michael O'Neill later wrote to the Hero Fund, "My family was in awe of your organization and the work you do. The records filled in many gaps for us."*

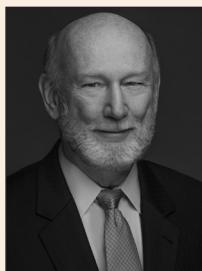


BOARD NOTES

CARNEGIE MEDAL
RECOGNIZES 'TRIUMPH OF
HUMAN SPIRIT'

By Mark Laskow, Chair Emeritus
Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

The Carnegie Hero Fund is blessed to work with a remarkable group of people, the rescuers whose deeds have earned them the Carnegie Medal. Many critically important nonprofit organizations deal with the most difficult aspects of the human condition, such as addiction, abuse, illness, and poverty. At the Hero Fund we deal with the very best of human behaviors, and it is a delight. Yet we are ever mindful that these heroic rescues can bring serious consequences for our heroes. Remember, about 20 percent of them die in the rescue. And so, it happens that among our work with these uplifting humans, I do sometimes ask myself, "Are we giving medals for things that never should have been attempted at all?" Or, worse, "Does the Carnegie Medal encourage people do things they should not have done?"



Mark Laskow

One of the most powerful flaws in human reasoning trips us up when we try to think about those questions. Let's call it "hindsight bias." When we read a case report, we already know the outcome for the victim and Carnegie hero, which inevitably colors our judgment of the risks the rescuer faced. Specifically, when the rescuer dies in the attempt, there is a powerful urge to look at the case as if the rescuer knew in advance what we know only in hindsight. The rescuer probably saw a risk, but in most cases, it is unlikely they saw the risk as certain death.

Notice that I used "probably" and "unlikely." That is because the real world is vastly complicated and the decision facing each Carnegie hero was unique. The upshot is that we who watch from the sidelines must exercise humility and restraint in deciding cases and in making sweeping generalizations about the nature of the award. It is impossible in most cases to know exactly what the rescuer saw in the unfolding situation before them, and how they each reacted to what they saw. From conversations with recipients of the hero medal, we know ►

FRIENDS REMEMBERED

DENNIS J. MYERS



Dennis J. Myers

Carnegie Hero **Dennis J. Myers**, 71, died Tuesday, May 16, 2023, in Leipsic, Ohio, surrounded by his family.

Myers was born to Norman and Helen Myers on Dec. 20, 1951, in Lima, Ohio. In 1974, he married Joyce Gebhardt.

Myers received the Carnegie Medal for saving a man from a burning vehicle after a highway accident in Benton, Illinois, on Jan. 13, 1984. Myers, a truck driver, saw the accident and ran to the wreckage, where the man in the overturned tractor-trailer hung upside down and was unconscious.

Having kicked the windshield in, Myers completely entered and untangled the driver despite heavy smoke that permeated from the inside of the vehicle. After he pulled the driver through the windshield and carried him to safety with the help of two other men, flames began to break out and explosively spread throughout the cab of the tractor-trailer.

Myers was a lifelong truck driver. He enjoyed fishing, camping, and was an avid Harley Davidson rider. In 1984, along with the Carnegie Hero Award, he received the Goodyear Highway Hero Award. He married Dawn Badertscher in 2001.

He is survived by his wife of 19 years; two daughters, April and Lindsay; stepdaughter, Crystal; stepsons, Toney and Tobey; seven grandchildren; six step-grandchildren; and two brothers, Gary and Joe. He was preceded in death by his brother, Norman Myers, Jr.

ODIS LEE JONES, JR.

Carnegie Hero **Odus Lee Jones, Jr.**, 84, died Sunday, May 28, 2023, in Okolona, Mississippi.

Jones, then a 27-year-old conveyer operator living in Shannon, Mississippi, received the Carnegie Medal after saving a 3-year-old girl from a burning vehicle in his hometown, on Dec. 9, 1966. The truck she was in with her family blew a tire, turned onto its side, and skidded along the highway. One of the truck's fuel tanks burst and escaping fuel caught fire on the roadway. Flames entered the cab and despite flames 15 feet high on the pavement, Jones ran to the truck, and after he unsuccessfully tried to kick in the windshield, obtained a bumper jack from his own vehicle and opened a hole in the windshield of the truck. After trying to remove the father from the truck to no avail, the young girl's hand appeared through the opening and Jones pulled her out to safety. He immediately put out the fire that had spread to her clothes.

Jones was known to family and friends as "Happy."

WILLIAM HAROLD DENZER



William Harold Denzer

Carnegie Hero **William Harold Denzer**, 72, died Sunday, July 2, 2023, in Germantown, Ohio.

He was born Jan. 29, 1951, to William and Marilyn Denzer in Newark, Ohio.

Denzer received the Carnegie Medal for saving a 1-year-old boy from an Aug. 27, 1965, house fire in Kettering, Ohio. When fire broke out in the kitchen of a one-story home where the infant was asleep in the bedroom, the flames spread rapidly and soon broke through the outside wall. Denzer, who was 14 years old at the time, arrived and ran ►

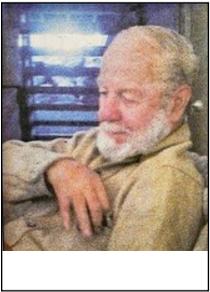
to the mother, who had made it outside, as flames broke through the roof of the kitchen and dense smoke poured through the open windows. He raised himself through the bedroom window with the use of a flower box beneath it, and using a board as a wedge, broke the metal arm holding the window and allowed him to raise it. Denzer held his breath, pushed in on the screen, and fell headfirst into the bedroom. The heat was intense and Denzer was unable to see through the thick layer of smoke, but he followed the cries of the boy and was able to locate the crib guided by his sounds. Denzer removed the baby from the crib, carried him to the window, and thrust him through the opening to someone outside. Although he was unable to hold his breath any longer and took in a breath of smoke, he managed to climb through the opening and fell to the ground. The baby's father who had also entered the home from an exterior door perished in the fire.

Denzer graduated from Middletown High School, and was a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, and the U.S. Air Force Reserves. He retired from AK Steel, enjoyed working around the house, and on his 1960 Thunderbird. Bill attended the Germantown First Church of God, was passionate about old cars, and loved his family, especially his grandchildren.

He is survived by daughter, Nickol Hembree; son, Billy; brother, Doug Denzer; sister, Lynette Lamphier; four grandchildren, Austin, Dalton, Wyatt, and Morgan; and a great-grandson. He was preceded in death by his brother, John Haug.



GERALD M. FORRESTER



Gerald M. Forrester

Carnegie Hero **Gerald M. Forrester**, 82, died Tuesday, May 30, 2023, in Shelton, Washington.

Forrester was awarded the Carnegie Medal for saving the life of fellow Carnegie hero Richard Swenson from electrocution in Vaughn, Washington, on July 4, 1964. When a power line carrying 7,200 volts of electricity accidentally was severed, it fell on two girls, ages 2 and 4, who lost consciousness. Swenson, 18, saw the wire sparking at its points of contact with the girls. He immediately sprinted

between them, dragging the power line from them but lost consciousness when his body touched it. Swenson slumped to a kneeling position beyond the two girls with the sparking wire in contact with his body and hands. Forrester ran to Swenson, leaped into the air, and thrust against him with his feet. The impact knocked Swenson backward to a prone position but did not free him from the wire. Forrester obtained a pair of pruning shears which were nearby, and holding them by their wooden handles, cut the wire near Swenson. Swenson and the girls that were electrocuted recovered but suffered third degree burns. Swenson's burns resulted in the loss of one finger and part of another.

Forrester was proud of his Scottish heritage. As a young man in Canada, he served in Princess Mary's Scottish Regiment. Jerry was an inspector and adjudicator for Washington State Department of Labor & Industries, working out of Tacoma. He was a past Battalion Chief for Lake Bay Fire Department and was integral in its formation. Jerry loved dogs, children, fishing, and telling very bad jokes. He also loved international trucks, all types of tractors and heavy equipment, and garage sales. He was known in his hometown of Vaughn as a man who could spend hours at an antique tractor show or a hardware store, and be entertained by both. He is survived by his sister, Jane Preppernau

He was preceded in death by brothers, Del Burnett and James 'Jim' Swindall. ☒

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BOARD NOTES

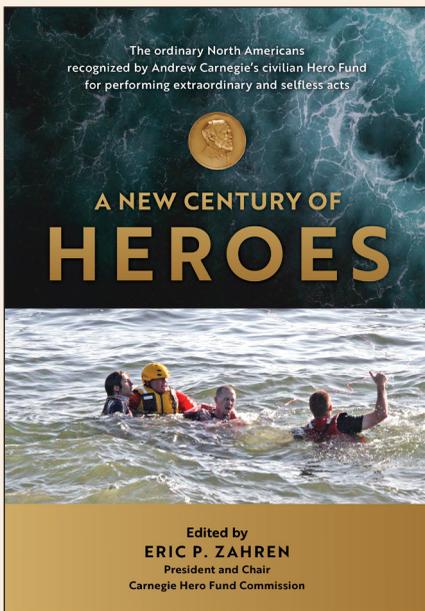
that rescuers are laser-focused on the victims. While they were certainly aware of the danger to themselves. It does not seem to have been their main focus.

What about the idea that the existence of the hero medal might somehow cause someone to attempt a foolhardy rescue? I wish that the Hero Fund's PR machine were so effective that every man, woman, and child in North America wakes up every morning thinking about the Carnegie Medal. Sadly, they do not. More importantly, our Carnegie heroes don't. Most of them heard about the Carnegie Medal for the very first time when they were contacted after their rescues.

There is one group of cases where you can confidently say it was certain the rescuer would die in the attempt. – those involving suffocating, sometimes poisonous gases in confined spaces. Construction workers digging trenches, farmers inside silage or manure storage units, industrial workers cleaning tanks, all face this risk. All too often a coworker will rush to retrieve the victim but without a rescue-breathing apparatus, it can't be done. The victim was overcome doing routine work. How can the rescuer go into the same environment, and pick up and carry another adult? The rescuer is using up oxygen at a huge rate and will succumb even faster than the victim. Even worse, it is very common for one or more others to try the rescue, one after the other, with the same result. On farms the victim and the rescuers are often members of the same family. Too much tragedy.

For decades government agencies, industry safety experts, and farmers' associations have been working to educate about this danger, and this has helped. In the decades I have served, I have seen the number of these cases has dropped, but it is not zero yet.

So, what of this special group of rescuers? Do we withhold their Carnegie Medals because their efforts were doomed from the start? No! There is a judicial saying that "hard cases make bad law." In just that way, these hard cases test our understanding of what the Carnegie Medal is all about. We do not award the medal for analytic skill or superior risk management. We award it for the triumph of the human spirit embodied in every rescue. Every day in ways large and small we make small sacrifices for each other, doing something that we didn't have to do but did anyway. This is what makes our society work. The Carnegie heroes show us the way, not with words but by their spectacular actions. Sometimes tragic, but always inspiring. ☒



HERO FUND'S 'A NEW CENTURY OF HEROES' BOOK RELEASED JULY 1

The Hero Fund is proud to announce the July 1 release of *A New Century of Heroes* (280 pages • 978-1-4930-7096-1 • \$39.95 • Hardback • Lyons Press) – the updated and expanded edition of *A Century of Heroes* (2004, University of Pittsburgh Press). Edited by Hero Fund President Eric Zahren, the book features the stories of more than 200 rescues from the Hero Fund archives dating back to 1904.

Moved by the stories of two men who died trying to rescue others in the devastating Harwick Mine Disaster that killed all but one of 180 trapped victims, industrial philanthropist Andrew Carnegie created the fund to reward selfless acts of bravery and courage. Since its creation almost 120 years ago, the Hero Fund has awarded more than 10,000 medals and distributed more than \$44 million in awards, grants, tuition, and other assistance.

A New Century of Heroes includes the tales of the clam digger who rescued a man from a burning retirement home, the dancer who prevented a robber from shooting two police officers at a nightclub, and the 23-year-old zoo volunteer who rescued a man who was mauled by a 320-pound tiger, among hundreds of other similarly harrowing events where real people risked their lives for others. It also details the creation and history of the Hero Fund, which for the last 120 years has been responsible for awarding the Carnegie Medal, North America's highest civilian honor for heroism.

New sections include a chapter on the ► p. 5



Photo: Shireen Korkzan/Episcopal News Service

Liz Edge, a local artist and parishioner of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Vestavia Hills, Alabama, made special stoles with ribbons in which people wrote prayers and reflections on in the weeks after a shooting killed three people on June 16, 2022, in the church's parish hall. Clergy wore the special stoles during an evening worship service observing the first anniversary of the shooting on June 16, 2023.

► from p.1

Alabama church observes anniversary

okay with me,” **James W. Musgrove, Jr.**, a parishioner of St. Stephens, wrote in an essay. “For those of us at Saint Stephens, however, our memories and pain will never end.”

Musgrove was awarded the Carnegie Medal by the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, North America’s highest honor for civilian heroism, for subduing the shooter until police arrived. His essay was published in “The Light Shines in the Darkness: Choosing Hope after a Mass Shooting,” a compilation of essays written by 42 parishioners of St. Stephen’s reflecting on the tragedy and the lifelong healing process.

The essay collection was edited by parishioner Melinda Rainey Thompson, a local author and Bart Rainey’s daughter. She’s also an English professor at Birmingham-Southern College.

To honor Pounds, Rainey and Yeager, St. Stephen’s observed the one-year anniversary of the shooting with a special evening worship service attended by hundreds of people, followed by a reception. Earlier in the day, a labyrinth memorial garden, which includes a plaque and three sheet-water fountains symbolizing Pounds, Rainey and Yeager, was unveiled to the public. The current plaque is temporary and will be replaced by a permanent one later.

Shooting survivors and the victims’ families arrived at St. Stephen’s earlier in the day for private reflection and prayer.

“How can we not give thanks to three of the most faithful people that this community has ever met? They lived in a life of the ultimate witness to God’s love, and there’s a sense of incredible gratitude,” the Rev. John Burruss, rector of St. Stephen’s, told Episcopal News Service.

Counselors were available on site for anyone in need throughout the course of the day.

In the weeks after the shooting, people wrote prayers and reflections on brightly colored ribbons and tied them on wire in front of the altar. Liz Edge, a St. Stephen’s parishioner and a local artist, used the ribbons to create a special altar frontal and stoles for clergy that were used during the evening service. ►

BEHIND THE SCENES

Commission elects 2 new members

The Carnegie Hero Fund Commission is pleased to announce the recent election of two new members.



Duane D. Holloway

Duane D. Holloway is a senior vice president, general counsel, and chief ethics and compliance officer for U.S. Steel, where he is responsible for all legal, ethics and compliance matters, environmental affairs, corporate governance, and managing relations with the Board of Directors. Before joining U.S. Steel in 2018, he served as executive vice president and general counsel for Ascena Retail Group, and held prior leadership roles at CoreLogic and Caesars Entertainment. A graduate of the University of Virginia and University of Pennsylvania Law School, Holloway also serves on the board of directors for the Minority Corporate Counsel Association and Allegheny County Parks Foundation, and is on the executive leadership team of the March for Babies in Western and Central Pennsylvania.



Dara Ware Allen

Dara Ware Allen is the CEO and principal of City Charter High School, which boasts a 94% graduation rate and is recognized nationally for its innovative education model. Prior to her work at City Charter, Allen served as assistant superintendent for Pittsburgh Public Schools, COO and program director for Leadership Pittsburgh, Inc., executive director of YouthWorks, Inc., and director of the Educational Opportunity Centers of Southwestern Pennsylvania at Penn State University. Holding a bachelor's degree from Spelman College, a Master's from Duquesne University, and a PhD. from Pennsylvania State University, Allen

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Alabama church

The labyrinth is available for public use as a form of prayer and meditation.

"I think grace that comes with brokenness being made a connection with the community, that's what the labyrinth will be," Alabama Bishop Glenda Curry said in a news conference. "It will be a place where everybody can come to collect."

Curry served as officiant while Burruss preached the evening worship service. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry was originally scheduled to preach the service and bless the labyrinth memorial garden, but he's currently not clear for travel due to recent health issues. However, he told Bishop Glenda Curry that he plans to visit St. Stephen's sometime before his tenure concludes in 2024.

Burruss said the tragedy and subsequent year of healing among the St. Stephen's community has, in a way, been clarifying for his faith.

"As Christians, we are not promised safety; we're not promised anything other than eternal life," Burruss said. "What we have found here is a commitment not only to care for each other, but to continue to be a place of inclusivity and to welcome the stranger. It's challenging and this has been really hard ... but St. Stephen's is testament that God's love is breaking through all things. And we don't have control over what happens, but we have control on how we respond. So is our baptismal covenant."

This article was published June 20, 2023, on the Episcopal News Service online. It was reprinted with permission from the author. ☒

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'A NEW CENTURY OF HEROES' BOOK

Hero Fund's response to disasters ranging from the 1905 Grover Shoe Factory fire disaster in Brockton, Massachusetts to the more recent COVID-19 pandemic.

"For better or worse, the Hero Fund is inextricably linked to disasters. After all, the impetus that spurred Andrew Carnegie's desire to honor civilian heroes from an idea into action lay in the settled dust and debris of the Harwick Mine Disaster of 1904," that chapter states.

In addition, several pages are dedicated to the Hero Fund's celebration of 10,000 heroes held in 2018. At the gala, Carnegie Hero No. 10,000, **Vickie Tillman**, and Carnegie Hero No. 10,001, **Jimmy Rhodes**, were presented with the Carnegie Medal. NPR's Scott Simon emceed the event; actor and Pittsburgh native Michael Keaton served as the keynote speaker.

"Courage shows up all the time in this world and often without any fanfare," said Keaton at the event.

Finally, the chapter on the six individuals who have been awarded the Carnegie Medal twice was updated to include the latest two-time awardees - **Charles T. Carbonell, Sr.**, and **Michael Robert Keyser**.

The heroes featured in this book offer a cross-section of the thousands of honorees who have received the Carnegie Medal. They represent only a few of the inspiring stories that uphold the Hero Fund's legacy, reminding us that true heroes are found, not on television or in comics, but in the uncommon strength that lives inside all of us.

Orders are being accepted at your favorite book retailers, including Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million, Bookshop, and Target.

For a complete list of the heroes mentioned in the book, e-mail carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org. ☒





Hero Fund internship program grows

This summer, two interns have joined the ranks at the Carnegie Hero Fund staff. University of Pittsburgh rising junior John DeSantes joined Claire Skirtirch, an intern since 2021, on the investigations team and recent Susquehanna University graduate Griffin Erdely is working in the communications department. Here they share what drew them to the Hero Fund.

JOHN DESANTES



John DeSantes

As a University of Pittsburgh rising junior, I had two requirements for an internship this summer: it had to further my skills for a future career in law enforcement and it had to be in Pittsburgh.

Participating in the Hero Fund's internship program meets both those requirements and more.

The people of Pittsburgh are friendly, and the city's spirit and energy are contagious, but not only is the Hero Fund located in Pittsburgh, it's part of Pittsburgh's storied history. Modern-day Pittsburgh wouldn't exist if it weren't for Andrew Carnegie's love for his second home, and the Hero Fund is part of that for him.

At the same time, working in the investigations department has allowed me to delve into investigations of real-world incidents applying the material that I've learned in the classroom in the law, criminal justice, and society program.

Learning about the Carnegie Hero Fund and its mission has grown my dedication to this position. I first learned about it as one of the many viewers who watched the segment about Carnegie heroes on 60 Minutes a few years ago. That piece was encouraging. While in the role, reading about and investigating these fantastic stories has been a positive experience. While the cases vary from the case studies we've covered in class, the variation is a nice change, while still sharpening the investigative skills I need to meet my future career goals, such as professional writing, communication, critical thinking, and analytical thinking skills. Being part of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission is an honor, and I want to make an impact while I have the opportunity.

I have learned more than I ever imagined, as I am truly humbled and inspired by every Carnegie hero. As an intern here, I have learned many things that I cannot learn in a textbook. I have learned true dedication, leadership, integrity, humility, and loyalty through all the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission staff.

Working in a profession where I can make a difference in society and my innate motivation to think critically while serving the community is why I want to have a career in law enforcement. I am eager to continue to learn and assist the Commission in every Carnegie Medal awarded in the future. The selfless and brave acts committed by all the heroes are truly inspiring, and I am grateful and honored to be a part of the history and success the Commission has had since 1904. The Carnegie Hero Fund Commission does inspiring work, and my belief in the mission strengthens daily.

GRIFFIN ERDELY



Griffin Erdely

Stories of heroes have always inspired me. Ever since I was young, my active imagination craved getting lost in a yarn. I looked to fantasy tales, graphic novels, and films showcasing epic quests, heroic feats, and a strong sense of morality. Growing up playing ice hockey, I also had plenty of childhood heroes to admire. The athletes I regarded seemed larger than life, almost like they, themselves, were fictional.

Those we identify as heroes have the ability to inspire us and make us understand different aspects of life, such as bravery, selflessness, and determination. I grew up an avid consumer of stories, and graduated from Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, with a Bachelor of Arts in creative writing and



HERO FUND INTRODUCES NEW PEER SUPPORT NETWORK FOR CARNEGIE MEDAL RECIPIENTS

A new program will be made available to Carnegie heroes thanks to a group of volunteer Carnegie Medal recipients who will serve as support coaches in a peer support network to be called "Heroes for Heroes."

Participants will be paired with one of a handful of volunteer coaches to discuss common experience and after-rescue issues and challenges where there is need for supportive communication.

The Hero Fund currently uses a team of volunteers to present the Carnegie Medal to newly awarded heroes around the country.

"We've long heard how beneficial it is for newly awarded recipients to talk to other Carnegie heroes," said Eric Zahren, Hero Fund President.

Although the Hero Fund has long offered to reimburse the cost of treatment of PTSD-related conditions that result from the heroic rescue, the Hero Fund has identified a need for broader support within its mandate.

Beyond the initial connection, the conversations will remain confidential from the Hero Fund, in case that, too, is an obstacle for some heroes.

"We want to provide support for heroes across the spectrum, and have no better resource to draw from than other awarded heroes who have experienced a similar life altering event and have dealt with the realities of the aftermath in daily life," concluded Zahren. For more information, go to carnegiehero.org/heroes/resources-for-awardees/hfh.

VETERAN INVESTIGATIVE INTERN LEAVES LASTING IMPRESSION



After two years of interning for the Hero Fund, investigative intern Claire Skirtich is moving on to start her professional career. Starting her internship as a Gannon University undergraduate, Skirtich will graduate this month with a Master of Science in criminalistics.

"I have really enjoyed my time working at the Commission. Being able to grow from only doing correspondence to actually writing my own cases has been amazing. I think the report writing skills will help me in my future career in law enforcement. I also loved being able to recognize the goodness of the world in a time when we all need it most."

Investigations Manager Joe Mandak on Skirtich: "Claire has become our go-to person to solve a problem or finish a new task – no matter how much else she's got going on. She never gets flustered; she just produces, dependably, day in, day out."

Intern Coordinator Jo Braun has joked all summer that she's going to give Claire the worst recommendation to anyone who calls because she doesn't want her to leave.

"Claire has added such an energetic personality to our office along with skills not normally seen in an intern. She has handled routine tasks like filing with the same professionalism as interviewing nominees for case write-ups. She has never backed down from additional responsibilities and has proven herself over and over again. Claire will definitely be missed!" she said. ☼

▶ from p.6

Hero Fund interns

publishing and editing. Having further developed my writing skills, I hope to one day tell similar stories through fiction. But, over time, I came to realize the impact and power that real hero stories can have as well. I have been reminded of that, and then some, in my short time working for the Carnegie Hero Fund.

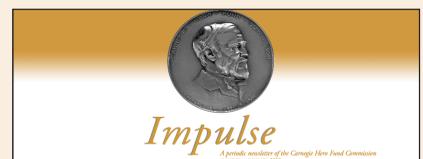
The Hero Fund's mission is what drew me to the organization – honoring the stories of REAL people doing heroic and selfless acts is something I found compelling and positive. Participating in the recognition of these individuals, who took on real risks and accepted the call to action, was an opportunity to work in an environment where I could give back to others. I want to contribute to spreading the word on these real-life heroes about whom society does not hear enough, and I wanted to have a sense of purpose while doing it.

It can be easy to fail to notice the everyday person with whom we walk the streets and share the subway. But, in a quick instant, one of those people next to us can make a difference. A prime example of this can be seen in the case of Andrew W. Mathieson, who hailed from my native Pittsburgh, and was awarded the Carnegie Medal after saving his secretary when she was threatened by an assailant with a gun in February 1986.

After Mathieson left a Pittsburgh Penguins hockey game one night with his wife and secretary, an armed man threatened his secretary with a gun and chased her in a parking lot. Mathieson made an instant decision and tackled the man from behind. Despite gunshot wounds to the chest, he chased away the assailant. He recovered in the hospital. Although he had achieved a heroic feat, Mathieson's secretary said that he never boasted about what he had done.

Like Mathieson, all of the Carnegie heroes share the same quality of selflessness, not asking for anything in return in the face of danger, and a similar compassion to help their fellow humans. Many of these heroes are not celebrated by society in the same way as a big-time athlete for example, with attention and praise for their accomplishments. In some cases, some of these heroes sacrifice everything, giving their lives to save another.

From the tragic to the uplifting, there is an integrity maintained by the Hero Fund as it recognizes each of these heroes. I am both excited and humbled to take in the stories of these heroes, and have no doubt I will forever be impacted by them and their stories, as well as the Hero Fund and its objective. ☼



Descendants of 2-time Carnegie Medal recipient visit Pittsburgh, Hero Fund

Although Michael O'Neil knew his father was a Carnegie hero, he didn't know the details. That's why, after seeing a name at the Hero Fund, he tracked him down to find out.

O'Neil's father, John J. O'Neil, Sr., was one of the individuals to receive the Carnegie Medal twice for acts of extraordinary civilian heroism. Both rescue operations by O'Neil were along the Hudson River in the Hudson River, New York, where O'Neil worked as a steel maintenance man.

O'Neil's first rescue occurred in 1916 when a 41-year-old woman fell into the Hudson River and, despite having been advised by fishermen to avoid physical contact due to her condition, O'Neil ran into the water to help her. He was hospitalized for 14 days on the river. It took 11 months to recover and needed hair wax. Despite his heroism, he was never mentioned in the news and O'Neil was awarded a local hospital for shock and exposure. They recovered.

Two years later, at night, in December 1916, a 42-year-old woman fell from the pier into the water. O'Neil leaped to the scene, held her up, and O'Neil was awarded a local hospital for shock and exposure. They recovered.

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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.



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.



PRESENTING

Carnegie Hero **Jose M. Pichardo** poses with New Hampshire Fire Marshal Sean P. Toomey, who presented Pichardo with the Carnegie Medal at a June 20 presentation at the Nashua (New Hampshire) Fire Rescue Station.

In October 2021, Pichardo kicked down the front door of a burning home. As thick, black smoke issued from the doorway, he went to his hands and knees and crawled into the living room. Despite intense heat and limited visibility, Pichardo followed the sound of the voice of the 97-year-old woman inside, finding her seated in a chair. He dragged the chair to the home's front porch and then farther from the house to safety.

"You entered a burning residence at great personal risk to rescue a trapped elderly resident," Fire Chief Steven Buxton told Pichardo during the ceremony. "Your willingness to become involved made a difference."

The woman was hospitalized overnight for treatment of smoke inhalation, but she recovered. Pichardo also inhaled smoke, but he recovered the next day.

Photo courtesy of the state Office of the Fire Marshal.



Sarah Perry, mother of Carnegie Hero **Aden Spencer Perry** displays the Carnegie Medal while Broward County (Florida) Mayor Lamar P. Fisher, left, and the Broward County Commissioners applaud at a June 6 commissioners meeting. Perry accepted the award on behalf of her son, who was posthumously awarded the Carnegie Medal after he drowned attempting to save a teen driver who was inside an SUV that left a Sunrise, Florida, roadway and entered a retention pond.

High schooler Aden Perry, 18, was walking his dog with his mother in April 2022 when they witnessed the car enter the water. The driver exited the car and called for help.

Aden entered the pond, but both the driver and Aden shortly submerged. Police divers later recovered them from the water but both teens had drowned.

At the ceremony, Fisher said he was honored that Perry chose the Broward County Commissioners to present the prestigious award.

"When I lost my son a year ago you were the first ones who reached out to me to honor my son with a Medal of Valor," Perry said at the presentation. "Since that time, you've been very supportive through the counties, through the cities of my initiatives that I've tried to bring to neighboring counties and cities."

Perry was referencing her mission to install rescue life rings at every body of water in the state of Florida.

That initiative was kicked off earlier this year by the installation of 70 Coast Guard-regulated life rings at city parks throughout Coral Springs, Florida.

"I feel it is my duty to carry on his memory, and something so simple as placing rescue rings near water is my way of keeping his legacy alive," Perry said earlier.

She said that was one of the reasons that she was so honored to receive the Carnegie Medal.

"Receiving this medal means so much because I made a promise to my son that he would never be forgotten, and this medal means that he will forever be apart of Carnegie history as a hero," she said.

PRESENTING



At a Pacific Grove, California, Carnegie Medal presentation held June 25, heroes **Paul W. Bandy, Aimee Johns, and Heath Braddock**, right, display the Carnegie Medal while flanking Stephen F. Bruemmer, the man they rescued from an attacking shark one year earlier. The presentation was held at Lover's Point which overlooks the rescue scene.

Pacific Grove Police Chief Cathy Madalone and Mayor Bill Peake presented the Carnegie Medal to the three rescuers at the outdoor ceremony. Bruemmer also thanked his rescuers.

"I am Steve Bruemmer. I am that unfortunate fellow who while swimming just 150 yards off shore right there was bitten by a 15-foot, 2,000-pound Great White Shark which left me for dead to be rescued by the heroes, Aimee, Paul, and Heath," he said while pointing to the ocean behind him.

The shark lacerated Bruemmer's upper left arm, upper legs, and lower torso. Bleeding profusely, Bruemmer, who at the time was 62, called for help. Bandy, 42, and his wife, Johns, 49, were paddle boarding nearby and paddled toward the scene, while Braddock, 43, who was on the beach, grabbed two stackable surfboards and also responded.

Once all three rescuers reached Bruemmer, Bandy and Braddock moved him to one of the surfboards. Braddock then paddled toward shore towing the man, who grasped Braddock's ankle as Johns grasped the back of the board and helped propel the unit along by paddling with her feet. Bandy followed the trio via his paddle board and called 911 en route.

Bandy told KION reporters that it was an honor to be recognized.

"The most blessed part of this entire day is to see Steve doing so well," he said.

New York Environmental Conservation Officer **Daniel Franz** holds the Carnegie Medal that was presented to him during a Carmel, New York, town meeting held July 5. Pictured from left are U.S. Rep. Michael Lawler, Franz, and Supervisor Michael Cazzari.

On the scene of an April 7, 2022, one-vehicle accident, Franz, 31, of Mahopac, New York, fully entered a burning SUV, grasped the dazed driver under his arms and pulled multiple times to free the driver's trapped foot. Eventually the driver came loose and Franz dragged him across the center console and out the front, passenger door.

"So often in our daily lives we hear of incidents where tragedy ensues, but we don't always hear of the great work that the men and women in law enforcement do every day to protect, to defend, to ensure the safety and well-being of our residents," Lawler said during the award presentation. "This is but one example of hundreds that are performed daily in the Hudson Valley. We are especially grateful today for Officer Franz and the work that he did—quick to act to save a life and ensure his well-being."

Franz said the fire in the SUV grew and spread quickly.

"A mere seconds later the flames are like 15 feet high," he said according to a July 15 article in Tap Into Mahopac.

Franz said the attention he's received for the act is "surreal."

"I really didn't think about it till the next morning," he said. "I have received so many awards and accolades for a split-second act. The support has been overwhelming."

Fellow conservation officers Aric Boyes and Murel Erik Lovgren and Council members Bob Schanil, Frank Lombardi, Suzi McDonough, and Stephen Baranowski also attended the ceremony.





LATEST AWARDEES OF THE CARNEGIE MEDAL

Since the last edition of Impulse, the following 16 individuals have been awarded the Carnegie Medal, bringing the total number of recipients to 10,371 since the Hero Fund's inception in 1904. The latest awards were announced June 20. The next announcement will be made in September.

A violent head-on collision in Petronila, Texas, left an SUV and sedan burning in a field off of the highway on Dec. 20, 2020. **Brady M. Pratt**, a 35-year-old off-duty border patrol agent of McAllen, Texas, was driving nearby and responded to the accident, where he was told two children remained inside the SUV. Despite flames issuing from the engine and heavy smoke inside the car, Pratt entered the car through the broken-out rear windshield. One of the girls, 8, told Pratt to first remove the younger girl, 1. With difficulty, Pratt reached into the backseat area and unlatched the girl's car seat harness, lifted her out of her seat, and backed toward the rear windshield, handing the girl to a woman outside the car. Pratt then returned for the 8-year-old, but realizing that a leg injury she suffered in the accident would make it difficult to remove her in the same manner, he left the SUV and, from the outside of the car, went to her window. A man there broke the window with a golf club. Pratt pulled the remaining glass from the door frame, then partially entered the car, grasped the girl under her arms and removed her to safety. Pratt then climbed on the SUV's roof and reached through the broken-out sunroof to check the pulses of the driver and a front passenger. Determining that they had died in the accident, Pratt retreated to safety. The 8-year-old suffered a broken leg. Pratt and the girls were not burned.

ultimately recovered downstream and was brought to the bank unresponsive. Attempts to revive him were unsuccessful. He had drowned.



Brady M. Pratt



Manjit Singh



Ryan Ross

During an early morning May 19, 2022, traffic stop, a Sequim, Washington, police officer was tackled to the ground. A violent struggle ensued for nearly 2.5 minutes while the assailant, who had just allegedly killed his mother, punched and kicked Officer Daniel Martinez, 31, and the two struggled for control of Martinez's gun. By the time Carnegie Hero **James Blouin** arrived on the scene, the gun had already discharged twice during the altercation, and the officer held tightly to the gun under the assailant's body. Blouin, a 50-year-old purchaser of Sequim, approached and attempted to take the gun, but failing to

find it, he pushed the assailant's head to the ground. As the assailant struggled to push himself up, Blouin grasped his hands and also called for help. Carnegie Hero **Ryan Ross**, a 45-year-old facilities maintenance technician, was driving nearby and responded. Ross, of Port Angeles, Washington, restrained the assailant's legs. Others arrived soon after to help subdue the man who was subsequently arrested. Martinez was hospitalized for treatment of injuries that included torn shoulder cartilage. Blouin and Ross did not need medical treatment. ▶

A 31-year-old farmer drowned Aug. 5, 2020, attempting to save an 8-year-old girl in the Kings River in Reedley, California. Samantha Cruz Pedro struggled to swim as she was separated from a group of children playing in the river and the swift current carried her downstream. Among those on the beach who were alerted by calls to help multiple people was **Manjit Singh** of Fresno, California, entered the river despite not knowing how to swim. He removed and unwrapped a turban he was wearing and extended it away from him as a lifeline as he advanced into water up to his neck. Shortly, he submerged and onlookers lost sight of him in the chaos. Another girl was removed from the water; she was not seriously injured. A man located Samantha and helped pass her to first responders on the bank. She was taken to a hospital and died six days later. Singh was



Carnegie Hero **James Blouin** poses with his family, from left, wife Cyn Blouin, daughter Jilian Blouin, and son Joe Blouin.

LATEST AWARDEES

A 53-year-old trader jumped into the 68-degree Houston Ship Channel off of La Porte, Texas, after a car entered the channel on New Year's Eve 2021. **Robert Cody Moore** of Bellaire, Texas, jumped from a ferry landing into the water 8 feet below. He swam to the vehicle and called for the driver inside to exit the car. At the point where water inside the car rose to cover the driver's head, the driver's window opened and the driver exited. Moore immediately grabbed the 63-year-old man by the collar, instructing him to float on his back, while Moore held him to his chest. After swimming back to the ferry landing and finding no way to exit the water, Moore towed the man to a nearby buoy, holding onto its tether in the 15-foot deep water. Two others in Moore's party tied together shirts to craft a lifeline and, standing on the landing, extended it to the water. Moore towed the man back to the landing and held onto the shirts where those on land dragged them to a point where they could pull the man out of the water. Moore then climbed out of the water.

Last June 27, a 16-year-old girl was wading in Lake Michigan off of Porter, Indiana, when she was pulled away from shore into water at least 5 feet deep. Water conditions were rough with rip currents, 4-foot waves and unpredictable water depths at the scene. A 38-year-old teacher was at the beach with his family when he saw the girl at a point about 60 feet from shore. A good swimmer, **Thomas Kenning** of St. Petersburg, Florida, entered the water and swam toward the girl.



Robert Cody Moore

Approaching her, he reached his hand out, but a wave broke over them before they could connect. Kenning submerged. Lifeguards arrived and removed the girl from the water. Kenning was spotted in the water about 15 minutes after he entered. Lifeguards and other rescue personnel removed him from the water and attempted to revive him, but he had drowned.

On Sept. 3, 2020, two sisters, Raabia K. Basaria, 22, and Zeanna K. Basaria, 16, were washed from a pier into Lake Huron off of Kincardine, Ontario, and struggled in 8 feet of water amid treacherous conditions including large waves and strong rip currents. A cousin in their party, 38-year-old teacher **Aleem Ramji** of Toronto, entered the water from the pier and swam to them. Another member of their party spotted Ramji holding onto Basaria and Zeanna, before a wave separated the three of them. Ramji lost consciousness. Others used a life ring and rope to assist Basaria and Zeanna from the water. Ramji was carried toward the beach where he was removed from the water. He could not be revived, he had drowned.



Thomas Kenning



Aleem Ramji



John M. Murphy

A 71-year-old man was fishing Dec. 18, 2021, in the 44-degree Sacramento River in Castella, California, when he lost his footing and was carried downstream. Bracing against an underwater boulder, Mark E. Likos held his head above water and shouted for help, as rushing water washed over him. In Likos' party, **John M. Murphy**, 39, a stay-at-home parent of Antioch, California, responded and entered the cold, swift water. Positioning himself behind Likos, he braced his feet on rocks and pulled Likos' upper body out of the water. Likos fell in and out of consciousness and Murphy had to wake him repeatedly. The current threatened to pull the men into the deeper current on either side of them. Murphy adjusted his position to remain stable. Rescue personnel arrived after Murphy had been in the water for an hour. Murphy then helped two rescue swimmers move Likos to an exposed boulder upstream where he was removed from the river by helicopter. He suffered hypothermia and nerve damage to his hands and arms. Murphy, who was nearly exhausted, was assisted to safety by rescue personnel. He suffered mild hypothermia and recovered. ▶



Two stills taken from an Dec. 31, 2021, surveillance video showing Carnegie Hero **Robert Cody Moore**, who immediately responded to a ferry landing after a car entered a Houston shipping channel. Left, Moore is seen crouching at the edge of the landing shouting at the driver to leave the vehicle. Right, Moore jumps from the landing and enters the water 8 feet below.



LATEST AWARDEES

Victor Villanueva and **Casandra Joann Kendrick** drowned while saving two small children from the same fate during a June 13, 2021, fishing trip in Seguin, Texas. Villanueva, a 30-year-old lumberyard worker of New Braunfels, Texas, took his three sons, ages 9, 6, and 5, to fish in the Seguin River. Another group of people on the tiny island that day included retail clerk Kendrick, 22. While wading, the 9-year-old stepped into water 15 feet deep near an undertow. In an attempt to reach the boy, his brothers also entered deep water. Villanueva swam to the boy and passed him to another woman who had responded from Kendrick's party. That woman brought the boy to safety. Kendrick and another woman swam to the younger boys, the other woman using a child's floatie. While one of the boys held onto the floatie, Kendrick handed the other boy to the other woman, who brought both boys to safety. Before they were able to return to shore, Villanueva and Kendrick submerged and drowned. The boys were unharmed.

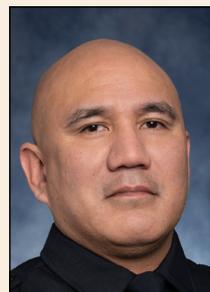


Victor Villanueva



Casandra Joann Kendrick

A Bellevue, Washington, police officer saved a 17-year-old from drowning after the boy, wearing a backpack filled with 50 pounds of weights, entered Phantom Lake on June 6, 2022. On duty, Officer **Kealii J. Akahane**, 51, and his partner, were dispatched to the scene, where after searching, they saw the boy's hand under the surface of the water at the end of a pier that jutted into the lake. Fully clothed including wearing boots and a ballistic vest, Akahane climbed over the wooden railing and jumped into the 50-degree water, where he submerged three times before finding the boy in the murky water. He pulled him to the surface and brought him to the pier. Akahane pushed the boy,



Kealii J. Akahane



Mickey Wilson

who was by then unconscious, upward and officers on the pier pulled him from the water, where they performed CPR. The boy was taken to the hospital by ambulance. He recovered. Firefighters assisted Akahane from the water. He was cold and nearly exhausted, but he did not seek medical treatment. He recovered.

A 30-year-old skier was dangling from a Dillon, Colorado, ski lift chair after his backpack became tangled in the chair as he attempted to disembark from the lift during a Jan. 4, 2017, outing. As the lift continued and carried Richard Rattenbury downhill, before it came to a stop the chest strap choked him and he lost consciousness. Alerted to Rattenbury's crisis, **Mickey Wilson**, a 28-year-old ski instructor of ▶

*Left: Despite an injured hand, Carnegie Hero **Mickey Wilson** shimmies 30 feet along a 2-inch steel cable to release a skier whose was being strangled by his backpack caught on a ski lift. Wilson dropped into the seat and cut the strap. The skier dropped to the ground, where others resuscitated him.*

Below: Richard Rattenbury and Carnegie Hero Mickey Wilson pose for a selfie on a ski lift.



Golden, Colorado, with a hand injury, climbed the ladder to a nearby tower, straddled a 2-inch steel cable and pulled himself 30 feet along the cable until he was at a point over Rattenbury's seat. Grasping the cable, he swung his body down and then dropped 2 feet into the seat where he tried to kick and break the plastic buckle that was caught in the chair. A ski patroller below the chair threw Wilson a knife, he caught it and used it to cut the strap, allowing Rattenbury to drop 10 feet to the ground, where others performed CPR and then took him by toboggan to a waiting ambulance. Rattenbury, who suffered a broken rib, was hospitalized overnight for observation; he fully recovered. Wilson rode the ski lift down to the mountain's base station, where he stepped off. He was not injured.

In a chaotic scene in the Atlantic Ocean off of Kure Beach, North Carolina, two sisters, 11 and 14, were pulled by a strong rip current to a point 110 feet from shore on April 18, 2021. Multiple people responded including **Jessica Lea Embry**, a 40-year-old, Wilmington, North Carolina, teacher, and **Rayna Michele Montgomery**, a 17-year-old, Stuart, Virginia, high school student. Embry reached at least one of the girls in water that was 9 feet deep, but she was repeatedly submerged by rough surf and eventually lost consciousness in the water. Rayna swam to the panicking 11-year-old who repeatedly submerged her. Rayna towed her to a point about 15 feet from shore where a man took the girl and brought her to safety. Rayna exited the ocean and vomited water she had swallowed. The 14-year-old girl also reached the beach, while firefighters rescued another man and Embry. Embry could not be revived; she had drowned. Rayna went to the hospital the following day; her treatment included the use of an inhaler for three days. She recovered.

After a Sept. 23, 2021, accident in Waverly, Nebraska, a 39-year-old warehouse manager entered the cab of a burning dump truck to free its unconscious driver whose foot was caught between the seat and the center console. Flames had entered the passenger compartment of the truck and were issuing from between the seats when **Joseph P. Cockerill** of Lincoln, Nebraska, responded to the truck. Cockerill fully entered the cab, knelt on the man's torso, and freed his trapped foot. He then backed out of the cab and he and another man pulled the 41-year-



Jessica Lea Embry



Rayna Michele Montgomery



Joseph P. Cockerill



Gerold Prather

old driver from the truck and brought him to safety. Flames, as high as 20 feet, grew to engulf the truck and spread to the grass below. The man was taken to the hospital for treatment of injuries sustained in the crash, but he was not burned.

A 16-year-old boy struggled to swim in Lake Michigan during a May 15, 2022, outing with his cousin and two friends at a beach off of Sawyer, Michigan. The boy and his friends were at least 100 feet out into the lake, when they started calling for help. The friends had submerged. In another party at the beach,

Gerold Prather, a 22-year-old robotic welder from Kalamazoo, Michigan, heard calls for help, entered the lake, and swam to the boy. Reaching him, they submerged and resurfaced. With difficulty, Prather first pushed the boy toward the beach and then positioned him on his back and towed him to a point about 50 feet from shore where, tiring, Prather shouted for help. Another man waded into the lake and helped Prather and the boy get to the beach. First responders took the boy to the hospital. Firefighters later recovered the bodies of the boy's friends, who had drowned. ☒

*Below: Flames consume the cab of a dump truck after a Sept. 23, 2021, accident in Waverly, Nebraska. Carnegie Hero **Joseph P. Cockerill** fully entered the cab of the truck where flames were issuing from between the seats to free the driver's foot and remove him from the truck. Right: The remains of the truck after firefighters extinguished the fire.*





OVERHEARD

A hero in every sense of the word.

– Father of **Katherine M. Wenzell**, Carnegie Medal recipient #10143

She didn't think about herself, she didn't hesitate, she didn't think what was best for her, she just knew that she had to help somebody else and somebody else was in need and she did that, and I think that's a true sign of a leader and a captain.

– Coach of **Marena L. Kouba**, Carnegie Medal recipient #10283

Awesome neighbors. It's nice to know there's caring people out there,

– Neighbor of **Steven W. Fitzpatrick**, Carnegie Medal recipient #90047

I don't feel like a hero. I just kind of went on what I thought was right and that was my instinct and my heart.

– **Douglas Leroy Tallman, Sr.**, Carnegie Medal recipient #10142

He was just in the right place at the right time because he was actually supposed to have gone to work earlier. It was meant for him to be there.

– Mother of **Calvin Parham**, Carnegie Medal recipient #10186, who saved his 85-year-old neighbor from his burning home.

We weren't supposed to be there, it was God to put us there.

– Widow of **Stacey Redmon**, Carnegie Medal recipient #10187

Am I a hero? No! Do I deserve anything in my opinion? No! Jeff and myself did what anyone should do and that's help someone in need.

– **Robert Lawson**, Carnegie Medal recipient #10190

I told these guys the other night you gave me what only one person in this life has ever given me and that was my mother. She gave me the initial gift of life, and they renewed that gift.

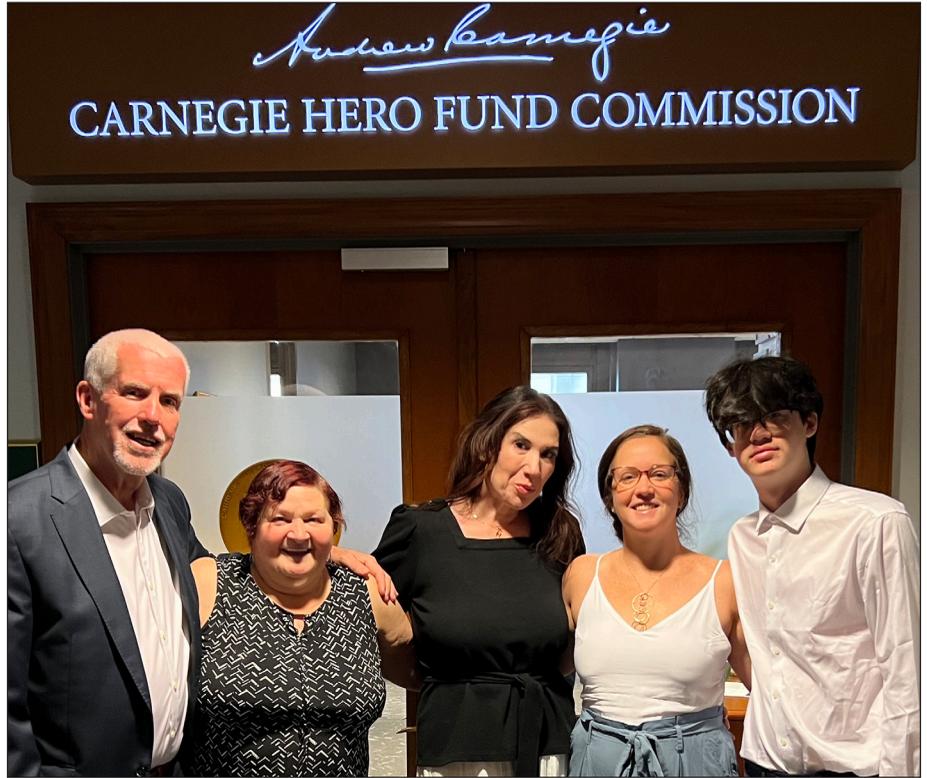
– Man saved from drowning by **Benjamin M. Blostein**, Carnegie Medal recipient #10195

I am just grateful I was able to be in the right place at the right time.

– Antonio Morgan, Carnegie Medal awardee #10228

That's exactly what I would've expected out of him. I definitely am proud.

– Father of **Christian W. Smith**, Carnegie Medal recipient #10254



Some of the members of the O'Neill family stand in front of the Hero Fund offices in Pittsburgh when they visited in June to learn more about two-time Carnegie Medal recipient **John J. O'Neill, Sr.** From left are Michael O'Neill, Stella O'Neill, Jenefer O'Neill Williams, Michelle O'Neill, and Liam O'Neill Murphy.

► from p.1

Descendants visit Pittsburgh

to the near-freezing water, swam 30 feet to the woman, grabbed her, and towed her back to a ladder that others had lowered. As O'Neill held to the ladder and the woman, the rough water caused his head to strike the wall repeatedly; and ice formed on his face and clothing. A rope was lowered to O'Neill, but his hands were so cold he could not tie it to the woman. A man descended the ladder and tied the rope around the woman, who was lifted from the water by others. O'Neill was aided up the ladder. They were treated at the hospital for shock and exposure, and O'Neill's heart condition was aggravated temporarily. He was hospitalized for a week and then recuperated at home for two months.

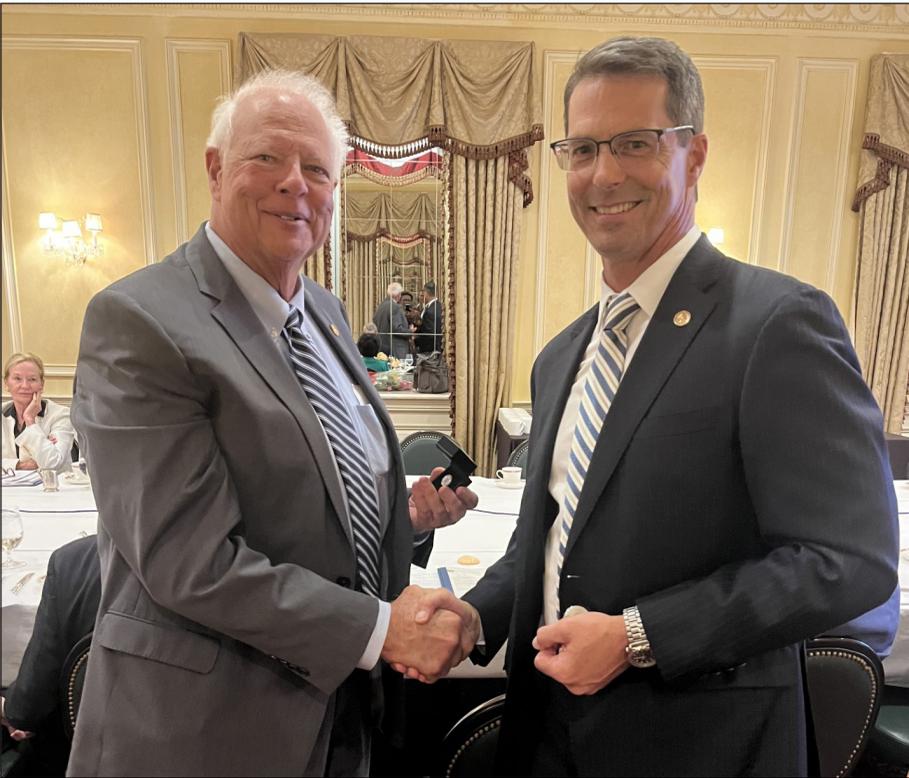
It was clear after corresponding with Michael O'Neill, the family wanted to know more, so several family members made the trek to the Commission's offices in Pittsburgh. There, they reviewed the 70-year-old investigative reports on O'Neill's acts of bravery.

Edward O'Neill, one of John's sons, said he was happy to receive more information about his father. "We are so thrilled to be able to see the honor you bestowed on John J. O'Neill up close. Being able to get to know the legacy of our father or, for some of us, our grandfather has been such an amazing experience," he said.

Following a brief tour of the office, the O'Neill family attended a dinner with Hero Fund President Eric Zahren, Director of Operations Melissa Brock, and board members Linda T. Hills, Kevin Hiles, and Arthur M. Scully III. The following day, the family joined Commission members at the Hero Fund's annual meeting, where the O'Neill family was recognized by the board.

Zahren reiterated the Commission's mission to honor and commemorate the "heroes of civilization" that Andrew Carnegie set forth in the Hero Fund's Deed of Trust. "We will always make sure his legacy is remembered," he said.

"It was one of the most remarkable days of our family's lives. It helped us put closure to our father's story and it allowed us to share his story with our grandchildren," Michael O'Neill said. ☼



Emeritus Commission member Dan Sandman accepts the emeritus pin from Hero Fund President Eric Zahren at the Commission's Annual Meeting held in June.

► from p.5

Commission elects 2 new members

currently serves on the Remake Learning Advisory Council and the Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools Advisory Board, and she sits on the Board of Directors for the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership and YouthPlaces.

“Both Duane and Dara are strong leaders in their fields, and we are excited to have their perspectives on our board. Their breadth of experience and passion for the Hero Fund’s mission will further strengthen the Hero Fund’s work,” said Eric Zahren, the Hero Fund’s president and chair.

In addition, longtime board members Mark Laskow and Dan Sandman received emeritus status at the Commission’s annual meeting held in June. Laskow and Sandman reached the maximum age of service as a regular member, but will “remain in our ranks” as emeritus members.

Laskow was elected to the board in 1992, serving at the helm of the organization since 2001. Sandman served for 21 years, including as treasurer of the organization for the last decade.

Any success [of the Hero Fund] in effecting the charitable purposes ascribed to it by Andrew Carnegie is due in no small part to the selfless participation and skill of its members, as exemplified by these individuals, who have to date served for a collective 52 years fulfilling Mr. Carnegie’s vision for the Fund,” stated a resolution that was read at the meeting.

Also at the annual meeting, commission member Evan Frazier departed the board after serving for seven years. Frazier was elected to the board in September 2015.

According to Zahren, Frazier “provided solid and consistent counsel and initiated and supported advances for the Commission’s staff and board” at a “crucial junction in the Commission’s development.”

Frazier said he was thankful to have served the Commission and participated in its mission to recognize civilian heroes.

“Being apart of this organization, this Carnegie family, has been a rewarding experience, and I am honored to have served,” he said at the Commission’s annual meeting held in June. ☼



GRAVE MARKERS AVAILABLE TO FAMILIES OF DECEASED HEROES

The Hero Fund is pleased to offer at no cost a bronze grave marker to the next of kin of any awardee who has died. The 3.75-inch medallion is designed to replicate the look of the Carnegie Medal, and can be displayed on an awardee’s stone or bronze headstone or on a flat-faced urn. For information, e-mail us at carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org.

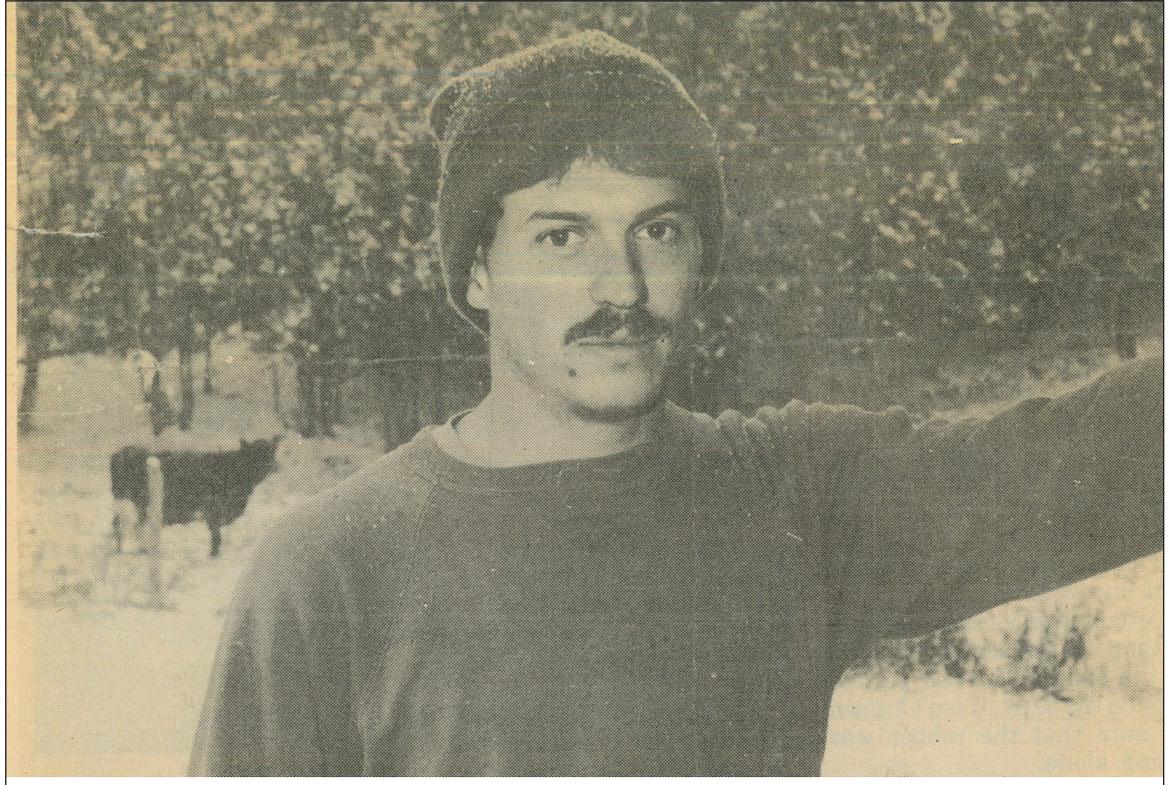


OBITUARIES SOUGHT TO COMPLETE HERO FUND'S HISTORICAL RECORD OF AWARDEES

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. Please send to the Hero Fund at carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org.



Photos by Bruce Patton/
Sherbrooke Record.
*Carnegie Hero **Michael Naylor** poses for a photograph appearing in the Nov. 28, 1995, edition of the Sherbrooke Record. Naylor, 23, received the Carnegie Medal in 1996 for his actions in using a hammer multiple times to attempt to drive an enraged bull away from his employer on a Quebec farm.*



1994 – Modest farmhand saves Quebec farmer from attacking bull

Warren Deacon, a 47-year-old beef farmer from Waterville, Quebec, had begun Nov. 25, 1994, like any other, as he took responsibility for rounding up the cattle on his farm. Located in Ascot, Québec, Deacon owned many cattle that ranged on his pastures. Among them was a fully grown, 2,600-pound purebred Simmental bull that Deacon purchased four months prior. The hornless 4-year-old bull had taken part in local parades, thought to have a quiet and easy to handle personality.

Early that morning, Deacon used a rope to lead the bull across the pastures to house it in the barn. Deacon's 23-year-old hired hand, Michael Naylor, was repairing a fence near the barn. The young man from Compton, Québec, had been on hand for 6 weeks. Although he had worked on dairy farms previously, he had never worked with bulls.

The 500 feet of land between the two men was slightly elevated making it impossible for Naylor to see Deacon. As Deacon led his prized Simmental, the bull suddenly became enraged and butted Deacon in the back, knocking him to the ground. Deacon later told Hero Fund investigator Marlin Ross that he assumed the sudden attack from the bull was because Deacon had recently separated it from the calves and cows it normally ranged among freely. As Deacon lay stunned on the ground from the first blow, the bull began to maul and stomp on his torso. Even after Deacon tried to play dead for a moment, the bull kept attacking him. He then called out to Naylor for help. ►



*Warren and Linda Deacon speak to reporters in a photo that appeared in the Nov. 28, 1995, edition of the Sherbrooke Record. After her husband was attacked a year earlier by an enraged bull on his farm and saved by farmhand **Michael Naylor**, a thankful Linda Deacon submitted Naylor's name for consideration for a Quebec bravery award.*

Hearing Deacon's cries but unable to see what was happening, Naylor went toward the scene. Seeing Deacon on the ground, Naylor ran at the bull, screaming, and wielding the hammer he still held from repairing the fence. He tried to divert the bull's attention away from Deacon.

"The first thing I saw was the bull rolling him around like a rag doll," Naylor told Sherbrooke Record reporters.

"I had a carpenter's hammer in my hand and I just started poking the bull in the head and yelling at him to distract him," he said.

The bull showed no immediate interest in Naylor, continuing to focus its efforts on the injured Deacon. Even after Naylor reached the bull and struck it over the head with his hammer, managing to move it a short distance away, the target of the animal's rage remained unchanged. It immediately refocused its attention toward Deacon, continuing its assault on him.

"He didn't want me, he wanted Warren," Naylor said in a media account of the incident.

Urgent to get the bull away from Deacon, Naylor came back a second time and used the hammer again to hit the unnerved animal. It produced similar results, the bull following him a short distance, but going right back to Deacon. Not willing to concede, Naylor returned again and hit the bull a third time with his tool, finally getting it to move about 5 feet away from Deacon, when it stopped in its tracks. Seeing a momentary opportunity, Naylor yelled for Deacon to crawl 25 feet into a portable cattle feeder – a steel cage, measuring 12 feet long, 5 feet wide, and 4 feet high, that was used to hold bales of hay from which multiple cows could feed. Made of steel tubing, the rectangular feeder provided enough protection to separate Deacon from the raging bull. At least, temporarily.

With Deacon in the feeder, Naylor went back toward the barn to ►

“The first thing I saw was the bull rolling him around like a rag doll.”



*Linda Deacon submitted several photos to Hero Fund Investigator Marlin Ross during his investigation of farmhand **Michael Naylor**, who rescued her husband from an attacking bull in Quebec in 1994 including this photo that depicts the metal bale feeder that sheltered Warren Deacon temporarily from a bull after he was mauled by the enraged animal.*



Farmhand saves farmer

retrieve Deacon’s parked pickup truck, giving the hammer to Deacon in the feeder before leaving.

But during his absence, the bull returned.

It resumed its attack on Deacon within the feeder, butting at the spaces between the side bars. The relentless bull nearly managed to maneuver itself beneath the bottomless feeder, almost lifting it. It would not stop at trying to get to Deacon.

Naylor returned with the truck and used the vehicle as a battering ram to push the bull away from the feeder. With Deacon moving slowly from his injuries, Naylor opened the passenger side door, helped him in the cab, and drove back to the barn where they then called for help. Naylor left the situation unscathed, but Deacon had extensive injuries.

“At first I didn’t think I was that bad,” Deacon told reporters later. “But then when I laid down I couldn’t breathe.”

An ambulance crew and police officer responded to the scene to take Deacon to the hospital. He was treated for internal bleeding, broken ribs, a collapsed lung, and a laceration to his liver that required surgery. He spent 29 days in the hospital, and even after being released from the hospital, Deacon was unfit to do work on the farm for more than two months.

“I will never be back to full capacity,” Deacon said. “I’m at about 75 percent, but I get tired faster.”

In the weeks that followed the incident, Naylor and Deacon’s wife, Linda, took over responsibilities on the farm. They also ►

“At first I didn’t think I was that bad, but then when I laid down I couldn’t breathe.”



Another photo submitted by Linda Deacon to Hero Fund investigator Marlin Ross to assist in his investigation. This photo depicts a similarly sized bull purchased to replace the bull that attacked Warren Deacon.

had help from family and friends that supported them taking on Deacon's duties.

"I was lucky — everybody helped me when I was down," he said.

It was ultimately decided that the bull would be butchered.

Several months after the bull's attack, Linda Deacon heard about the Quebec government's award for bravery, and she immediately thought of Naylor. According to the Sherbrooke Record, Naylor was uncomfortable with the attention he gained for his actions and was more focused on forgetting what happened.

"I don't figure I was doing anything that anyone else wouldn't have done," Naylor said in the Nov. 28, 1995 article.

"I'm sure Warren would have done the same for me ... I'm a quiet person, I don't like too much action ... Now I'm going to Quebec City to get an award or a plaque or something," he said.

Despite his modesty, Naylor was awarded with the medal from Quebec City and recognized for what he had done to save Deacon. A year later, he was awarded with the Carnegie Medal and a \$2,500 grant.

"For a young fella he handled himself pretty good," Deacon said about Naylor. "If I hadn't had a good hired man, I would have had to sell [the farm]." ☒

— *Griffin Erdely, communications intern*

“For a young fella he handled himself pretty good.”



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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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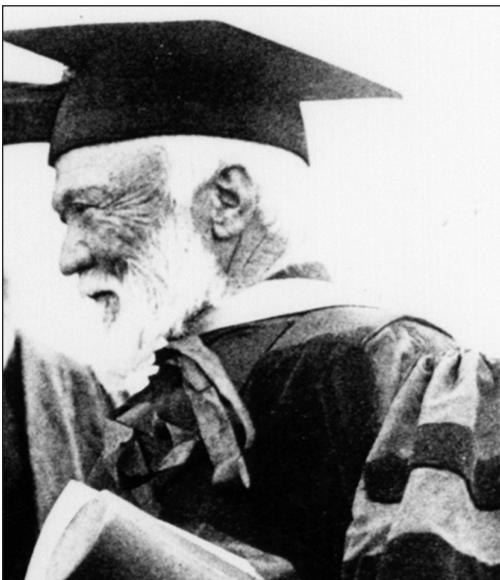
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THE QUOTABLE A.C.



Attract the attention of the people. This leads them to think ... and finally to stir within themselves to desire to go and do likewise.

— May 31, 1905 letter from Andrew Carnegie to Charles Taylor, first Hero Fund president

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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