By Jim Buchanan

The Sylvia (North Carolina)
Herald

Editor's note: This story first appeared in the Nov. 23 edition of The Sylvia Herald and is reprinted with permission.

It’s been more than 110 years since news hit Jackson County that a couple of mountain men’s heroics on Whiteside Mountain had earned them recognition from the prestigious Carnegie Hero Fund.

More than a century later, recalling a dizzying account of bravery

By Jim Buchanan/The Sylvia (North Carolina) Herald

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It’s been more than 110 years since news hit Jackson County that a couple of mountain men’s heroics on Whiteside Mountain had earned them recognition from the prestigious Carnegie Hero Fund.

The incident that sparked the honor had occurred a couple of years before, in May of 1911. It might have become one of those tales only handed down by local families or perhaps lost in time altogether were it not for something of a lobbying campaign to give the rescuers their proper recognition.

Rolling the clock back a bit further, Andrew Carnegie sold Carnegie Steel to J.P. Morgan in 1901. That netted Carnegie the tidy sum of nearly one-quarter of a billion dollars’ worth of bonds. Three years later the Harwick Mine disaster occurred in Cheswick, Pennsylvania, an explosion claiming 179 miners and two aid workers, Daniel Lyle and Selwyn Taylor, who were overcome by fumes while looking for survivors. The incident haunted Carnegie – “I can’t get those widows and...”

LONGTIME HERO FUND COMMISSION MEMBER DIES AT AGE 75

Hero Fund Commission member Dan Sandman, 75, of Vero Beach, Florida, and Upper St. Clair, Pennsylvania, died Thursday, Nov. 30, 2023. He had served on the Commission for 21 years.

He was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on May 1, 1948, to Martin Joseph and Charlotte (Frey) Sandman.

Sandman was a two-time graduate of The Ohio State University as an Evans Scholar undergraduate in 1970 and a Barton Scholar at the Moritz College of Law in 1973. He worked as the general counsel and executive at Marathon Oil Corporation, USX, and US Steel. Throughout his career, Sandman and his family lived in Ohio, London, Houston, Texas, and finally settled in Pittsburgh. His many interests included teaching Corporate Governance Law as an adjunct professor, p.2
Steven Alan Tarnoff, 73, died on Thursday, Oct. 12, 2023, in Morristown, Tennessee. Tarnoff received the Carnegie Medal in 1981 after saving a man from burning after a plane crashed in Spokane, Washington. All others aboard the aircraft were killed in the crash. When Tarnoff crawled out of the wreckage, he saw another man who was still alive but could not get out. Unable to walk, Tarnoff crawled back to the aircraft and reached the man near increasing flames. With difficulty, due to his injuries and being greatly outweighed, Tarnoff dragged the 37-year-old man to a safe distance from the wreckage shortly before it was entirely engulfed by the flames.

Tarnoff graduated with three degrees at Villanova University: education science, history, and military science. At commencement, he was awarded the Distinguished Naval Graduate Award, one of only 20 awarded that year throughout the United States.

After a brief opportunity to follow his true passion as a history teacher for junior high and high schools, he was called to serve his country, fighting in Vietnam. He spent three tours as a naval weapons officer aboard the John Paul Jones, as well as inland at Quang Tri, Vietnam. His final year in the Navy was spent in JAG training.

Upon being honorably discharged, Steve was hired by Hoechst Pharmaceutical where he remained for 21 years, working in a variety of positions but most notably as a governmental affairs manager. After retiring from Hoechst, Steve and his three best friends used their combined expertise to found The Franklin Group, where they spent 11 more years doing regulatory law consulting for a multitude of other pharmaceutical companies. In his combined years in the pharmaceutical industry, Tarnoff was responsible for bringing many life-saving medications to market by gaining FDA approval.

Tarnoff was blessed to have met his soulmate and love of his life in the summer of 2019, Robin Reinhart, and later married in February 2022. Tarnoff is survived by his wife; and his three stepsons, Zach, Connor and Jonas.

Stanley W. Bowes, 86, died on Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023, at the Regina General Hospital in Regina, Saskatchewan.

Bowes was born to Stan and Freda (Olson) Bowes in Walpole, Saskatchewan, on March 19, 1937.
Bowes was awarded the Carnegie Medal in 1966 after saving a man from suffocation, after the man collapsed at the bottom of a 23-foot-deep pit, where water was 3 feet deep. With the help of an assistant, Bowes raised the man from the bottom with a rope attached to a safety harness, but the man became caught under a platform. While the assistant held the rope, Bowes descended a ladder to the platform and pulled him onto his lap, before Bowes lost consciousness. Others responded including Earl Gray. They withdrew the man from the pit using the rope, and Gray attached the same rope to his belt where he descended the ladder to the platform. Gray secured the rope around the chest of Bowes and removed him. All three men were hospitalized and recovered. Gray also received the Carnegie Medal.

Bowes married Mary Renwick in 1961 and moved to Regina in 1971 where he operated a trucking company for many years. In his spare time, he lovingly restored antique tractors. Over the years, he was proud to display his tractors at the Farm Progress Show and take part in the antique parade. Bowes had a large group of friends who all shared this passion. In his retirement, he devoted countless hours volunteering at the Sukanen Ship Pioneer Village and Museum near Moose Jaw. A conservationist his entire life, Bowes loved responsible hunting practices and was involved with The Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation through their Deer Feeding Program and Gun Safety Training. Bowes was dedicated to his pursuits and had strong beliefs.

He is survived by his wife; daughter Karen Bonkowski; sons Dale, Alan, and Kevin; two granddaughters; a great granddaughter; his sister Norine; four nieces; and four nephews. Bowes was preceded in death by his wife and sister Butella Parsley.

ARNOLD WARREN PARRETT


He was born to Neal and Pearl (Manning) Parrett on Oct. 15, 1938, in Williamsburg, Kentucky.

Parrett received the Carnegie Medal in 1961 for his attempted rescue of a 4-year-old boy from drowning. The boy was swept into the Great Miami River after his father’s motorboat stalled above a dam where the water was 5 feet higher than normal. His father and brother were also swept into the water but managed to reach the bank of the river.

From the bank below the first of four bridges, Parrett entered the water. Swimming hard, he overtook the boy and attempted to tow him toward the bank, but both were carried downstream. The swift current pulled the boy from the grasp of Parrett, who regained his hold but still could not make any progress toward the bank. The current again jerked the boy from Parrett’s grasp. Tiring rapidly, Parrett swam after the boy but could not overtake him and was submerged intermittently. At the second bridge, Parrett, who had swum 3,000 feet, grasped a rope lowered by firemen and clung to it until two policemen reached him in a motorboat and took him aboard. The police in the motorboat were later able to pull the 4-year-old aboard and another man who had attempted to save him.

Parrett received his education in the Hamilton Public Schools. On June 21, 1957 he married Donna June Bardot in Newport, Kentucky. He was employed by Beckett Paper Company and retired after 32 years of service. He was a devoted member of the North Fairfield Baptist Church. After retirement, just like before, Parrett lived life to the fullest. He loved spending time with his family and friends and playing volleyball.

Parrett loved to travel, whether by bus, plane, car, or cruise ship. He had a love for the outdoors and listening to music. Parrett will always be remembered as a fun-loving, easy-going, witty, “never met a stranger” kind of guy. He was described as a selfless man.

Parrett is survived by his daughter, Dreama Barnes; son, Arnold Dwayne Parrett; three grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife and sister Butella Parsley. ➤p. 5
children of the mine out of my head” – and he gave $40,000 to the Harwick relief committee and presented two gold medals to Lyle and Tyler. That was the birth of the Hero Fund, which had its inaugural class in 1905. The Rev. G.W. Belk heard of the Whiteside rescuers and thought they’d be fine recipients. He penned an article that ran in a number of newspapers across the state recounting their saga. He opened his tome with his amazement upon seeing Whiteside himself, taken with its imposing rise and sheer cliffs, before recounting the tale. “About three months ago, a party of sight-seers from Highlands set out for Whiteside Mountain. The company was composed of Mr. and Mrs. Charles N. Wright, Mr. and Mrs. {William L.) Dillard, and Misses Martha Heacock, Eliza Peek and Irena Edwards; Messrs. Frank Cabe, Hatley McCall, Sam Reese, Barney Wilson, Gus Baty and Jean Potts. Just 13 in all. On reaching the summit the company soon became divided, some going to the highest point, some to the ‘Lion’s Tongue’ or ‘Fool’s Rock,’ while Mr. and Mrs. Wright, Miss Heacock and Mr. McCall went on some 200 yards farther to the north. Suddenly the top of the mountain was ringing with wild screams. Mr. Wright rushed rapidly to the scene. All was confusion. The women were running to and from, almost frantic. Mr. Baty and some of the others had been out on the rock, viewing the scenes with a glass, when, in a moment of dizziness, he made a false step and slipped from the projecting rock and shot like an arrow down the cliff. Just then one of the girls fainted.” Wright climbed out on the rock and saw Baty had fallen some distance but had been caught by the last piece of vegetation, a scrub rhododendron, and was dangling over a sheer drop of around 1,800 feet. Belk wrote, “No man in the country knows Whiteside Mountain better than Charlie Wright, and no one better knew the risk of attempting to reach Baty.” He asked Dillard to accompany him on a rescue attempt, to which Dillard agreed. The two navigated a ledge to get within 30-40 feet of Baty. Facing a sheer cliff, Dillard turned back, while Wright went on, his only purchase being small crevasses in the cliff face to a position about 20 feet above Baty. Somehow he managed to maneuver down to the badly injured Baty, who was severely bruised in addition to having had a large stick pierce his head behind the ear. And there the two were, 2,000 feet of air below them and 60 feet of steep slope above. Wright pulled Baty up by the collar and began inching his way up the rock face. “To get out himself would seem almost impossible. But to climb that rock with a man half killed, would be little less than a miracle,” Belk wrote. Wright called out to Dillard, saying he if couldn’t help he needed to send for help. Realizing the two men were in mortal peril, “Dillard took on new courage” recounting to Belk “We held Baty on his feet, on each side, dragging and pushing him little by little — moving his feet along with our feet, and holding on. I don’t know how, till we reached the ledge where the rock was not so steep. Here we rested, till the lines and halters from the buggies were brought, and we tied them around Mr. Baty and
Carnegie Hero Donal A. Wallace, 93, died Saturday, Dec. 9, 2023 in Happy Valley, Oregon surrounded by his family. Wallace was born May 25, 1930 in Sonora, California to Arthur and Alta Wallace. Wallace earned the Carnegie Hero Medal for saving a girl’s life from an oncoming train at Multnomah Falls, Oregon, on Feb. 19, 1950. The young girl had strayed from her grandfather and froze on the tracks as the speeding locomotive was approaching. As he grabbed her arm, the girl resisted and Wallace lost his footing. He regained a foothold just in time to pull the both of them up against the railing of a retaining wall as the speeding train passed inches from his face. The heroic act also earned him an award of “Citizen of the week” from the famous columnist, author, and television personality, Jimmy Fidler.

Wallace worked many jobs, from auto parts clerk to truck driver, and he eventually became a successful upholsterer and ran his own vocational trade school, Portland Upholstering School, for more than 30 years. He was very proud that many of his students were from the Veterans Department and State Rehabilitation Services, where he helped numerous individuals over the years overcome their own hardships to become successful in the upholstery trade. This is where he met the love of his life, Rosalie, after hiring her as the business secretary. They married in August 1965. Wallace loved to play the steel guitar and had a fondness for country music. He loved to travel to the desert and enjoyed camping, hiking, and biking with his family. Wallace is survived by his loving wife; son Jeff; and two grandchildren, Ellie and Ethan.

Dizzying account of bravery

Belk concluded his report thusly: “No report of this incident has been given to the papers. A man must see the mountain to be fully impressed with the degree of heroic nerve necessary to do such a deed. A gentleman who knew all the facts, said to me, “Charlie Wright is the only man in this county, in my judgment, who has the nerve and the courage even to have attempted to rescue Gus Baty from the edge of that cliff. And after seeing the place I am of the same opinion. If any man ever deserved the hero medal, Charlie Wright is that man. And next to him, W.M. Dillard. These men told me that no sum of money could tempt them to undertake it again. If Mr. Carnegie ever gave a medal to men who deserved it, let him give medals to Charlie Wright and, W.M. Dillard.”

Over the years details of the story changed in varying accounts, including Baty falling when showing off for the girls in the outing to whiskey being involved. In a 2015 article in the Herald Gary Carden recounted “a number of mythical tales emerged about the incident, and Gus was often asked about the bottle of whiskey in his pocket. Gus said that the bottle broke in his fall. He also noted that he never touched another drop of whiskey. Instead, he became a gifted carpenter and his handiwork can still be seen in a number of houses in Highlands. Gus once told an interviewer, ‘I built good houses and I wish folks would remember that instead of the fact that I fell off Whiteside Mountain.’”

The Jackson County Journal reported the Hero awards on Nov. 13, 1913. Wright received $2,000 and a gold medal, Dillard a silver medal and $2,000.

Rev. Belk’s account almost certainly spurred that recognition. One can imagine he was a very persuasive man in the pulpit as well.
Glendale (Wisconsin) police officers Robert M. Wilson, Jr., center, and Andrew Reischl, right, pose with the Carnegie Medal with police Chief Mark Ferguson, who presented the medals to them during morning roll call on Jan. 10.

Wilson and Reischl entered the dangerously cold Milwaukee River on April 10, 2022, to rescue an unresponsive driver, 46, of an SUV that had entered the river and submerged in water 9 feet deep. Wilson, 32, arrived at the scene first and swam about 100 feet to the SUV, peering through its sunroof, but he could not see anyone inside. He swam back to the bank, and when Reischl, 34, arrived with a window-breaking tool, and they swam to the SUV again. Seeing that the driver’s window was partially down, Reischl kicked at it until it lowered completely. Holding to the car’s roof cargo bar, Reischl straddled the two-inch steel cable and pulled himself along the cable to a point above the man’s chair. He dropped to it and, using a pocket knife to slice the strap, causing the man to fall. The man was treated at a hospital for a broken rib and recovered without any long-term injuries. Wilson was uninjured.

“It was such an honor to have the opportunity to present him with the Carnegie Medal for his bravery,” Pettersen said in a Facebook post about the presentation.

Pettersen represents Colorado’s seventh district.


Wilson was awarded the highest civilian honor for the Jan. 4, 2017, rescue of a man whose backpack was caught on a ski lift chair and strangled him as he attempted to disembark. As the ski lift continued downhill, the 30-year-old skier dangled by his neck and quickly lost consciousness.

After being alerted by screams, Wilson removed his skis and climbed a nearby tower. Wilson removed his gloves and a hand brace from a recent injury and climbed to the top of the tower where he then, without a harness, straddled the two-inch steel cable and pulled himself along the cable to a point above the man’s chair. He dropped to it and, using a pocket knife to slice the strap, causing the man to fall. The man was treated at a hospital for a broken rib and recovered without any long-term injuries. Wilson was uninjured.

“We are very appreciative of the Carnegie foundation recognizing the actions of our officers,” Ferguson told the Hero Fund. 
Carnegie Hero **Gerold Prather** poses with U.S. Rep. Bill Huizenga after Huizenga presented the Kalamazoo resident with the Carnegie Medal at a private presentation held Dec. 18, at Huizenga’s Portage office.

Prather received the Carnegie Medal after he rescued a teenage boy from drowning on May 15, 2022. The boy and three others were at least 100 feet from the Lake Michigan shoreline, when they shouted for help and struggled to stay afloat. Prather, who was with another party on the beach, immediately swam to the boys in deep, cold water. As he reached a 16-year-old, they submerged and resurfaced. With difficulty Prather pushed the boy away from him, closer to the beach, and then positioned the boy on his back and towed him halfway back to shore. Once they reached wadable water, Prather shouted for help because he was quickly tiring. Another man waded to the pair and helped Prather bring the boy to the beach. Two of the other three boys died.

“Gerold Prather answered the call to save a total stranger at great risk to his own personal safety,” said Huizenga. “It is an incredible honor to present this award to Gerold because he embodies the very spirit of the Carnegie Medal. Gerold’s bravery is a tremendous example of how we can make a positive, life-changing difference in our community.”

In addition to receiving the Carnegie Medal, Huizenga presented Prather with an account of his heroism to be printed in the Congressional Record. The Congressional Record is the official record of history regarding proceedings, events, and debates that occur in Congress.

“I didn’t think I was going to be able to go through with it,” Prather told reporters about his rescue in a news interview. “But I just turned off my brain and tried to do what I could. I ended up grabbing the one boy and helped get the second.”

Huizenga represents Michigan’s fourth district.
Left photo: Carnegie Hero Kendall Reyes, left, accepts the Carnegie Medal from Hero Fund Commission member Nancy Rackoff at a Dec. 1 presentation hosted by Reyes’ department in Palm Beach, Florida.

In June, Reyes was called to a scene where a 67-year-old woman who was perched on the ledge of the roof of a six-story building and threatening to jump. Officer Reyes, 38, arrived and attempted to establish a rapport with the woman, but could not lure her away from the edge. Concluding that she was about to jump, Reyes sprinted 15 feet to the woman and pulled her backward to the deck of the roof.

When the Hero Fund announced the awards in September, Reyes told reporters she was thrilled.

“Being recognized by such an organization is incredible in itself,” Reyes told the Daily News.

Right photo: Carnegie Hero Thomas Anthony Trento also attended the presentation. Trento was awarded the medal in 1983 after saving a 23-year-old man from a burning car in Cherry Hills Village, Colorado.

“It was beautiful,” Trento said about the presentation to Reyes.

Carnegie Hero Joseph D. Donnell, center, recalls the rescue of a 9-year-old boy from a submerged vehicle in a remote reservoir in Oakley, Utah, at his hometown’s Jan. 7 council meeting, where Kamas City Mayor Matt McCormick presented Donnell with the Carnegie Medal with Donnell’s wife and daughter.

“It’s really incredible that we have people like you in our community,” McCormick told Donnell as he presented the medal.

According to a KPCW article, Donnell got emotional as he remembered the rescue. The pickup truck had sank in water, 9 feet deep, and while two other children were rescued from the truck, 9-year-old Paxton K. Knight remained inside. Donnell, 55, was kayaking nearby when he saw the truck enter the 60-degree water. Donnell removed his life vest and exited his kayak, swimming to the truck. He submerged to fully enter the truck and felt around the backseat area and floorboards for Paxton in the murky water. Not finding him, Donnell returned to the surface for air and then dived again, entering the truck through a rear door and searching for Paxton with his hands. Witnesses said Donnell dove at least six times. On the final dive, Donnell felt Paxton’s clothing, pulled him to his chest, exited the truck, and returned to the surface. He swam him to the bank, where he and others performed CPR on the non-responsive boy. After 15 minutes of CPR, Paxton had a faint pulse. He was taken to the hospital by helicopter where he remained for eight days. He fully recovered. Donnell was tired and cold but not injured.

“We really didn’t expect him to survive,” Donnell told those in attendance of the council meeting. “He walked out of the hospital 100% healed. He’s a fighter.”

Donnell said that receiving the Carnegie Medal was “the highlight of my life.”
Family members of Carnegie Hero Anthony Diehl gathered to receive his Carnegie Medal at a presentation held at a Jan. 8 city council meeting in Beavercreek, Ohio. Pictured, from left, are Diehl’s sister, Amanda Diehl; his partner, Laura Steele holding their daughter Alexia Diehl; sister Brittany Diehl, and mother Teresa Diehl behind Diehl’s stepson, Robert Steele. Daughter Athena Diehl is holding her father’s award standing next to Diehl’s stepdaughter, Sophia Steele, who is in front of Diehl’s brother-in-law Andrew Britt, the father of the boy who Diehl attempted to save. On the far right is Beavercreek Mayor Don Adams.

Anthony Diehl was posthumously awarded the Carnegie Medal for attempting to save his nephew from drowning in South Haven, Michigan. On July 13, 2022, Diehl’s 7-year-old nephew was using a bodyboard in shallow water while out on Lake Michigan with other children in his family when the waves became stronger. There were no lifeguards on the beach, and the boy reached a point farther from shore than the other children. Diehl was on the shoreline with other adult relatives and immediately waded out into the water. He swam out to his nephew but the two of them were soon separated and their family lost sight of them. Diehl’s nephew was washed to shore by the rough current and despite attempts to revive him, drowned. Diehl was found the next day after deteriorating water conditions prevented rescue operations that night. He, too, had drowned.

Beavercreek Mayor Don Adams presented the award to the family. Steele accepted the award on his behalf, along with their children and his nephew’s father.


In January 2021, Badet rescued a couple who had entered the Pacific Ocean from San Diego’s seaside cliffs and struggled in the choppy water. Badet was surfing nearby when he spotted the couple in a cove, where 10-foot waves crashed into the rocky cliffs and water circulated like a whirlpool. In the cove the 59-degree water was 9 feet deep. Badet paddled to them, and, instructing the man to hold onto the nose of the surfboard, moved the man to an area of the cove where he could exit the water. Badet paddled back to the woman and did the same, but she panicked and would not let go of the surfboard to exit the water. Waves crashed around them, and, after two more failed attempts to get the woman to safety, Badet feared that the waves would slam them both against the cliffs, so he paddled into the center of the cove and waited for help. Lifeguards arrived, entered the water, swam to the woman, and took her to safety. Badet paddled about 50 feet where he could exit the water safely.

Peters commended Badet for his bravery.

“This award is given to people who risk death or serious injury saving lives,” Peters tweeted later that day.
Since the last edition of Impulse, the following 18 individuals have been awarded the Carnegie Medal for Heroism, bringing the total number of recipients to 10,405 since the Hero Fund’s inception in 1904. The latest awards were made Dec. 12. The next announcement will be made in March.

**F. Daniel Calix A.**, a 23-year-old roofer, was returning home Nov. 22, 2021, to his Flemington, New Jersey, apartment when he saw flames through the living room window of his 59-year-old neighbor, who used bottled oxygen. He called for his brothers, 35-year-old **Marvin D. Argueta R.**, a landscaper, and 29-year-old **Franklin G. Calix A.**, a carpenter. Together, they ascended a stairway to the second-floor apartment, kicked down the man’s front door, and tried to enter the apartment, but thick, black smoke made entry nearly impossible. Using his cell phone’s flashlight, Argueta stood at the doorway where he heard the man calling for help. Argueta entered the apartment, bear-hugged the man and dragged him toward the front door, 8 feet away. His brothers also responded, also helping to carry the man. Together, they carried him down the stairs. At one point an explosion caused intensifying flames to burn Argueta’s ear and face and blew a chair into their path to safety. Daniel threw the chair out of the way, and they continued carrying the man to an outside porch. Argueta was treated at a hospital for his burns and smoke inhalation; he recovered. Daniel and Franklin inhaled smoke, but weren’t treated. They, too, recovered.

**Scott Kilburn**, a 49-year-old metal fabricator of Waverly, Tennessee, and his wife were stranded on the roof of his pickup truck during heavy flooding in Waverly on Aug. 21, 2021. Rapidly rising flood water had risen above the truck’s hood and continuously washed debris forcefully against the truck. A woman, 53-year-old Regenia L. Brake, had been attempting to evacuate with her son, when she was swept up in the flood and carried about a half-mile before she neared Kilburn’s truck. Kilburn reached Brake, but the two were carried away from the truck and eventually separated. Kilburn’s wife soon lost sight of them, but held tightly to the truck while flood water continued to rise and surge. She remained on the roof for about three hours until she could be rescued. Brake and Kilburn drowned. Brake’s body was recovered about 1,000 feet from the truck. Kilburn’s body was found more than a mile away.

A 39-year-old police officer gave chase to apprehend a man who had just robbed a Springfield, Massachusetts, store at knifepoint on Dec. 27, 2022. As she reached the man, he resisted arrest, brandishing the knife, and the two struggled.
nearby and saw the skirmish. Intervening in the altercation, he pushed them out of the street, which caused the assailant to drop the knife. All three fell to the ground, where the assailant grabbed the officer’s pistol and removed it from its holster. Perez and the officer were attempting to disarm him when he fired two shots. One bullet struck the assailant’s hand and caused a serious injury before it went through the hood of Perez’s sweatshirt. The other shot hit Perez’s nearby truck. With the assistance of an arriving police lieutenant, the pistol was taken from the assailant and he was handcuffed. The officer sustained a back injury during the incident, and Perez had sustained bruised ribs but recovered.

Despite being instructed by a 911 operator to stay outside his next-door neighbor’s burning bungalow on March 2, Alan H. Mackie, a 63-year-old mechanic from Grand Valley, Ontario, knew his 69-year-old neighbor had limited mobility and worried he needed help leaving his home. Mackie kicked open the front door and entered the house despite dense smoke that limited visibility and flames that stretched from the floor to the ceiling. Crouched over under the smoke, Mackie called out for the man and walked toward his faint responses. He reached the man’s bedroom at a point about 25 feet inside and saw him standing at the foot of his bed. Mackie retrieved a walker from the living room and returned to the bedroom, where he turned the man to face away from the walker and sat him on the walker’s seat. Mackie grasped the metal bars of the walker and backed to the front door pulling the walker with him. As Mackie exited the house, he came within a couple feet of flames. The man was treated at the hospital for smoke inhalation. Mackie was not injured.

A teenaged boy was swimming in Seattle’s Green Lake on April 21, 2021, when he submerged and did not resurface at a point about 80 feet from shore. His friend shouted for help. A 24-year-old tutor, Benjamin Ramsay, of Seattle, was on a paddleboard nearby and heard the shouts. Despite no visibility beneath the water’s surface and Ramsay’s poor swimming ability, upon seeing bubbles rising to the surface, Ramsay dove 15 feet to the bottom where he located the boy and grasped his arm. When Ramsay successfully pulled the boy to the surface, his paddleboard was no longer within reach. Ramsay positioned the unresponsive boy against his chest and backstroked toward shore. Ramsay was tiring quickly and he struggled to keep both their heads above water. A female paddleboarder nearby responded to them at a point halfway to shore. Ramsay grasped onto the board with one arm while still holding the boy. The woman leaned across her paddleboard and kicked until she reached shallow water while holding onto Ramsay and the boy. The boy expelled water during efforts to revive.
him and recovered after treatment at a hospital. Ramsay was cold and fatigued, but he did not require medical attention.

Flames broke out on the first floor of a two-story, Newport Beach, California, apartment on Dec. 20, 2022. Three children, ages 9, 6, and 5, were inside a bedroom on the second floor as flames grew and spread to the second floor. Car designer Fairuz Jane Schlecht, 51, who lived in a neighboring apartment, had already escaped the burning building when she learned that the three children were still inside. Despite wearing little clothing, Schlecht ran up a stairway to her apartment where she accessed the neighboring apartment through a set of service doors. She ran down a hallway filled with swirling smoke and loud, high-pitched noises inside. She kicked in the children’s bedroom door and gathered the children. Schlecht ran back down the hall and pushed the older girl through the service doors to her apartment. The younger girl ran into the flame-filled primary bedroom, and Schlecht entered the room after her as she held onto the boy. The girl ran back to her, and Schlecht exited with the children through her apartment. The youngest children recovered after inhaling smoke. The 9-year-old girl suffered reduced oxygen levels and minor burns to her feet but recovered. Schlecht inhaled smoke and suffered a loss of hearing in her right ear but was not burned.

A 27-year-old woman was trapped inside her submerged sedan that slid off an icy road into a golf course pond in Lincoln, Nebraska, on Feb. 22, 2023. Lincoln police Sgt. Tu Anh Tran, 36, responded to the accident and, despite below-freezing air temperatures, entered the frigid water. He reached the vehicle, which was submerged up to the trunk and opened the rear, driver’s-side door. Items from the vehicle bobbed out of the car, obscuring Tran’s vision. He dipped his face beneath the water’s surface, but the murky water also limited visibility. Tran reached inside the car blindly and felt the woman’s legs. Feeling his touch, the woman resurfaced and grabbed his arms. Holding to her arm, Tran pulled her free from the vehicle that submerged seconds later. Tran towed the woman toward the bank. Others assisted them both to safety when they reached wadable water. The woman was cold and taken to a hospital; she recovered. Tu Anh Tran was cold and nearly exhausted, but did not seek treatment; he recovered.

A father attempting to save his 13-year-old son from a house fire died Dec. 16, 2022. Flames broke out in the attic of their one-story, Bostwick, Georgia, home and spread throughout the residence. Eric T. Hawk, 13, saw smoke entering his bedroom and opened the door to a smoke-filled hallway. He closed the door and called his father, Thomas Lee Hawk, a 39-year-old quality control supervisor, who was next door at Eric’s grandfather’s home. Hawk immediately ran into the burning home, with the grandfather following behind. As conditions worsened inside, the grandfather could not enter the home, but from the outside, heard Eric shouting for help from his bedroom. He went to Eric’s window, removed an air conditioner, and pulled Eric through the opening. He dragged him away from the home. Eric suffered severe smoke inhalation and was hospitalized for a few days. Hawk’s body was found in the hallway near Eric’s bedroom. He sustained burns to his body and died from inhaling smoke and soot.

A fire broke out on the rear deck of Stephen Pryke’s two-story home on Feb. 19, 2023, in Long Beach, New York. Pryke, 65, was in his bedroom when he was awakened and searched the house for his son and a tenant that lived with them. A passerby flagged:

The remains of the apartment building where Carnegie Hero Fairuz Jane Schlecht saved three children from burning during a nighttime fire Dec. 20, 2022, in Newport Beach, California. Schlecht had already escaped the burning building when she learned that three children remained inside. Photo courtesy of the Newport Beach Fire Department.

Carnegie Hero Thomas Lee Hawk died while attempting to rescue his 13-year-old son from their burning home in Bostwick, Georgia. While the boy’s grandfather helped him escape the flames through his bedroom window, his father had already entered the home, but did not make it to the boy’s bedroom before collapsing from smoke inhalation.
down on-duty police officer Judy Arroyo, 51. As she approached the house, flames had completely consumed the rear portion. She entered through the unlocked front door to see flames burning on the kitchen ceiling. She located Pryke, gripped his arm, and forcefully ushered him outside. After hearing that others may be inside the home, Arroyo returned to the house, where flames had overtaken the kitchen. Through black smoke, Arroyo climbed a few stairs toward the second floor when she felt a burst of heat. She suffered burns to her face and both hands. She escaped back through the front door as the fire continued to spread. The son and tenant were later located outside the home. Pryke suffered no burns and declined to go to a hospital. Arroyo was treated at a hospital and later at a burn center. She mostly recovered from her burns in about three weeks.

A mother, 34, and her son, 4, had fallen unconscious inside the kitchen of their burning home on Feb. 2, 2022, in Green River, Wyoming. Ryan Pasborg, a 33-year-old derrickhand of Rock Springs, Wyoming, was driving to work when he smelled smoke and noticed flames from the house’s front windows. Three other siblings had escaped and alerted Pasborg that their brother and mother were inside. Pasborg entered the home and ascended steps to the kitchen, where intense smoke forced him to his hands and knees. He crawled farther into the house and came upon the boy. Hugging the boy with one arm and still crawling, he retreated until he could stand and eventually carried the boy through the garage to safety.

The snow-covered Wasatch Mountain Range, where on Dec. 14, 2022, an avalanche buried a 35-year-old cross-country skier. Carnegie Hero Thomas Elbrecht heard the man shouting for help and responded to the scene, dug him out and then remained with him under extreme conditions in a dangerous area until help could arrive several hours later.
Pasborg instructed the children to seek refuge inside his work truck before he reentered the home to look for their mother. Crawling again through the kitchen despite intense flames, heat, and smoke, Pasborg searched until he found her. He grasped her under the arms and dragged her from the home to safety. Pasborg performed CPR on the woman before driving her and the children to first responders at the end of their long driveway. The boy later recovered from burns to his arms and legs. The mother suffered burns to more than 60 percent of her body but recovered. Pasborg inhaled smoke but did not seek medical treatment.

While backcountry skiing on Dec. 14, 2022, in a remote area of the Wasatch Mountain Range in Millcreek, Utah, Travis Haussener, 35, was caught in a 200-foot wide, 2-foot deep avalanche that surged downhill and enveloped him. The snow slammed him against a tree where he was pinned with severe injuries. Only his head and an arm remained unburied. He shouted for help. Within earshot while backcountry skiing himself, firefighter Thomas Elbrecht, 31, of South Salt Lake, Utah, heard Haussener’s calls. He followed Haussener’s tracks in the snow to the bottom of the avalanche-debris pile, where he then hiked up the steep slope and unburied Haussener, who had a broken thighbone among other severe injuries that inhibited him from moving to safety. Elbrecht used his cell phone to inform authorities about Haussener’s injuries after he moved him to a flat area nearby. He used a ski pole as a makeshift splint to stabilize Haussener’s leg and built a small shelter to shield him from the frigid conditions. He removed some of Haussener’s wet clothes and provided him with dry clothes including an extra jacket Haussener had in his backpack and Elbrecht’s own jacket and gloves. With the threat of another avalanche looming, Elbrecht remained with Haussener as rescue crews came up with a plan. A rescue helicopter responded but was unable to affect a rescue because of the steep slope and closely packed, tall trees. Eventually, two rescue personnel on the ground found them. Elbrecht helped lower Haussener to a spot where he was moved by toboggan and then snowmobile to a waiting ambulance. Haussener spent a few days in the hospital and endured a lengthy rehabilitation to his leg. Elbrecht was cold and hungry after spending several hours with Haussener, even beyond sunset, but was not injured.

Three children were trapped inside a SUV after a June 6, 2022, accident in Emporia, Kansas. Madilyn McNack, 6, and her brothers, Jaseh McNack, 2, and Alexander Wilson-McNack, 8, were in the vehicle with their mother when the SUV veered off an interstate highway and struck a tree. Their mother was pinned between the steering wheel and her seat. Fate, Texas, oil and gas inspector, Sean L. James, 47, was driving ahead of the SUV when he saw the accident in his rearview mirror. Tree branches prevented him from opening the driver’s door and when he attempted to open a rear door, the handle came off. From inside the car, Madilyn unlocked a door, and James leaned into the vehicle amid smoke and pulled her out. He carried her to safety and returned to the vehicle. He fully entered the car and crawled across the back seat to Jaseh. At this point, flames had spread across the dashboard and passenger compartment. Although James struggled with removing Jaseh from his car seat, with Jaseh’s help he unbuckled it, held Jaseh to him, and retreated from the vehicle, placing him near Madilyn. James returned to the car a third time for Alexander and crawled again into the vehicle as smoke obscured his view. The mother informed...
The creek carried him downstream headfirst knees where the current swept him into rapids. Radtke fell to his knees when the current forced him downstream. As he tried to cross Gore Creek at a shallow point his dog on July 17, 2023, in Vail, Colorado. As he tried to cross Gore Creek at a shallow point his dog pulled away from him. Radtke fell to his knees where the current swept him into rapids. The creek carried him downstream headfirst with his face down, striking numerous rocks that rendered him unconscious. A 53-year-old attorney of Denver, John Chase, was biking nearby with his wife and saw Radtke swept downstream. He jumped onto his bike and pedaled 600 feet on the path to a gap in a high fence to get ahead of Radtke. He slid down the steep embankment to the 56-degree water and waded out to a rock in the middle of the creek. Chase jumped into the water to intercept the unconscious Radtke and grasped him with one arm as he paddled with the other. The two men were swept downstream about 225 feet until Chase gained enough of a foothold in an area of calm, shallow water. He maneuvered Radtke to the shore with the help of a bystander. Chase performed CPR on the unresponsive Radtke until first responders took over and revived him. Radtke was hospitalized for six days but made a full recovery. Chase was bruised but recovered.

On March 26, 2023, in Tarpon Springs, Florida, Carson Furness, 6, and his 10-year-old brother were caught in a fast moving current while swimming in the Gulf of Mexico. Anchored near the southern tip of Anclote Island, auto mechanic Adem Qorri, 39, of New Port Richey, Florida, was with the boys’ father when he saw them drift into water 10 feet deep. Qorri jumped off the boat, ran approximately 90 feet across shallow water and sand created by low tide, and then swam 225 feet to Carson. The boys’ father followed Qorri until he reached Carson’s brother at a point about 150 feet from shore. After swimming Carson’s brother’s relative to the water and calming him, the father saw Qorri facedown in the water with Carson hanging onto his back. A tour boat pulled up next to them and the captain lifted Carson onto the boat. The tour boat arrived, and both boat captains pulled Qorri aboard. They started chest compressions as they began the 3-mile journey to the closest boat ramp. Carson and his brother were not injured. Qorri was immediately put into an ambulance and taken to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead. He had drowned.

On June 23, 2023, 36-year-old Joshua Unglesby, who is paralyzed from the waist down, was asleep in the rear bedroom of his one-story home in Springboro, Ohio, when a fire broke out. Awakening, he called 911 and scrambled onto the floor at the back of the room as flames spread. On-duty police officer Heath Martin, 47, was nearby and responded to the call. He entered the smoke-filled house through the garage and called out for Unglesby, who was still in the back bedroom. Martin ran 25 feet down a long hallway to the bedroom and threw the door open. Thick, black smoke issued through the doorway making it difficult for Martin to breathe. He heard Unglesby but told him he could not reach him because of the smoke. Martin retreated and ran to the home’s front door, which he opened for responding firefighters. He then returned to the bedroom, went to his knees and crawled inside. Surrounded by flames, he found Unglesby in the back corner of the room and picked him up in a bear hug. As he attempted to exit carrying Unglesby, he tripped and the two fell. Martin then held Unglesby under his arms and dragged him to the front door. Unglesby suffered second-degree burns and continues to recover. Martin suffered minor burns and smoke inhalation but recovered.

Martha Gonzalez, 58, was wading in the Long Island Sound off of Norwalk, Connecticut, on July 31, 2022, when she lost her footing and struggled to swim amid a strong outgoing tidal current. Her husband, Mauricio Rodas-Garcia, 60-year-old Norwalk jeweler, was on shore when he saw her signal for help. Despite being unable to swim, Rodas-Garcia entered the water, wading 15 feet and stretching his arm out to Gonzalez before he, too, lost his footing. He attempted to swim toward Gonzalez but ultimately submerged. A nearby sailing school employee entered the water and a bystander atop a paddleboard both made their way to Gonzalez. A third bystander helped them to the shore where emergency personnel responded and received Gonzalez. She was unharmed. Rodas-Garcia was unresponsive on the surface of the water when he was located by bystanders moments later. He was taken to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead. He had drowned.
Presenting

Sam Shumate, left, and Cody Brown, right, flank Carnegie Hero Lloyd Muldrow holding the Carnegie Medal that was presented to him at a Dec. 5 event at the National Montford Point Marine Association in Jacksonville, North Carolina.


Muldrow was at a club in Baltimore, Maryland, on July 4, 2022, when his friend was struck in the face with a handgun. Muldrow was alerted to the scene by club patrons as his friend held onto the assailant’s arm. Without withdrawing his own concealed handgun, Muldrow approached, struck the assailant in the face, and forced the assailant to the floor with help from his friend. As police shortly responded and witnesses informed them that the assailant was armed, officers found Muldrow and his friend restraining the assailant on the ground.

Muldrow said he was honored to receive such a prestigious award and Shumate said the event where it was presented was “exceptional.”

Murphy represents North Carolina’s third district.

Carnegie Hero Stephen D. Rhodes stands with Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards holding the Carnegie Medal that Edwards presented to Rhodes at a Dec. 6 Wildlife and Fisheries Commission meeting in Baton Rouge.

Rhodes was awarded the medal for saving a 7-year-old girl from drowning on May 7, 2022.

A boat carrying nine people capsized in the Gulf of Mexico off of Grand Isle Beach, Louisiana. Rhodes, a fish and wildlife enforcement officer, was on duty and piloted his boat to the scene. Eight of the passengers were on top of the hull when he arrived, but the 7-year-old was missing.

Rhodes removed his ballistic vest, duty belt, and firearm, left his boat, entered the water, and swam under the capsized boat, where swept his arms back and forth in front of himself, searching for the girl.

After submerging twice and failing to find the girl, Rhodes grasped the gunwale of the boat, used his legs to probe the water and underside of the boat for the girl. After feeling something, he dived and swam to the girl, grasped her, and towed her to the surface. Rhodes handed her off to a nearby boater and swam about 20 feet back to his patrol boat, exited the water, and performed CPR on the girl. She was resuscitated, and Rhodes drove the boat to a nearby marina, where first responders took her to the hospital.

“What Sgt. Rhodes did on that day is the purest example of the meaning of heroism which is the willingness to serve others at whatever the cost,” said Louisiana Department of Wildlife Secretary Robert Shadoin. “He did not hesitate to act and for that, a family and especially a little girl are alive today.”

Rhodes told local reporters that his mother nominated him for the medal.

“It’s a really good day when you can have your mother take a lot of pride, a lot of pride in her son. I owe a lot to her,” he said.
On the morning of March 27, 1966, 7-year-old Catherine L. Waters and her 11-year-old sister Janet were getting ready to go to morning mass in a neighborhood of Providence, Rhode Island, where they lived with their mother in a second-floor apartment. But at around 11 a.m., an ex-boyfriend of the mother broke into their apartment and threatened to kill the three of them with a .32 caliber semi-automatic pistol.

Hero Fund investigator Ronald Swartzlander noted that the 26-year-old gunman was said to be, “greatly disturbed emotionally and talked of committing suicide if it became necessary to kill them.”

After eight hours of holding the family hostage, the man sent the two girls outside to retrieve his coat from his car parked on the street. With the gunman watching the girls from the top of the stairs as they exited the apartment’s front door, the mother sensed an opportunity and fled through the apartment’s back door to an outside stairway. She told the occupants of the first-floor apartment what was happening, and they notified the police.

Janet and Catherine returned to the apartment with the coat, and, shortly, three policemen arrived at the scene. As they made their way up the interior stairway, the assailant fired at them from the top of the stairs. The police retreated immediately, taking cover.

New England priest devotes life to helping those in crisis situations

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Janet and Catherine returned to the apartment with the coat, and, shortly, three policemen arrived at the scene. As they made their way up the interior stairway, the assailant fired at them from the top of the stairs. The police retreated immediately, taking cover.
One of the officers radioed for assistance from a patrol car parked directly across the building. The gunman broke two bay windows with the pistol and fired five times at him.

Two more police officers responded to the scene and the gunman fired five shots toward them. One took cover in a nearby house and the other hid behind a patrol car.

Soon, around 50 police officers responded.

A few officers covered the gunman with rifles from positions in adjoining houses, but were afraid to shoot because the man continued to hold Catherine and Janet hostage.

Joseph Coleman, a 37-year-old parish priest from Providence, Rhode Island, was at his church in the area when he learned about the standoff. Coleman was a police chaplain with duties to serve the spiritual needs of police officers of his faith. He was not, however, expected to endanger his life or negotiate for the safe return of hostages. He had no related training nor experience. He responded anyway, telling the Hero Fund investigator that he feared for the girls’ lives.

The gunman, recognizing Coleman as a priest, shouted greetings. From the street, Coleman attempted to reassure the assailant that he would not be harmed if he surrendered himself and released the children, but the assailant was agitated and talked irrationally. He cursed at the police, and then apologized to Coleman, who slowly moved to the house, onto the front porch, and then climbed up onto concrete blocks that brought him closer to the broken-out bay windows.

Coleman continued to plead for the children’s safety with the gunman for 20 minutes and felt he managed to calm the man down fairly well. He urged the armed man to lower the children down to him, but the gunman remained unconvinced the police would not shoot him.

It was then that one police officer shouted to the gunman that he was a coward. Coleman later noted to Swartzlander that the remark irritated the gunman and, he “feared he had been aggravated to the point of desperation.”

The man brandished his firearm and fired two more shots toward police. The bullets passed over Coleman’s head which was a mere 2.5 feet below the window.

Coleman told Swartzlander that it was at this time he felt he would not escape this situation alive. He prayed – the Act of Contrition – and ran back under the porch.

Police fired four tear gas grenades. Two made it into the dwelling, and the gunman, Catherine, and Janet stuck their heads out of the window, seeking relief from the choking gas. Janet begged Coleman for help.

The other two grenades hit the side of the house and sent fumes onto the porch where Coleman had taken cover. Despite the tear gas, when he heard Janet, Coleman again climbed the blocks beneath the window. From there, he again urged the gunman to surrender the girls, which the gunman agreed to do but was still unconvinced the police would not shoot him if he complied. Coleman tried to reassure him that the police would not harm him, but the gunman ultimately did not trust him. He then told Coleman that he would surrender the children if the priest entered the house to get them.

Coleman hesitated to do so out of worry that the gunman would take him hostage as well. The gunman reiterated his offer and threw a ten-round ammunition clip to the ground.

Coleman proceeded through the gas fumes and entered the front door. Police did not provide backup.
He ascended the stairway to the second-floor landing and attempted to open the door of the apartment, but furniture barricaded the entrance. Blinded by the tear gas, Coleman pounded on the door and shouted. The gunman removed the furniture and opened the door.

The gunman cooperated with Coleman, surrendering his pistol to the priest. It still contained one round of ammunition.

Holding the pistol in one hand and holding Janet in the other, Coleman instructed the gunman to carry Catherine and follow them down the stairs. They descended the stairway together and, emerging onto the porch, the ordeal for the girls was over.

The gunman was immediately taken into custody by police, and the girls were treated for tear gas exposure.

Both girls recovered from the incident. Coleman sustained no injuries. Although Coleman did not know it at the time, Janet and Catherine were both part of his parish and were getting ready to go to his church that morning.

Acts such as this were one of many examples of how Joseph Coleman lived until his death on March 6, 2023. Eventually leaving the priesthood and marrying his wife, Sandra, Coleman was known in his community for giving aid. In a letter written to the Hero Fund, Sandra Coleman described her husband as a man who spent his life, “helping others to a degree he forgot about himself.”

Coleman would later be known as the ‘bridge priest’ in Jamestown, Rhode Island.

The Newport Bridge in Jamestown became a common location for people who attempted suicide, but the standard protocol for bridge authorities, according to a 1981 article by The Voice (Miami), was to “call the state police, alert the Coast Guard and send for the ‘bridge priest.’”

Coleman would utilize a safety harness and ascend to heights 200 feet or higher above the Narragansett Bay, where he would then attempt to reason with the individuals. He would try to give them reassurance that not all was as grim as it seemed.

“Every time I go up there, I pray I say the right words,” Coleman told The Voice. “There is no set formula; each person up there is an important individual.”

Despite his own fear of heights, Coleman always remained calm through prayer and regarded all those he helped as ‘special creations.’

“The day no one cares and lets them go, we put a cheapness on life,” he told the reporter.

During his priesthood, Coleman received many civic awards for his community service. Along with the Carnegie Medal, Coleman was recognized by the Newport City Council in 1974 for his service to the community. In 1978, the Rhode Island House of Representatives recognized his courage with a citation of congratulations for saving more than a dozen lives on the Newport Bridge.

After 1984, when he left the active ministry, Coleman worked for several social agencies including the Newport County Community Mental Health Center, Department of Children, Youth, and Families in Rhode Island and Department of Children and Families in New Hampshire, and the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council in New Hampshire.

—— By Griffin Erdely, communications intern

“I hope that I will always be mindful of that concern for mankind which must have prompted Mr. Carnegie to set up such a fund.”

— Joseph Coleman in a 1967 letter to Hero Fund Manager David B. Oliver
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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I resolved to stop accumulating and begin the infinitely more serious and difficult task of wise distribution.

— Andrew Carnegie, Gospel of Wealth, 1889