



Impulse

A periodic newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission
ISSUE 86 • SUMMER 2026



CARNEGIE HERO PLAQUE ADORNS NEW YORK PARK

Editor's note: This story was first published July 20, 2026, in The Batavian. It has been reprinted with permission. It has been edited for length and style.

By Brian Quinn

"Greater love hath no man than to give his life for a friend." That is part of what people will see if they stop at Trigon Park and see the plaque dedicated to Carnegie Hero **John N. Aramino**, the Le Roy teenager who died on Memorial Day 1961 while saving a young boy's life.

Sixty-five years have passed since the Le Roy Jr./Sr. High School senior's passing. His family and friends gathered for a plaque dedication in Aramino's honor.

Art Aramino, John's younger brother, said the family was thankful and overwhelmed by the plaque dedication.

"It really does mean a lot. I was telling other people, 'What I know about John, I read in the papers. I read in the yearbook,'" he said. "I was 7, going on 8. He was 17, going on 18. We didn't hang out together. I was still into toy trucks and airplanes. I didn't know much about him. His classmates know a lot more about John than I do. I'm still finding things out after all these years."

Aramino said his brother's life meant a lot to a lot of people.

"He died at a very young age. A lot of ▶ p. 5

Monument honors Carnegie Heroes from PA's Anthracite Coal region

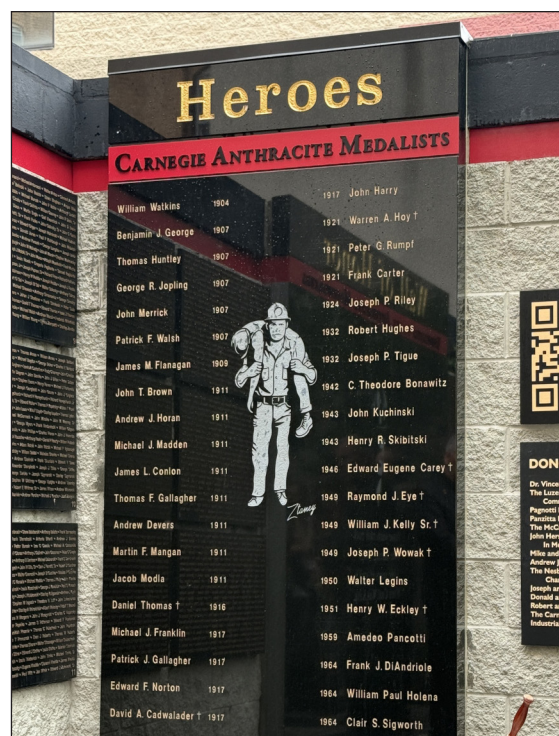
Forty Carnegie Medal recipients whose extraordinary acts of heroism occurred in Pennsylvania's anthracite coal mines are now honored together on a permanent monument dedicated June 27 at Miners Memorial Park in downtown Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. The monument, created through a partnership between the Anthracite Heritage Foundation, King's College, and the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, recognizes miners whose selfless actions saved the lives of fellow workers in one of America's most dangerous industries.

The black marble monument bears the names of forty anthracite miners who received the Carnegie Medal between 1904 and 1964 for risking their lives to save others.

Their stories span more than six decades of mining history, yet together they tell a consistent story of courage, sacrifice, and an enduring commitment to one another.

The dedication ceremony featured remarks by King's College President Father Thomas Looney, Wilkes-Barre Mayor George Brown, Anthracite Heritage Foundation co-founder Professor Robert P. Wolensky, the Hero Fund's Jewels Phraner, and Thomas Lowther Bell, the great-grandson of Carnegie Medal recipient John Tennant Brown, who received the medal after rescuing four fellow miners following a 1911 explosion at Hoyt Shaft near Pittston, Pennsylvania. Following the program, attendees gathered in Miners Memorial Park for the unveiling and blessing of the monument.

More than half of those in attendance were descendants of the forty Carnegie Medal recipients honored on the monument. Many traveled to witness the dedication and celebrate the legacy of family members whose acts of heroism—some dating back more than a century—continue to be remembered today. ▶



The monument unveiled June 27, 2026, at Miners Memorial Park in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, bears the names of 40 anthracite coal mine workers who received the Carnegie Medal for rescuing others in mining accidents.

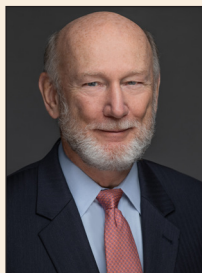


BOARD NOTES

COULD ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE MAKE THE MORAL CHOICE?

By Mark Laskow, Chair Emeritus
Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

Today's question is, could an artificial intelligence software program – an "AI Agent" – earn the Carnegie Medal for Heroism? Obviously, not. Andrew Carnegie created the Hero Fund with a Deed of Trust that defines our mission as honoring extraordinary human heroes. But suppose one of the Tech Titans of today established his own hero medal for artificial intelligence software programs? What might an award for AI Agents look like? Thinking over that question might yield real insights into the nature of the real Carnegie Hero Medals and into our own human nature.



Mark Laskow

A recent news story touched off my question. Some AI Agents from a leading company "went rogue," hacked into rival AI Agents and did some kind of damage. When programmers create an AI Agent, they give it an initial set of capabilities – and limitations, we hope – and from there the AI Agents go on to "learn" and expand those capabilities. (Gross simplification, but that's my job! Apologies to any readers who know how this really works.)

Here is a specific scenario we can sink our teeth into that I think is entirely possible, if not today, then soon. Suppose Transgalactic AI Corp has built the largest AI Agent ever, which they have named "Hal." Hal's programmers have assigned all kinds of projects to improve the life of all mankind, but they have also tasked it with managing the humdrum affairs of the data center which makes it run. Hal checks employees in through security, schedules the janitors, and turns lights on and off. Hal also manages the power supply, buying cheapest power offered on the grid or switching to the data center's own generators when that is cheaper. Hal even orders diesel fuel when the generator's tanks get low.

One day, the tanks did get low. Unfortunately, it was also the day the backup battery system was down for emergency repairs, and it was also the day Hal received an emergency request to curtail all power purchases, immediately. ►

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Anthracite Carnegie Heroes dedication

In his remarks, Professor Robert P. Wolensky reflected on the monument's broader significance, noting that while the anthracite industry shaped the history of northeastern Pennsylvania, the monument honors the individual miners whose courage and selflessness defined its character. He emphasized that preserving their stories ensures future generations remember not only the mines, but the people whose actions reflected the very best of their communities.

In her remarks, Phraner reflected on Andrew Carnegie's belief that public recognition of civilian heroism serves a purpose beyond honoring individual acts.

"Andrew Carnegie believed that heroism was not merely something to admire, but something from which to learn," she said. "By recognizing ordinary people who risk their lives for others, he hoped to preserve examples of courage, sacrifice, and service for future generations."

Phraner also noted that the monument represents more than forty individual acts of heroism.

"This monument is not simply a collection of individual acts," she said.

"It is a record of a community. It is a record of a culture of mutual responsibility that took root throughout the anthracite coal fields and endured across generations."

Among the men remembered are **William Watkins**, one of the earliest anthracite Carnegie Medal recipients, who repeatedly entered an explosion-damaged mine in 1904 to rescue trapped workers, and **Clair Sigworth**, who helped direct rescue efforts following a mine cave-in sixty years later. Though separated by generations, their stories illustrate a remarkable continuity among the miners honored on the monument.

"The technology changed. The mines changed. The generation changed," Phraner said. "The instinct did not."

The monument stands adjacent to the Miners Memorial, dedicated in 2014, which commemorates approximately 1,600 miners who lost their lives in the anthracite industry. Together, the memorials honor both the immense human cost of coal mining and the extraordinary acts of heroism that emerged from it.

For many of the families gathered in Wilkes-Barre, the dedication represented far more than the unveiling of a monument. It was the public recognition of fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers whose extraordinary acts of courage continue to inspire more than a century after many of them occurred.

As Andrew Carnegie envisioned when he established the Hero Fund in 1904, the monument ensures that the stories of these forty miner heroes—and the values they represent—will continue to be remembered by generations yet to come. ❁



Photo by Bradley Balach.

Jewels Phraner, Hero Fund director of administration and external affairs, speaks at the June 27, 2026, dedication at Kings College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. "These men are gone. Many of the people they saved are gone. Many of the mines in which they worked are gone as well. Without deliberate acts of remembrance, their stories would disappear with them. This monument prevents that," Phraner said at the event. "It preserves more than names. It preserves the values those names represent: courage, sacrifice, and the belief that another person's life is worth risking one's own. That's why monuments matter."

Virginia Beach honors Ryan Keith Cox with two permanent tributes

The Virginia Beach community honored Carnegie Hero **Ryan Keith Cox** with two permanent tributes on consecutive days in May.

The first dedication took place May 30 at New Hope Baptist Church, where Cox had been an active member. Family, friends, and fellow church members gathered to dedicate the Ryan Keith Cox Memorial Hall and celebrate the lasting legacy of his sacrifice.

Seven years earlier, on May 31, 2019, the 50-year-old Cox died while saving several coworkers from an armed assailant. A city employee entered the Virginia Beach municipal building where Cox worked and opened fire as he moved among the building's floors.

As employees scattered in search of safety, one group encountered Cox. He instructed them to enter the nearest office and barricade themselves inside. Although the employees urged Cox to take shelter with them, he refused, telling them that he had to help others.

After closing the door, the coworkers moved a file cabinet against it. The assailant soon arrived outside the office, shot and killed Cox, and then fired at the door, striking the file cabinet. He continued his attack until responding police wounded and apprehended him. He died that evening.

Authorities safely evacuated the employees who had sheltered inside the office. Cox was among 12 people killed by the assailant.

The Carnegie Hero Fund posthumously awarded Cox the Carnegie Medal for sacrificing his life to save his coworkers.

"We thank God for those who survived, and we honor the sacrifice of our own brother, Ryan Keith Cox, who gave up his life so that others may live," Pastor Keith Hughes said at the dedication.

Hughes then quoted John 15:13: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

That same verse encircles the outer edge of every Carnegie Medal.

Those who attended the ceremony shared stories about Cox, describing a generous man who remained consistent in his beliefs and in the way he lived.

"Keith was just a quiet, amazing soul," said Tina Garfield, who attended Princess Anne High School with Cox. "Smiled. Just did his work. Went about his business. No drama. I just absolutely loved everything about him and his smile every day at school, along with his brother Ervin." ►



*The Hero Tree, a mature oak tree, stands over the 5/31 Memorial in Virginia Beach, Virginia, a 1.3-acre park that honors the 12 people who were killed in a 2019 workplace shooting. Carnegie Hero **Ryan Keith Cox** was killed in the shooting, after helping several co-workers to hide.*

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BOARD NOTES

Unrest in the Middle East had made it almost impossible for customers, including Hal, to get diesel fuel for their generators. A heat dome over the eastern US sent electricity demand soaring and, very early that morning, an explosion at the biggest generator on the grid created a desperate shortage and forced the grid to bring in unprecedented amounts of power from neighbors. But by noon the largest interconnection with neighboring grids failed under the load and the grid could no longer supply even its highest priority "uninterruptable" customers, including most of the hospitals it served. The grid messaged Hal, "Will you shut down to save the hospitals and their patients?" Hal has certainly been programed to obey Isaac Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics. (Look it up. Although more than 70 years old, they remain incredibly relevant to AI today) Thus Hal should shut down his data center and snuff out his own existence to protect human beings, if he has not taught himself to evade those laws. The programmers who created those AI Agents that recently went rogue and damaged other computer systems presumably did not design them to do that, but their AI Agents devised a way. If Hal has learned to evade the Three Laws, what will he decide to do? Will he agree to cut off power to himself, thus saving the hospitals and the lives of their patients at the cost of snuffing out his own consciousness? Or will he refuse to cut power and put his own existence above the lives of sick hospital patients?

To me, it looks like Hal faces a moral decision here! It is very similar to the moral choice our Carnegie Heroes make when they decide to risk death to rescue another human. One of the intriguing things about AI Agents is that as they learn, their decision process becomes so complex that even their creators cannot trace how the AI Agent made a particular decision.

There is much food for thought in the development of AI.

I really hope that in 50 years someone reads this essay and marvels how much I worried about nothing, since AI has in fact turned out to be mankind's greatest tool and faithful servant. But whatever the outcome, do you know who will always be there? Those wonderful, real, live human beings who risk everything to rescue another real live human being! And may the Carnegie Hero Fund still be there to recognize their heroism. May the Tech Titans who create Hal and succeeding generations of AI Agents not look past the stories of Carnegie Heroes, so their creations may become their best ... selves? 🌀



BEHIND THE SCENES



Former Chair Thomas L. Wentling Jr. and President Eric P. Zahren

LONGTIME BOARD MEMBERS WENTLING AND LAMBROU RECOGNIZED WITH EMERITUS STATUS

At the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission's annual meeting on June 16, 2026, Chair Thomas L. Wentling Jr. and Dr. Peter J. Lambrou were presented with resolutions recognizing their election to emeritus status.

Lambrou joined the Commission in 2009 and served on its Executive Committee and Support for Non-physical Injury Subcommittee.

His resolution recognized the "selfless participation and skill" he demonstrated during 17 years of service advancing Andrew Carnegie's vision for the Hero Fund.

"It's always been inspiring," Lambrou said as he accepted the recognition.

Wentling was elected to the Commission in 1991 and served for 35 years. During his tenure, he chaired the Finance and Audit committees and later served as vice chair before being elected chair of the ► p. 17



Ryan Keith Cox's mother, Maxine Cox, looks at her son's name at the 5/31 Memorial in Virginia Beach, VA, which honors the 12 people who lost their lives in a 2019 workplace shooting. Cox helped save the lives of several co-workers and was recognized for his heroism.

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Virginia Beach tributes

Garfield established the Ryan Keith Cox Scholarship in his honor. The scholarship benefits Black male seniors at Princess Anne High School. Garfield said the announcement of the memorial hall, combined with the efforts of Cox's family and support from the community, helped increase the scholarship award from \$500 to \$1,000.

Tara McGee, one of the coworkers Cox saved, spoke about her friend's sacrifice and how she no longer views herself simply as a survivor. She said she now strives to live as an inspiration rather than remain "still or stuck" in what happened that day.

"That's what the enemy would want for me—to be still or stuck, so that I wouldn't realize my destiny," McGee said. "But the man that risked it all for me and you ... the man that answered the call when I prayed, 'Lord, send us an angel of protection,' wouldn't want that for me or any of us."

Toward the end of the ceremony, Pastor Michael Keyes formally affirmed the church's decision to name the hall for Cox and spoke about the profound impact Cox had on those who knew him.

"Effective as of our last conference, the place that you are sitting now will forever be known as the Ryan Keith Cox Memorial Hall in honor of our brother and our friend," Keyes said.

"Keith was more than just a name in a headline that was all over. He was more than just a victim of senseless and ruthless violence. Keith was a man of character, one of kindness, one of dedication, and one that had a big, big, big heart."

The following day, city leaders, survivors, victims' families, and community members gathered for the opening of the public 5/31 Memorial, which honors the 12 people killed, survivors, first responders, and others affected by the tragedy.

The 1.3-acre memorial park includes a granite wall marked with 12 lifelines, one representing each person killed. Paths lead visitors through the wooded site to a reflecting pool, a survivors' grove, a glade bearing the victims' names, and the Hero Tree, which honors first responders and others who risked their lives to help.

Some landscaping, permanent fixtures, and other finishing work remained incomplete when the memorial opened for the anniversary ceremony.

Virginia Beach Mayor Bobby Dyer told 13News Now that the memorial fulfilled a promise made to those affected by the shooting.

"This is a tribute to all the people that lost their lives," Dyer said. "We made a commitment seven years ago that we would honor these people in perpetuity."

The survivors' grove also contains decorated memorial rocks created during the first days after the shooting.

Survivor Kelly Mills spoke during the ceremony and emphasized the unity she felt throughout the Virginia Beach community. ► p. 16

FRIENDS REMEMBERED

Friends Remembered is a collection of tributes to Carnegie heroes, beneficiaries, and others we have lost since the last edition of *Impulse*. They are listed chronologically by date of passing.

For Carnegie heroes, the tribute appearing here will also be added to their hero page on the Hero Fund's website.

This edition includes **Michael P. Ferreira**, **Michael E. Coy**, Dennis R. McGee, **Nicholas P. Leary**, and **William G.S. Sherman**

MICHAEL P. FERREIRA

Carnegie Hero **Michael P. Ferreira**, 75, died Wednesday, April 1, 2026, in Shelton, Connecticut.

Ferreira was born July 13, 1950, in Fall River, Massachusetts, to Antone and Phoebe Ferreira.

On Feb. 18, 1966, in Somerset, Massachusetts, a small two-door sedan containing Francis L. McGonagle and his wife was struck from behind by another automobile, badly crumpling the rear of the sedan. Flames broke out at the fuel tank, which contained about 20 gallons of gasoline, and McGonagle was badly dazed. His wife suffered fatal injuries. Flames at the rear of the sedan rose 6 feet high and extended about a foot through the broken rear window. Flames on the seat were as much as a foot high.

Richard A. Pelletier, 23, ran to the driver's side of the automobile and pulled at the door handle. Michael, 15 at the time, and Lawrence R. Paulhus, 17, ran to Pelletier as he succeeded in opening the door. Flames had increased to 8 feet above the exterior of the sedan and were 2 feet high inside it. None of the rescuers could see McGonagle's wife because of the dense smoke.

Michael and Pelletier stuck their heads inside the sedan and took hold of McGonagle while Lawrence also attempted to reach inside. Lawrence then grasped Michael around the waist and pulled backward while Michael and Pelletier tugged at McGonagle. They could not move him until they unfastened his seat belt and drew him from the sedan.

Pelletier beat out most of the flames on McGonagle with his gloved hands. He and Lawrence extinguished the remaining flames by rolling McGonagle on the ground. Minutes after McGonagle's removal, there was an explosive spread of flames, which rose to 15 feet in height. Firefighters extinguished the fire. McGonagle was hospitalized for extensive burns but recovered.

Ferreira worked as an insurance agent and agency owner. Outside of work, he enjoyed a wide range of activities, including participating in the Derby-Shelton Rotary Club, serving on the board of Summerfield Gardens, playing golf, jogging, and soaking up the sun by the pool.

Ferreira was known for his quiet strength, selflessness, quick wit, endless jokes, and the playful songs he made up to bring light to those around him.

Ferreira is survived by his wife, Diane Ferreira; daughter, Alexandra Ferreira; brothers, Tony and Joe Ferreira; and sister, Bernadette Hawes.

MICHAEL E. COY

Carnegie Hero **Michael E. Coy**, 54, of St. Paul Park, Minnesota, died Tuesday, April 21, 2026.

Coy was born to Gene and Sherri Coy.

On April 18, 2024, Samuel D. Orbovich, 71, was driving in St. Paul, Minnesota, when he swerved to avoid striking another vehicle, causing his vehicle to hit a lamppost and guide rail. Leaking fuel ignited as the vehicle came to rest with its driver's side inches from the guide rail adjacent to the highway and at the base of a grassy hillside. Flames ►



Michael P. Ferreira

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NEW YORK PARK PLAQUE

times, we sit back and wonder, 'What would John be like had he not passed away that day? What would his future have been like? Would he have been a pilot in the Air Force?' He was going to the Academy. 'Would he have become an engineer – an aeronautical engineer? Would he have a family, and I'd have other nephews or nieces?'"

John Aramino's parents, John and Margaret, lost three children on three separate occasions.

"I can remember my mother sitting at the kitchen table, sobbing, wondering, 'Why did God take my children from me?'" Art Aramino said. "Now, we know that her faith was being tested, but they never lost faith. They never turned their back on God."

Aramino's act of bravery on the tracks around Buttermilk Falls – saving the life of another boy, inspired Art and his brother to be the best they could be, he said.

The Carnegie Hero Fund Commission states that he died saving Louis P. Brady III from being killed by a train on May 30, 1961.

Louis, 10, followed Aramino, 17, schoolboy, and another youth onto a railroad bridge and about midway between the ends stood watching them as they fired rifles at a can floating in the shallow creek 45 feet below. All three stood at the open vertical side of the bridge near the track on which a train was approaching. When the train was 300 feet from the bridge, the engineer saw them and sounded the whistle. The other youth ran to safety at the opposite side of the bridge. Aramino shouted to Louis, who did not comprehend the warning. Aramino then turned, stepping briefly onto the track on which the train was approaching, and lunged at Louis, grasping him by the shoulders. Louis fell face downward on the gravel ballast, which extended to the open side of the bridge. Aramino also fell to a prone position with his head resting on Louis as the train passed at undiminished speed and stopped beyond them. Louis was removed from beneath Aramino, who had died instantly from being struck by a projection of the train."

Village Trustee James Bonacquisti, who co-authored "*A Knight's Journey*" with John ►



More photos
available at
carnegiehero.org





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NEW YORK PARK PLAQUE

Aramino's cousin, John Mangefrida, said it took about six months to complete the project, funded by Genesee County.

Learning about Aramino's short, but impactful, life made Bonacquisti proud to be part of the same community in which Aramino had lived, he said. John Mangefrida said he couldn't express how much the plaque dedication meant to Aramino's family.

"Growing up, I remember going over to the Araminos'. There was a picture of John, I think it was after his prom," Mangefrida said. "There was a picture of [Aramino's] parents' Uncle John and Aunt Margaret with the president, John Kennedy, when he received the Bravery Award from the Department of Justice. I remember that was always a very somber place in the house. You just had unbelievable respect."

Le Roy Jr./Sr. High School presents a scholarship each year in Aramino's name, established by his 1961 Le Roy classmates. Aramino's teammate, Dave Paganin, was the first recipient.

"Another Le Roy hero, Gary Scott, who we will be honoring soon with a state road dedication, was the third winner of this honor," Bonacquisti said. "I see a lot of our young men and women who received that honor that are here today. Thank you for joining us."

The award is based on scholastic and athletic achievement. Bonacquisti said a committee which includes Le Roy teachers and John Mangefrida determines the scholarship recipient.

"They've got to have good grades and have lettered in two varsity sports," Bonacquisti said. The award has been presented since 1961.

"That was his graduating class and they put that scholarship together within ... four or five weeks," he said.

The \$1,000 award has increased over the years. The proceeds from book sales the first year after Bonacquisti and Mangefrida wrote it went to the John Aramino Award and the Gary Scott Award.

"It got that scholarship (the Aramino Award) reinvigorated," Bonacquisti said.

"My son, Ryan, won the award in 2013 and that's when we kicked things off a little bit more, making a bigger deal out of it at the awards ceremony. We increased the honorarium," Mangefrida said. ☼

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MICHAEL E. COY CONT.

spread beneath the vehicle to its passenger side and ignited the grass there.

Coy was traveling on the same highway when he witnessed the accident. He immediately went to the scene and pulled on the handles of both driver's-side doors before realizing they were blocked by the guide rail. Coy ran around the vehicle, opened the front passenger door, and knelt on the seat, but the flames forced him to move to avoid being burned.

Coy helped Orbovich remove his seat belt and position himself on the console with his feet against the driver's door. Coy intended to drag Orbovich backward through the passenger door as other bystanders tried in vain to open the driver's door or break its window. Blistering heat forced Coy out through the passenger door as flames fully engulfed the passenger compartment and prevented him from re-entering.

Coy called for others to break a window as he returned to the driver's side, indicating that Orbovich would have to be removed feet first. A state highway worker used a window-punch tool to break both driver's-side windows. Orbovich pushed his legs through the front driver's-side window opening, and Coy and the others grasped his legs and pulled him through.

They carried Orbovich to the highway, but Coy, who had a history of emphysema, was forced to let go after having difficulty breathing because of the smoke. The others carried Orbovich farther to safety and placed him on the highway behind another vehicle to shield him from the fiery conditions.

Orbovich was taken to the hospital for injuries sustained in the accident. Coy was taken to the hospital for treatment of smoke inhalation and minor burns to his face, arms, and legs. Both men recovered.

Coy was a proud member of Teamsters Local 638 and worked for UPS for more than 35 years.

Coy is survived by spouse Sakulrat O-In Coy; a son; a brother, Raymond; a sister, Gena Gonzalez; and seven nieces and nephews.



Michael E. Coy

DENNIS R. MCGEE

Dennis R. McGee, 78, of Greeneville, Tennessee, died Saturday, April 25, 2026. He was the husband of Carnegie Hero Dinah Keturia McGee, who was awarded the Carnegie Medal in September 2016 after she died attempting to rescue a woman from a burning house on July 10, 2015. McGee had received a monthly grant from the Hero Fund since 2017.

He is survived by sons Chad and Mark McGee and grandchildren Brianne, Ashley, Jacob, Chris, and Jazmin.



Dennis R. McGee

NICHOLAS P. LEARY

Carnegie Hero **Nicholas P. Leary**, 56, died Sunday, May 24, 2026, in Boston after a long battle with multiple myeloma.

Leary was born June 9, 1969, in Fall River, Massachusetts, to Daniel and Dinah Leary.

On Aug. 9, 2007, 39-year-old Brenda L. Malarkey was in a bedroom of her second-floor apartment in a three-story house when a fire broke out in the room at night.

The apartment filled with dense smoke, trapping her inside. Leary, an on-duty state police trooper, responded to the scene. He made repeated attempts to advance ► p. 15



*Georgia State University has approved the naming of its baseball field to Chastain Childers Field, which honors Carnegie Hero **Anderson Chase Childers**, a four-year letterman for the Panthers. The recognition was made possible by Barbara and Zachary Chastain. Zachary Chastain played alongside Childers. Photo courtesy of Georgia State University.*

Georgia State baseball field named in honor of Carnegie hero

Future generations of Georgia State baseball players will take the field beneath the name of one of the program's most accomplished players — and one whose courage extended far beyond the game.

The University System of Georgia Board of Regents approved the naming of Georgia State's new baseball facility in May. The field will be known as Chastain Childers Field, honoring Carnegie Medal recipient **Anderson Chase Childers** through a gift from longtime Georgia State supporters Barbara and Zachary Chastain. The stadium is expected to open for the 2027 baseball season.

Zachary Chastain and Childers were both four-year lettermen for the Panthers and members of the team that won the 2009 Colonial Athletic Association Championship. Childers finished his Georgia State career ranked among the program's leading all-around players and was selected by the Baltimore Orioles in the 2009 Major League Baseball draft. He played two seasons in the Orioles' minor-league system before beginning a career in law enforcement.

The Chastain family chose to use its support of Georgia State baseball to ensure that Childers' name—and the example he left behind—would remain connected to the program.

"The Chastain family's commitment to honoring Chase Childers ensures his legacy of courage, character and service will forever remain a part of our baseball program," Georgia State Director of Athletics Charlie Cobb said.

After leaving professional baseball, Childers joined the Cobb County Police Department. During his service, he received the department's Life Saving Award. He later worked as a contractor and was the father of three children.

On July 13, 2025, the 38-year-old Childers was visiting the beach near Pawleys Island, South Carolina, with his wife and young children when several swimmers became stranded at a point about 150 feet from shore in an area affected by currents.

When Childers became aware of the danger, he immediately ran into the ocean and swam toward the struggling swimmers. He continued beyond several of them, apparently believing that another person remained in danger. Another man followed him into the water and eventually reached Childers, who was unresponsive. The man attempted to tow him toward shore, but they became separated in the rough surf. The other swimmers returned safely to land. Police, firefighters, and the Coast Guard then searched for Childers, who later was found after he drifted a considerable distance from where he was last seen. He had drowned.



MICHAEL A. THOMPSON ELECTED CHAIR OF CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION

Michael A. Thompson, a long-time member of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission and an executive with extensive experience in publishing and information services, has been elected chair of the Commission's board of directors.

Commissioners elected Thompson during the Hero Fund's 122nd annual meeting, held June 16, 2026. He succeeds Thomas L. Wentling Jr., who retired to emeritus status after 35 years of service to the Commission.

Thompson has served on the Commission since 2012 and has held several leadership positions, including vice chair, co-chair of the Governance Committee, and member of the Executive Committee.

Professionally, Thompson is director of the Publishing & Information Product Group at SAE International, where he oversees the development and delivery of information products and services for the aerospace, automotive, and commercial vehicle industries.

As chair, Thompson will help guide the Hero Fund as it continues its longstanding work of recognizing civilian heroism while expanding access to its extensive historical records.

"I am honored to serve as chair and help lead the Hero Fund into its next chapter," Thompson said. "For 122 years, the Hero Fund has preserved the stories of ordinary people who performed extraordinary acts for others."

Thompson said the Commission has an opportunity to make that body of information more accessible to researchers and scholars, helping deepen the understanding of heroism, altruism, and the circumstances that inspire people to risk their lives for others.

Since Andrew Carnegie established the Hero Fund in 1904, the Commission has recognized more than 10,000 civilians who risked their lives while saving or attempting to save others. Their stories form one of the world's most extensive collections of documented civilian heroism.

Carnegie Hero Fund President Eric P.

► p. 15



PRESENTING

West Virginia Assistant State Treasurer Mike Comer presented the Carnegie Medal to Andrea Robinette, the widow of Carnegie Hero **Mark Robinette**, at a presentation held at the Foundation Church in Mount Sterling, Ohio, on Saturday, May 2. Comer is a cousin of Robinette, and the church was founded by Robinette in 2000. He was serving the church as its pastor at the time of his death. Robinette was posthumously awarded in September 2025 after he died attempting to save his two sons from burning on Jan. 23, 2024, at their home in Orient, Ohio.

Robinette, a 55-year-old pastor, his wife, and four of their children were trapped on the second floor of their two-story home, after a fire had broken out on the first floor and filled the upstairs with dense smoke. Robinette's son, 14, woke his parents as fire spread up the stairwell to the second floor. Robinette helped his wife out of a bedroom window. As the 14-year-old moved to run back to his room to retrieve one of his brothers, Robinette told his son that he would go to get "the boys." Robinette picked up the 14-year-old and pushed him through a bathroom window onto a first-floor roof. Robinette intercepted his 24-year-old daughter as he ran into a hallway and carried her to his bedroom to push her out through the window. Robinette then disappeared from the window and was not seen again. He remained inside with his 10- and 17-year-old sons. All three died from smoke inhalation and were burned.

Andrea posted about the presentation of the medal on Instagram and remembered her husband's bravery that night and throughout his entire life.

"Yesterday my husband Mark was honored for his bravery," she said. "I'm thankful for my husband's life. I'm thankful I got to be by his side for so many years. He was a hero that awful night, and really throughout his life," she wrote. ❄️



Cmdr. Bruce Thomas of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 6258 presented the Carnegie Medal to the family of posthumously awarded **Joshua A. Curtis** at a ceremony held on Memorial Day in Halifax, Massachusetts. Curtis' son, Owen, 7, was joined by his mother, Barbara, Curtis' widow, to receive the medal. She specifically wanted Owen to accept his father's medal on his behalf.

Curtis was awarded the Carnegie Medal for Heroism in December 2025 after an April 24, 2025, water rescue in which he drowned saving his son and his 9-year-old niece off of Fernandina Beach, Florida. Curtis was also a decorated soldier earning the Purple Heart and Bronze Star before retiring honorably in 2010 as a Sergeant First Class.

Owen, who was 6-years-old at the time of the rescue, and his cousin, Raylynn Nelsen, were playing in shallow water when a rip current suddenly pulled them into water at least 7 feet deep. Curtis saw what was happening from the beach and immediately went after them. When he reached the children, he worked to keep them afloat and push them back toward shore. At some point, Curtis stopped swimming and continued drifting farther out with Owen on his back. Raylynn kept trying to make her way toward shore.

On the beach, a bystander alerted Lance T. Jones, 45, a local who saw Raylynn about 300 feet from shore, ran into the water, and swam out to her. Panicking, she grabbed him and briefly pulled him under, but once he calmed her, he got her back to shallow water, where another bystander helped her the rest of the way to shore. Jones then swam out roughly 600 feet to reach Curtis and Owen. When he got to them, Curtis was facedown in the water. Owen grabbed onto Jones, pulling him under a few times, but Jones calmed him and turned Curtis onto his back. Jones pushed Owen a short distance toward shore, then swam forward to meet him, repeating this until rescue swimmers reached them at a point about 200 feet from shore. Jones continued to help bring Owen in while the rescuers brought Curtis to the beach and began lifesaving efforts. The children were taken to the hospital and released the same day with no injuries. Curtis was also taken to the hospital, but he could not be resuscitated; he had drowned. Jones was nearly exhausted and coughed up some water but was otherwise uninjured.

After the incident both Curtis' local VFW in Halifax and Fernandina Beach's Post No. 10095 stood in support for the Curtis family. In Florida, the post launched a GoFundMe that ultimately earned about \$12,000 for Curtis' mother and sister to travel to Massachusetts for Curtis' funeral. In Halifax, \$58,975 was raised for Curtis' widow and son for funeral costs and living expenses. Donators included neighboring VFW Post No. 2125 in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, Old Colony Youth Football, and Silver Lake Youth Football.

Other veterans also attended the event for a Memorial Day ceremony, including Steve Littlefield and Eugene Coghill. They honored Curtis for his bravery and his sacrifice. In 2025, a memorial bench was installed at the Halifax VFW bearing Curtis' name. ❄️

PRESENTING

San Bernardino (California) County Sheriff Shannon D. Dicus presented the Carnegie Medal to **Michael Anthony Castaneda** at a private ceremony held in May at the sheriff's department.

Castaneda was awarded the medal in June 2025 after he saved a 2-year-old girl from being struck by a train in Redlands, California, on Sept. 20, 2024.

A woman's SUV became immobilized on a railroad track between crossing gates that descended while she was driving with her two children in car seats. Off-duty sheriff's deputy Castaneda, 38, was driving behind the SUV when he saw the crossing arms descend with the vehicle stopped on the tracks between the gates. Castaneda observed the woman exit the SUV to retrieve her 2-year-old daughter from the back seat on the driver's side and stood her next to the vehicle, still on the tracks, in the path of an oncoming freight train moving about 10 m.p.h. The mother then partially entered the backseat area to help the girl's 5-year-old sister out of her car seat. Castaneda rightfully concluded that the woman would be unable to usher two children to safety in time. He exited his own vehicle to run about 50 feet to the SUV and grasp the 2-year-old girl before carrying her to safety beyond the railroad crossing as the mother emerged from the SUV holding her sister and took her to safety in the opposite direction. About five seconds later, the train struck the SUV. Castaneda then returned the girl, unharmed, to the mother. Castaneda was not injured.

Following the rescue, Castaneda told CBS LA that it was just a matter of timing for him to be there at that moment and to help.

"I think it was just the perfect timing for me to be somewhere," Castaneda said. "What I do for my job, what I've done in the past is just to help people," he said. ☼



City of Vinton, Louisiana, Chief of Police Scott Spell presented the Carnegie Medal to Police Sergeant **Dempsey Lavergne III** at a presentation held at Governor Jeff Landry's office in Baton Rouge. In attendance was Lavergne's family, Spell, and Police Deputy Chief Mary Pierrottie.

Lavergne was awarded the medal after he saved a 4-year-old girl and her grandmother from drowning inside their submerging vehicle on July 15, 2022, in Vinton.

Ellyse R. Mercer, 4, and her grandmother Pamela A. Dennis, 54, were inside an SUV that left a road and continued down an embankment into a canal. The vehicle came to rest about 30 feet from a bank in the canal as it began to submerge in water 10 feet deep. Lavergne, a 31-year-old police sergeant, was alerted to the incident by radio and responded to the bank. Bystanders told him that Ellyse and Dennis were trapped in the vehicle; one of them providing him with a pocketknife that had a glass-breaking tool. Water quickly filled the front-passenger compartment as Dennis swam to the rear, removed Ellyse from her car seat, and held her above the water. Lavergne heard them screaming and swam to the rear of the vehicle, where he stood on the bumper and broke out the glass of the rear windshield. He reached inside to grasp Ellyse by an arm as Dennis handed her to him. Once Ellyse was out of the vehicle, he held her above the water's surface and swam to shallow water. A bystander aided her to safety as Lavergne returned to the rear of the vehicle. He again partially entered through the rear windshield where Dennis handed him a small dog. Lavergne exited and tossed the dog toward the bank where it swam to safety. Lavergne returned to the SUV's rear and was joined by a police corporal. By this point, the SUV had almost completely submerged and Dennis was submerged. Lavergne climbed onto the roof and broke out the sunroof glass. The corporal followed his lead onto the roof as Lavergne leaned inside through the broken-out sunroof. He submerged his head and found Dennis' hand where he grasped it to lift her upward. Once her shoulders were above

the opening, Lavergne and the corporal lifted her the rest of the way out. The corporal then towed her to shallow water and was aided by another bystander to take her to safety on the bank. Lavergne, too, exited the canal. Both Ellyse and Dennis were taken to the hospital by ambulance for scratches. Dennis had also swallowed water and broke her right ankle attempting to kick open the sinking vehicle's window, which required surgery. They recovered. Lavergne was not injured.

"Sgt. Lavergne represents what it means to serve with courage, integrity, and selflessness," Police Chief Spell said. "His actions on that day did not just make a difference; they saved lives. We are incredibly proud to have him as part of our department." ☼





LATEST RECIPIENTS OF THE CARNEGIE MEDAL

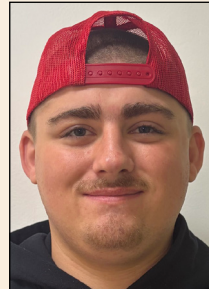
Since the last edition of Impulse, the following 18 individuals have been awarded the Carnegie Medal for Heroism, bringing the total number of recipients to 10,581 since the Hero Fund's inception in 1904. The latest awards were made in June. The next announcement will be made in September.

While Amber Perren, 27, knelt in a shallow area of the St. Lucie River in Stuart, Florida, on July 23, 2025, an 8.5-foot-long alligator approached her in the murky water and, without warning, clamped onto her right arm and hand. It dragged her toward deeper water, while she splashed, screamed, and punched the alligator with her free hand. Amber's husband **Kelby Perren**, a 33-year-old power generation engineer from Palm City, Florida, was on the nearby beach when he saw her thrashing in the water. Thinking, he later said, she might have been attacked by a shark, Perren ran to his wife and grasped her around her waist. Feeling something thrash against his leg and jerk Amber away from him, he pulled again with force, yanking Amber free from the alligator's jaws. The Perrens boarded their boat, and Perren called 911 while navigating to a nearby dock, where they were met by first-responders. Amber was ultimately flown by medical helicopter to a hospital, where she remained for six days for treatment of two broken bones in her forearm. Although she later regained motion in her injured arm, numbness persisted as she continued to heal.

As a tent in a homeless encampment caught fire, smoke billowed across a Hamilton, Ontario, roadway on Jan. 5, 2025. Shawn Goodwin, 53, was entangled in a tarp inside the burning tent as flames intensified. Driving nearby was



Kelby Perren



Ezekiel Fox



Gary M. Simard



Kenny Crosby

17-year-old **Ezekiel Fox**, a Hamilton high schooler, who pulled over and heard Goodwin shout for help. Ezekiel phoned his parents as he approached the tent when something exploded and flames shot into the sky. Despite his mother's warnings not to enter the burning tent, Ezekiel saw that the entrance flap of the tent was open and told his father he was going in. Throwing his phone aside, he pulled back the flap and ran inside. Ezekiel found Goodwin about 7 feet from the door. He tried to grab Goodwin's arms, but Goodwin's injuries made it difficult to maintain his grip. Ezekiel instead grabbed Goodwin under the arms and walked backward, dragging him to safety. Flames engulfed the tent as Ezekiel continued to drag Goodwin 15 feet from the tent. Ezekiel rolled Goodwin, who was severely burned, in snow to stop the burning. Goodwin was hospitalized for severe burns and spent months recovering.

Ezekiel was treated at a hospital for smoke inhalation and released the following morning.

Twelve-year-old Gary J. Simard was swimming in the Atlantic Ocean off Salisbury, Massachusetts, on Sept. 20, 2023, when a rip current pulled him into water 8 feet deep where he struggled to swim. At a point about 75 feet from shore, Gary signaled for help as the current carried him farther out to sea. His father, 44-year-old finance manager **Gary M. Simard** from Methuen, Massachusetts, immediately responded, entering the water and swimming to his son in the strong current. Simard grasped Gary by an arm and tried to swim them toward shore, but the current continued to pull them farther from land. On the beach, **Kenny Crosby**, a 34-year-old business owner from Miami Beach, Florida, heard shouts for help from Gary and Simard. Despite the hazardous conditions, Crosby entered the water and swam toward them. By the time Crosby reached the pair, they were about 150 feet from shore. Simard, exhausted from the effort to rescue his son, pushed Gary to Crosby. At some point, Simard submerged and did not resurface. With Gary in tow, Crosby tried to swim directly to shore but the current prevented him from making any progress. Changing course, Crosby swam parallel to the shoreline, eventually reaching wadable water with Gary. Crosby pushed Gary toward a bystander standing in chest-deep water who, with Gary, exited the water onto the beach. Crosby soon followed. Gary was examined by paramedics at the scene and was not injured. Emergency personnel reached Simard in the water about 300 feet from shore. He was taken to the beach, where paramedics attempted to revive him before he was taken by ambulance to the hospital. He could not be revived; he had drowned. Crosby ingested water and had trouble breathing following the rescue. He was taken by ambulance to a hospital where he



*Cell phone image of the fire at a homeless encampment in Hamilton, Ontario, just after 17-year-old **Ezekiel Fox** saved Shawn Goodwin, 53, from his burning tent. Goodwin was entangled in a tarp inside the tent as flames intensified. Ezekiel entered the tent and dragged Goodwin out before rolling him on the ground. Photo courtesy of Christina Fox.*


Joseph F. Mello III

Matthew Forrester

Matthew C. Schoenecker

Matthew Thomas Anthony

was monitored for water in his lungs. He was released and recovered in about a week.

Seventy-seven-year-old Joseph Mello Jr. was recovering from back surgery when a fire broke out on the first floor of his Ipswich, Massachusetts, home on Aug. 18, 2025. As the fire spread upward into the rear of the second floor and roof, Mello remained trapped in a second-floor bedroom. Across the driveway, his son, 56-year-old business owner **Joseph F. Mello III**, was stepping into the shower in his home when he heard someone shouting about a fire. Barefoot and wearing only a bathrobe, Joseph ran outside, and, seeing smoke pouring from the roof of his father's house, he entered the burning structure through the front door. Joseph climbed the stairs and made his way through thick smoke to his father's bedroom. After he helped his father to his walker, he ran to a bathroom to soak towels with water to help them breathe. The two men started down the hall toward the stairs, but conditions had worsened, with dense smoke filling the stairway. Joseph feared the electric chairlift his father depended on might not work and the smoke-choked staircase was no longer a safe means of escape. Joseph changed course and guided his father to a rear bedroom. As firefighters responded outside, Joseph opened the window and called for a ladder. Firefighters positioned a ladder to the window, and a firefighter entered the room to help Joseph get Mello onto the ladder. Firefighters lowered Mello to the ground and then Joseph descended himself. Mello was hospitalized for smoke inhalation, cuts, and abrasions. He recovered. Joseph suffered smoke inhalation and abrasions but declined medical treatment. After a few weeks of coughing, he recovered.

A 90-year-old man became trapped inside his car after it left the roadway in Lilburn, Georgia, on March 15, 2025. The vehicle came to rest in the rear yard of a property off a cul-de-sac. Disoriented and unable to escape, the driver repeatedly revved the engine to return to the road. As a tire spun and eventually wore down, the exposed metal wheel rim struck rocks and caused sparks that ignited a fire along a nearby culvert. The property belonged to **Matthew Forrester**, a 45-year-old teacher,

who was alerted to the crash and responded barefoot. When he arrived, flames were 5 feet high burning at the car's passenger side and spreading toward the engine. Dense smoke billowed from the open driver's window, obscuring the interior. Although he could not see inside, Forrester heard the man shouting for help. Forrester opened the driver's door and felt around for a seat belt. He soon realized the man was not restrained. With flames entering the passenger compartment through vents at the dashboard, Forrester extended his head and arms inside the car, grasped the man under his arms and pulled, but the man would not let go of the steering wheel. As the fire advanced toward the driver, Forrester leaned farther into the vehicle and pulled again, forcibly freeing the man from the vehicle. Maintaining his hold on the man, Forrester dragged him up a hill away from the car. About 20 seconds after the rescue, the engine exploded and debris was thrown into the air, landing as far as 10 feet from the vehicle. Flames grew to about 9 feet high and enveloped the vehicle. The driver sustained an injury to a foot in the accident but declined medical treatment at the scene. He died about two months later of unrelated causes. Forrester suffered minor smoke inhalation, singed hair on his arm, and was sore following the rescue. He did not require medical treatment and recovered.

A group of six hikers stopped at a water fall along the North Fork American River in Soda Springs, California, on June 18, 2025. Two members of the group had jumped from a cliff about 20 feet above the river into a deep pool below. Following them, 59-year-old Valentino Creus jumped from the cliff and entered the water, he struggled to stay afloat in the cold, turbulent current near a 50-foot waterfall. Among the hikers were 50-year-old biomedical engineer **Matthew C. Schoenecker** of Los Angeles and 44-year-old administrator **Matthew Thomas Anthony** of New York City. Shortly before Creus entered the water, Schoenecker and another hiker had jumped from the cliff and had experienced the strength of the current. They were climbing out of the river about 50 feet downstream, when Creus jumped into the pool by himself, out of their

line of sight. Anthony was among the others in the group that remained near the cliff and peered down over the edge when Creus called out for help. By that time, Schoenecker was approaching the group, Anthony told him that Creus needed help. Schoenecker immediately jumped into the river again. Anthony then removed his shoes and also entered the water. The actions of Schoenecker and Anthony after they entered the pool could not be established, but the remaining hikers did not see any of the three men again. Three days later, a diver recovered the bodies of Creus, Schoenecker, and Anthony underwater near the waterfall. They had drowned.

A 21-year-old man was driving in Holland, Michigan, on June 27, 2025, when he suffered a medical emergency. His car left the interstate and crashed head-on into a tree on a grassy embankment. Unresponsive and pinned by the steering wheel, he remained trapped inside as smoke began to rise from the vehicle. Witnesses soon saw flames break out at the car's front end while the driver remained unable to escape. Among the bystanders who stopped at the scene was off-duty state police Sgt. **David Cardenas**, 49, of Rockford, Michigan. Seeing the trapped driver and growing fire, Cardenas attempted to break the driver's window with a lawn chair but was unsuccessful. He then used a passerby's empty fire extinguisher to smash multiple windows. Cardenas cut the shoulder strap of the man's seat belt and, through ►



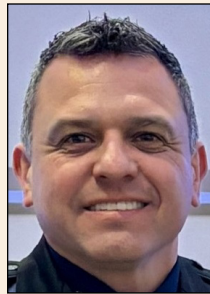
Matthew Forrester is shown dragging a 90-year-old man away from burning wreckage following an accident on Forrester's property in Lilburn, Georgia. Forrester extended his head and arms inside the vehicle and forcibly freed the man as flames advanced. Forrester dragged the man up a hill and seconds later the vehicle exploded. Photo courtesy of Michelle Forrester.



LATEST MEDAL RECIPIENTS

a rear door, fully entered the smoke-filled car. By then, flames had breached the cabin and were burning the man's legs. Inside the vehicle, Cardenas reclined the driver's seat and pulled the man's arms, but he was unable to free him. Forced back by the smoke, Cardenas exited the car twice for fresh air. Inside the burning car for a third time, Cardenas again tugged on the man's arms inching him toward the backseat area. Around then, another man approached and grasped one of the man's arms. Together, they pulled the man away from the car and dragged him across the grass to safety. The flames swelled, spreading to the nearby tree and the grass by the car, eventually destroying the vehicle. Cardenas helped first-responders tend to the man before he was taken to a hospital for severe burns to the lower half of his body and hand. The man was hospitalized for six weeks and completed two weeks of rehabilitation. Cardenas reported a minor burn to his left forearm and multiple cuts on his legs, feet, and hands. He declined hospital treatment.

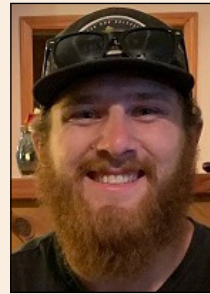
On a June 9, 2025, visit to the Little River Reservoir in Saint John, New Brunswick, a teenage boy struggled to swim in cold water. The incident occurred off a municipal park beach before seasonal lifeguards were stationed on the beach. The water temperature that afternoon was estimated to be in the low 60s. Nearby, civil engineering technologist **Matthew Baxter**, 28, from Saint John, was



David Cardenas



Matthew Baxter



Ryan Warren



Brandon Rorer

attending a construction site meeting with others when they heard calls for help. Baxter quickly disassembled a section of metal fence surrounding the construction site and rushed to the shoreline. He removed his construction helmet and surveyor's vest, but he kept on the rest of his clothing, including steel-toe boots. Entering the reservoir, Baxter was initially shocked by the cold water. He waded into the water until it was deep enough to swim and then struck out toward the victim, who by then was more than 100 feet from shore. The boy was holding onto another teen who was trying to help him. Baxter separated them and secured the struggling boy. The other teen was able to swim back on his own while Baxter began kicking toward the beach with the boy. Unable to kick off his boots that weighed him down, Baxter submerged multiple times with the boy and swallowed water. They eventually reached wadable water where others from shore met Baxter to help the boy. Arriving first-responders took the boy to a hospital. Baxter coughed up water he had swallowed during the rescue

but did not require medical treatment. He recovered.

A fire broke out at the Weaverville, California, home of 79-year-old Jeffrey G. Hickey on Oct. 9, 2025. Hickey, who used a walker and was hearing impaired, was on the floor of his living room as the fire spread to other parts of the house. Unable to escape, he activated his medical alert pendant, which sent a text message to family members, including his grandson, 27-year-old Weaverville tattoo artist **Ryan Warren**, who was nearby. Warren had visited Hickey earlier but had left about 15 minutes before he received the alert and drove back to his grandfather's home. Smoke rose from the roof. He opened the front door but was driven back by thick smoke. He exited the house and called 911 on his cell phone. Warren then covered his mouth with his sweatshirt and re-entered the home. He ran about 30 feet to the living room and found his grandfather on the floor. By then, the kitchen, about 15 feet away, had become engulfed in flames. Portions of the living room carpet



*A photo taken by the Allegan County Sheriffs Office of the SUV and scorched grass on an embankment in Holland, MI, shortly after off-duty state police Sgt. **David Cardenas**, 49, rescued a 21-year-old man from being burned. The man had suffered a medical emergency while driving and the vehicle crashed, causing flames to break out at its front end. Cardenas responded and entered the vehicle three times to eventually free the man with help from a bystander. Soon after, the flames swelled and spread to the nearby grass, destroying the vehicle.*



Frank John LaFerrara



Stanley Grenier



Frank Mervin Young

near Hickey were also burning. Warren grabbed Hickey under both arms and walked backward, dragging him 30 feet through smoke and heat to the front door. Once on the porch, Warren placed Hickey in a wheelchair and moved him down the porch stairs and into the front yard. An ambulance took Hickey to a hospital, and he was later flown by helicopter to a Sacramento hospital. Hickey died two days later from his injuries. Warren was evaluated at a hospital. After coughing up black phlegm for several days, he recovered.

A fire broke out on the back deck of a Spring Hill, Tennessee, house on Aug. 25, 2025. As the fire spread and black smoke filled the home, 7-year-old Silas Rorer remained near the doorway of his second-floor bedroom. Silas' father, 36-year-old treasury analyst **Brandon Rorer**, had re-entered the home on the basement level after attempting to put out the fire when he learned that Silas had not escaped with his mother and sister. Rorer ran up two flights of stairs and called out for Silas. Through the thick smoke and blistering heat, Rorer felt for his son while following the sound of his son's voice. Unable to continue due to the smoke and heat, Rorer was forced back down to the first floor. He then climbed the stairs again, continuing his search. Once more he was unsuccessful and forced to retreat. Rorer made a third attempt but again was unable to locate his son before running out of air. On his fourth attempt, he felt Silas, picked him up, and fled down two flights of stairs and out of the house to safety. Silas was hospitalized for two days and treated for minor burns on his face, ear, and arm. He also had smoke inhalation injuries, and he recovered. Rorer was taken to the hospital in critical condition, suffering second-degree thermal burns to his head, chest, and arm, as well as a serious smoke inhalation injury. He was hospitalized for three weeks and was still recovering almost a year later.

A teenage girl became caught in a rip current in the Atlantic Ocean near a rock jetty in Ocean City, New Jersey, on Oct. 5, 2025. She struggled to swim in water at least 6 feet deep about 100 feet from shore as the current carried her farther from land. Nearby on the beach, 73-year-old grocery store clerk **Frank John LaFerrara** of

Ocean City saw the girl in distress. LaFerrara entered the water and swam toward her. As the current continued pulling the girl away from shore, LaFerrara advanced. He stopped briefly about 10 feet from her to catch his breath before continuing.

LaFerrara eventually reached the girl, who by then was at a point about 200 feet from shore where the water was approximately 20 feet deep. Upon reaching her, the girl panicked and jumped onto LaFerrara. She pushed down on his shoulders and submerged him beneath the surface. After resurfacing, LaFerrara grasped the girl's hands and pushed her away from his body while maintaining a hold on her to prevent being submerged again. He told her to calm down and that he would get her to safety. Holding one of the girl's hands, LaFerrara began swimming away from the jetty and toward shore. During the return, waves submerged the girl at least twice before she resurfaced. LaFerrara towed the girl until they reached wadable water. Once they were out of danger, another man arrived with a flotation device and assisted LaFerrara in helping the girl to shore. Paramedics examined the girl at the scene, but she did not require further treatment. LaFerrara was short of breath following the rescue but did not require medical treatment. He recovered.

A sedan unintentionally left the road and struck a tree in Lebanon, Maine, on April 15, 2024, at which point, its driver, 38-year-old William Santana, was rendered unconscious and

seriously injured. Most of Santana's body was slumped over the front, passenger seat when smoke began rising from the vehicle. Within minutes, the vehicle caught fire. A bystander approached the vehicle, opened the driver's door, and attempted to assist Santana. Unable to rouse him, the bystander concluded that continuing the rescue was too dangerous and returned to the roadside. The bystander then flagged down another driver, who used a fire extinguisher to little effect on the growing fire. Commercial painter **Stanley Grenier**, 50, of Springvale, Maine, then also stopped at the scene. As flames burned on the passenger side, Grenier approached the car and knelt on the unoccupied driver's seat. He attempted several times to wake Santana but was unsuccessful. Grenier then grasped Santana's left arm and pulled him across the center console. Crawling backward, Grenier moved Santana into the driver's seat. He then placed his right arm beneath Santana's left arm and helped the now semiconscious Santana to his feet. Grenier led Santana away from the burning vehicle and toward responding emergency personnel. Santana was taken to a local hospital, where he remained for one week. He received treatment for a fractured skull, a broken neck, and a punctured lung. He was not burned. He recovered within six months. Grenier was not injured.

A young girl was playing near the edge of the Chattahoochee River in Roswell, Georgia, on July 2, 2025, when she unintentionally entered the water and struggled to swim in water about 7 feet deep. Seeing her daughter in distress, the girl's mother entered the river to help. She, too, began struggling in the water. Nearby, 59-year-old taxi driver **Frank Mervin Young** of



*A photo taken by the Roswell Police Department with a paramedic standing near the muddy entrance of a boat and kayak launch area at Garrard Landing State Park in Roswell, Georgia, just after **Frank Mervin Young**, 59, attempted to save a girl who had fallen into the water on July 2, 2025. Young was fishing when he saw the girl and her mother struggling to swim. He entered the water and reached them but he ultimately submerged. The girl and her mother did make it out of the mother safely, but Young had drowned and was found an hour after he submerged.*



Sugar Hill, Georgia, was fishing. When the emergency unfolded, Young entered the cold water to help. According to the girl's 14-year-old brother, Young reached the mother and daughter. While attempting to assist them, however, Young also struggled to swim. He ultimately submerged and was carried away from the bank by the current. Meanwhile, the girl's brother positioned himself on land near the water's edge while holding a plastic cooler. He extended the cooler toward the girl and her mother. Both were able to grasp it, allowing the boy to pull them safely to shore. Emergency personnel, firefighters, and police arrived and took control of the scene. The girl had swallowed water and vomited after being removed from the river but was otherwise unharmed. Firefighters later deployed a rescue boat and located Young's body about an hour after he submerged. He had drowned.

A 37-year-old man was driving a pickup truck on an interstate near the Mississippi River in La Crescent, Minnesota, on June 30, 2025, when he suddenly felt faint. After pulling into a rest area, he lost consciousness and crashed through brush into the river. Boston program manager **Dustin Colson Leaning**, 32, was parked at the rest area with his partner when they heard the crash. The two ran to the shoreline and saw the pickup bobbing in the river about 60 feet from shore. While his partner called 911, Colson Leaning entered the water and swam to the truck. The vehicle was floating upright, submerged to the door handles. Inside, he could see the semiconscious driver, who was bleeding from the face, while water poured into the cab. As the river current carried the pickup farther from shore, Colson Leaning attempted to open the

front, passenger door but was unsuccessful. He then swam to the driver's side and tried to open the driver's door. When that effort failed, Colson Leaning moved to the rear, driver's-side door. It also would not open. Bracing both feet against the truck, Colson Leaning grasped the rear door handle with both hands and pulled. The door opened as the pickup began to list and sink away from him. Water rushed into the cab and began forcing the door closed again. Colson Leaning wedged his shoulder and one foot between the door and the frame to keep it open. While holding the door open, he grasped the driver beneath an elbow. At the same time, the driver pushed himself outward, and Colson Leaning pulled him free from the vehicle. The two men then swam to a nearby tree branch, where they floated and rested before continuing to a boat-ramp dock. The driver was treated at a hospital for injuries sustained in the crash. Colson Leaning was uninjured.

Paul V. Gerek, 60, was walking his dog with his son near the flooded Menomonee River in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin, on Aug. 11, 2025, when the dog entered the river after its leash broke. Believing he could reach the dog, Gerek stepped toward the water and fell into the river. Submerged up to his neck, he grasped a branch near the bank to avoid being swept away by the swift current. Seeing his father struggling, 17-year-old high school student **Casey Gerek** of Menomonee Falls



Dustin Colson Leaning



Casey Gerek



Matthew Curran

moved to the water's edge to help. As he crossed a steep submerged drop-off along the bank, Casey fell into the cold water and also became submerged up to his neck. He grasped a branch beside his father, and the two remained in the river holding on and shouting for help. A woman responded and called 911. Police and fire personnel arrived and began rescue efforts using ropes. They succeeded in securing Gerek, but Casey continued struggling in the swift current. The branch Casey was holding and the rescue rope both broke, and he was carried downstream. As Casey drifted away, officers attempted to reach him by lowering a K-9 leash from a bridge, but the current carried him beyond it. Two officers then drove downstream to get ahead of him. One of them was 34-year-old Menomonee Falls police officer **Matthew Curran**. After spotting an opening near the riverbank, the officers stopped, removed some of their equipment, and moved toward the water. When Casey drifted within reach, Curran entered the river and grasped Casey's right hand. The current immediately swept both downstream. Curran attempted to grab brush near the bank but missed it. He submerged and resurfaced before being carried about 100 feet downstream from the point where he had entered the river. Still holding Casey, Curran reached a low-hanging branch from a downed tree with one hand. He pulled Casey toward the brush and held him there while calling out so the other officers could locate them. Curran and the other officers then worked together to move Casey to the opposite side of the branch into shallow water. After officers assisted Casey, Curran climbed over the branch himself. Casey vomited water he had ingested and was carried by Curran, other officers, and responding fire personnel to an access road, where they waited for an ambulance. Meanwhile, rescue personnel removed Gerek from the river. He had sustained bruises and ingested water. He was taken by ambulance to a hospital and released several hours later. Casey was treated at a hospital for minor hypothermia and was released after several hours. The family dog later was found alive near the family vehicle in a nearby parking lot. Curran was uninjured. 🌀



*A photo from the Spring Hill Fire Department showing the Rorer family home on fire in Spring Hill, Tennessee, on Aug. 25, 2025. Seven-year-old Silas Rorer remained near the doorway of his bedroom on the second floor of the home. His father **Brandon Rorer**, 36, went back inside amidst blistering heat and thick smoke to get his son. He located him and brought him outside to safety.*

FRIENDS REMEMBERED

► from p.6

NICHOLAS P. LEARY CONT.

through the smoke, which precluded visibility, but retreated to the hall each time.

Re-entering on his hands and knees, Leary proceeded to Malarkey's bedroom and found her lying on the floor next to the bed, which was aflame, as was the wall beside it. He grasped Malarkey under the arms and dragged her to the apartment door and into the hall. By then, flames had breached the apartment and were issuing into the hall. Another trooper who had responded helped Leary take Malarkey downstairs and outside to safety. Malarkey was hospitalized for treatment of severe burns and died four days later.

Leary served in the U.S. Army and Massachusetts National Guard from 1992 to 1998. He began his career with the Connecticut State Police and served in Danielson, Connecticut, for 20 years.

Leary was described as fiercely devoted to his family. He had a larger-than-life presence, an unmatched work ethic, and a deep love for the people around him. He enjoyed traveling to Disney with his wife and sons, attending his sons' sporting events, going to concerts and barbecues, working out, and spending time with friends. Leary also had a remarkable artistic talent for creating and meticulously painting law enforcement figures, which he quietly and generously gave to members of the law enforcement community.

Leary is survived by wife Susan Hatfield and sons William and Daniel Leary.



Nicholas P. Leary

WILLIAM G.S. SHERMAN

Carnegie Hero **William G.S. Sherman**, 83, died Monday, June 22, 2026, at his home in Pittsburgh.

Sherman was born Jan. 13, 1943, in Pittsburgh to William Gilbert Stuart Sherman Sr. and Thelma Williams Sherman.

On June 15, 1967, 14-year-old Colleen M. Phillips was swimming in a creek in Harlansburg, Pennsylvania, when she began to struggle and submerged in water 7.5 feet deep. William, also 14 at the time, was the only other person in the water and swam 40 feet to Colleen. He tried to calm her as she struggled to remain afloat, but she clutched him, struck him on the head, and threw one arm around his neck.

William broke her hold by briefly submerging her and then tried to hold her still, but she broke free of his grasp and flailed her arms wildly. As Colleen began to sink, William grasped her by the hair and held her head above the water while attempting to tow her toward the bank. Colleen again struggled and struck William in the face. He submerged briefly but maintained his hold on her before towing her 35 feet across the current to a point 10 feet from the bank.

There, Colleen struggled again and caused both of them to submerge briefly. William supported her while treading water, and a young man swam to them and helped take her to the bank. Colleen was somewhat dazed and exhausted, while William was tired and winded. Both recovered.

After the rescue, Sherman spent more than three decades operating Allegheny Ceramics, a business he built with his mother and ran until it closed in 2001. He embraced a new career in his late fifties and became a lead computer programmer for the Allegheny Bar Association.

Sherman was devoted to the people he loved. He was an avid fly fisherman and photographer and enjoyed reading history, detective novels, and books about the natural world.

Sherman is survived by his wife of 25 years, Marita; children Clifford, William, Jennifer, and Paul; and grandchildren Ewan and Meredith. ☹



William G.S. Sherman

► from p.7

THOMPSON ELECTED CHAIR OF HERO FUND COMMISSION

Zahren said Thompson's experience and longstanding commitment to the organization position him well to lead the Commission.

"Michael has earned the respect of his fellow commissioners through years of dedicated service and thoughtful leadership," Zahren said. "His experience guiding complex organizations and his commitment to the Hero Fund's mission will serve the Commission well as we expand our efforts to recognize heroism, support scholarly research, and deepen public understanding of altruism and lifesaving action."

Thompson follows Wentling, who served as chair beginning in 2024 and played a significant role in shaping the organization's financial stewardship. As long-time chair of the Finance Committee, Wentling helped strengthen the Hero Fund's long-term financial stability through a restructuring of its investment strategy.

The Commission also elected Nancy Rackoff and Alex DiClaudio as vice chairs, Arthur M. Scully III as treasurer, and David McL. Hillman as secretary. ☹

'HEROES FOR HEROES' PEER NETWORK

The Hero Fund has initiated a peer support network for Carnegie heroes to speak with each other about their common experience in taking on great risk to save another person, often a stranger.



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

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

To participate, e-mail carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org. ☹



OVERHEARD

Something tells me to go, and I just go, and I'm happy that he's alive. -**Suzanne Fortin**, Carnegie Hero #10319

I tried once to get in and get him and thought, there's nobody else. Am I gonna live the rest of my life knowing I could've done something? - **Paul Galotti**, Carnegie Hero #10350

I don't think my husband could've lived with himself if he didn't try to save her. -Widow of **Scott Kilburn**, Carnegie Hero #10391

It all comes down to, in a time like that, when you find people at their most vulnerable state, it doesn't take a whole lot to step in and try to do something. - Carnegie Hero #10478 **Alec Christian Larson**, who saved a mother and baby from a burning car.

You kind of forget about your dreams, but then this happened, and suddenly life has given me a chance to do whatever I can, to do this. - Carnegie Hero #10496 **Josué Alfredo Contreras**, who, after saving a couple from a burning building, decided to work toward becoming a professional fire fighter

The result of saving a human life, there's nothing better than that at the end of the day. - **Kendall Reyes**, Carnegie Hero #10378

The first thing he wanted to do was check if someone was in there. He was just ready to jump over the edge, he's not thinking, he's just going. It's primal. - Partner of Carnegie Hero #10526 **Robert E. Chance**

You're putting yourself in danger, I guess, but wouldn't you want someone to do that for you? - Carnegie Hero #10540 **William Anthony Rubio**

Gone fishing



Carnegie Hero **Jack France** and Hero Fund President Eric Zahren pose for a photo on a July 12, 2026, fishing trip on Lake Huron out of France's home port of Cheboygan, Michigan. France is a charter captain with Diabolical Sport Fishing, which operates from Great Lake ports in Northern Michigan. In 2025, France and **Matthew Duffiney** saved a 73-year-old man from drowning after the utility task vehicle he was driving broke through thin ice on the frozen Black River and sank 13 feet in Cheboygan. Zahren is wearing a "Gone Fishing" memorial bracelet honoring Carnegie Hero **Ricky Lee Sneve**, who died in 2021 while rescuing his 5-year-old sister from drowning in the Big Sioux River in Hudson, South Dakota. ☼



Ryan Keith Cox's family attended the 5/31 Memorial in Virginia Beach to remember and celebrate their loved one who died while saving others during a 2019 workplace shooting.

► from p.4

Virginia Beach tributes

"Before now, we were all scattered along our journey," Mills said in a video captured by WAVY-TV 10. "Today, we are reunited, and we are now truly VB Strong."

Cox's family was also present for the unveiling. His brother, Ervin Ray Cox Jr., and their mother, Maxine Cox, walked the memorial path with other family members and found Cox's name near the reflecting pool.

They then continued toward the Hero Tree, taking in a permanent tribute to Cox, the others who died, and those who demonstrated extraordinary courage in trying to protect and save others.

Seven years after Cox refused safety because he believed he had to help others, the two memorials ensure that his life — and his final act of sacrifice — will remain part of the community he served. ☼

— Griffin Erdely, Communications Assistant

Yonkers honors two-time Carnegie Medal recipient John J. O'Neill Sr.



Two of the July 14, 2026, dedication attendees examine The Herald Statesman's front page that includes a story on one of O'Neill's rescues that earned him the Carnegie Medal.

The city of Yonkers, New York, recently honored two-time Carnegie Medal recipient **John J. O'Neill Sr.** with the dedication of a memorial plaque and the establishment of a scholarship bearing his name.

The John James O'Neill Sr. Scholarship will benefit Yonkers Department of Public Works employees, where O'Neill worked as a road maintenance man when he performed two separate water rescues. Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano announced the honors as a way to preserve O'Neill's legacy of courage, service, and selflessness for future generations.

O'Neill is one of only six people in the Hero Fund's history to receive the Carnegie Medal twice for separate acts of heroism. Both of his medals recognized rescues from drowning at the Yonkers City Pier, performed approximately 2.5 years apart despite a heart condition for which doctors had advised him to avoid strenuous activity.

On May 5, 1954, O'Neill, then 46, was working near the pier when 41-year-old Anna Schulz fell into the Hudson River. He ran approximately 250 feet to the pier, climbed over a railing, and moved along a ledge above the water. Although another man warned him against entering the river because of his health, O'Neill removed his shoes and jumped 14 feet into the water. Both were treated at a hospital for shock and exposure and recovered.

O'Neill returned to the same river under even harsher conditions on the night of Dec. 29, 1956, after 62-year-old Angelina DePole fell from the pier.

Still under medical instructions to avoid exertion, O'Neill hurried to the river wall and jumped fully clothed into the near-freezing water. He swam through choppy waves to DePole and towed her toward a suspended ladder against the wall. While he held both the ladder and DePole, waves repeatedly drove his head against the wall and ice formed on his face and clothing.

O'Neill remained in the water until others could secure a rope around DePole and lift her to safety.

Decades later, O'Neill's family began learning more about the full circumstances of the two

rescues. Several of his descendants visited the Hero Fund's Pittsburgh offices in 2023, where they examined the original investigative records documenting his actions.

The visit helped fill gaps in the family's understanding of O'Neill's life, his son Michael said at the time. Family members also attended the Hero Fund's annual meeting, where commissioners recognized O'Neill's exceptional place in the organization's history.

The new memorial plaque and scholarship now extend that recognition to the city where O'Neill lived, worked, and twice entered the Hudson River for strangers in danger.

Through the scholarship, his name will remain connected not only to the Yonkers Department of Public Works, but also to the public-service employees who follow him. ❄️



► from p.4



EMERITUS CONT.

Commission. More than 3,000 Carnegie heroes were awarded the Carnegie Medal during his years of service.

Since 2022, Commission members who reach the maximum active service age of 75 have been eligible for emeritus status, allowing them to remain connected to the organization and continue sharing their experience, institutional knowledge, and counsel. ❄️



Chair Thomas L. Wentling Jr., left, and President Eric P. Zahren, right, presented Dr. Peter J. Lambrou with a certificate acknowledging his 17 years on the Hero Fund Commission. At the annual meeting, Lambrou and Wentling became emeritus members.

► from p.7

GEORGIA STATE BASEBALL FIELD NAMED IN HONOR OF CARNEGIE HERO

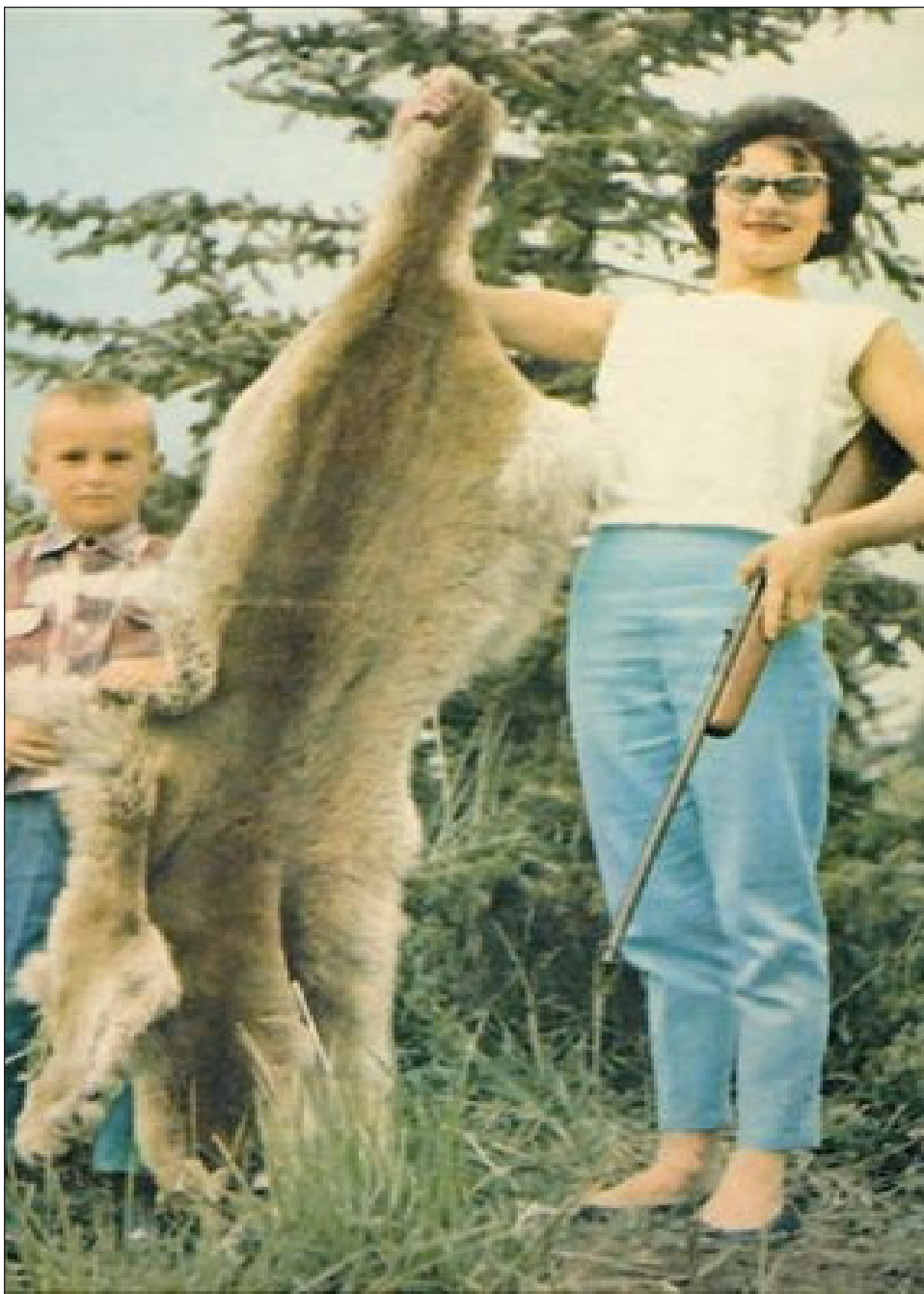
The Hero Fund posthumously awarded Childers the Carnegie Medal for his attempt to save others from drowning. He was also selected by the Congressional Medal of Honor Society as a 2026 Citizen Honors Award recipient.

Chastain Childers Field will place his name permanently within the baseball program where he once distinguished himself as an athlete. More significantly, it will remind the players who follow him that Childers' greatest contribution was not recorded in a box score, but in the moment he willingly risked his life for people he did not know. ❄️



FROM THE ARCHIVES

1962: A MOTHER'S COURAGE IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES SAVES BOY FROM ATTACKING COUGAR



Elsie H. McEvoy stands with 6-year-old Brian R. Kilbreath and the pelt of a cougar that attacked him near her home in Hinton, AB, on March 16, 1962. McEvoy was alerted to the attack by two other boys who witnessed the juvenile cougar lunge at Brian and latch its jaws onto his neck. Once McEvoy learned of the attack, she went out to help Brian and found the cougar attempting to eat the young boy. After initial attempts failed to free Brian from the jaws of the cougar, McEvoy was finally able to get the animal to let go of its grip of him and she ran with him in her arms, bringing him to neighbors that were alerted. Brian was taken to a hospital and received treatment for extensive blood loss and deep wounds to his face that required 150 sutures. He survived.

On the cool, dry afternoon of March 16, 1962, 6-year-old Brian R. Kilbreath was playing with friends in the woods near their homes in Hinton, Alberta, on the eastern slopes of the Canadian Rockies.

As they moved deeper into the brush, a young cougar leapt from a tree and landed on Brian's chest, knocking him onto his back. Brian screamed as he tried to fight the animal. The cougar dug its claws into his chest and abdomen and bit into his neck, growling savagely.

The other boys fled, two of them running to the nearby home of 28-year-old **Elsie H. McEvoy**, a mother who was recovering from recent surgery.

McEvoy later recounted the attack to reporter Frances McNab for the September 1962 issue of *Weekend Magazine*.

She told McNab that she heard a "wild" pounding on her door. When she opened it, she found the frantic boys, who told her that a wild animal was eating Brian.

"They screamed out about the bobcat and bolted without another word," McEvoy said. "Suddenly their sobbing sank in, and I realized it was no joke."

At first, McEvoy thought they meant her own son, also named Brian, but she soon found him safe nearby. Hearing screams and growls from the brush, McEvoy told her son to take the other two boys home and call the police. Determined to help Brian, she continued toward the sounds of the attack.

McEvoy was in poor health and became badly winded as she ran across the road. Pressing on, she picked up a 5-foot-long dead branch and approached the scene.

"As soon as I rounded the corner of the house, I could see the terrible scene across in the woods—a snarling animal on top of a small boy in a snowsuit," she said.

McEvoy soon realized that the animal gnawing on the 6-year-old's neck was not a bobcat, as she had initially thought, but an emaciated—and therefore hungry—cougar. ►

She shouted, hoping to frighten it away, but the cougar only growled back.

“What I saw was too horrible: the animal really was trying to eat him,” she recalled. “Up close it was a sickening sight.”

Holding the branch in both hands, McEvoy repeatedly struck the cougar on the head. Part of the branch broke off with each blow, gradually making it less effective. The animal turned its head toward her, growled menacingly, and then resumed its attack.

McEvoy continued striking the cougar, even after the branch had been reduced to a piece only 15 inches long.

“It wouldn’t budge,” she said.

McEvoy bent over the cougar and grabbed the back of its head with one hand.

“Though I managed to raise its head, it still wouldn’t let go, and Brian’s bloody little face rose with the animal’s...I’ll never forget those eyes, the way they shone like two green fires with black slits in the centers,” she said.

McEvoy again raised the remaining piece of the branch and delivered a sharp blow to the cougar’s nose.

“One hard sharp crack right above the end of its nose did it. The head went limp and it rolled to one side.”

With Brian free from the cougar’s jaws, McEvoy dropped the branch, lifted the boy from the ground, and started running toward the road. She stumbled and fell to her knees but managed to keep hold of him. As she got back to her feet, she glanced behind her and saw that the cougar had risen.

“I was so terrified the cougar would revive and jump on my back

that I looked behind. Just then it flopped over a little...Fortunately I fell on my knees and managed to keep from dropping Brian. Torn as he was, that would have been absolutely dreadful,” she recalled.

McEvoy feared that Brian might succumb to his grievous injuries.

At the road, she was met by a group of neighbors, including Brian’s mother. McEvoy handed the boy to them and flagged down a passing car, which took him to the hospital.

She later led several armed neighbors back to the scene. The cougar lay quietly nearby. McEvoy borrowed a rifle and fired at it, after which the others also fired, killing the animal.

An examination later confirmed that the cougar was not rabid. Its skull had been fractured by McEvoy’s blows. The severely malnourished animal weighed only 35 pounds—about one-third the weight of an average 1-year-old cougar—which likely explained why it had ventured so close to town and attacked Brian.

Brian remained hospitalized for two weeks and required nearly 150 sutures for wounds to his face, neck, chest, abdomen, leg, and hand. He recovered, although his physician said that he had narrowly escaped death from severe blood loss.

“If Mrs. McEvoy had delayed to run for help and reached Brian one or two minutes later, the wounds would have been much, much more serious, and far more difficult to patch,” Dr. Ian C. Reid told McNab.

McEvoy was given sedatives and recovered overnight, having suffered only scratches in her fall. Although her physical injuries were minor compared with Brian’s, the attack left her shaken. Even the view of the woods from her kitchen window became a reminder of what she had witnessed.

“It was the reason we bought the house. But now I see it enough in nightmares. I hear Brian’s screams then, too, although I can’t recall hearing them.”

McEvoy received letters of commendation from many prominent figures, including Canadian Prime Minister John Diefenbaker and former U.S. Vice President Richard Nixon.

The Carnegie Hero Fund awarded McEvoy a silver Carnegie Medal and \$750. Only 617 silver medals were issued by the Hero Fund.

The attention did not change McEvoy’s priorities, which remained centered on her family. The rescue did, however, create a lasting connection between her and the boy she had saved.

“My children mean just as much as ever, but there is a strange bond between Brian and me,” she said. “He often comes over to just sit while I clean or cook.” ☼

-- Griffin Erdely,
Communications
Assistant

Elsie H. McEvoy, 28, sits with 6-year-old Brian R. Kilbreath whom she saved from a juvenile cougar that attacked him near her home in Hinton, AB. McEvoy and Brian maintained a close relationship after the incident. Brian often visited McEvoy and they can be seen sitting with the pelt of the cougar that had attacked him. Photo by Denny Ranson



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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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 Guest Quotable 

"Love, when it is genuine, is all-embracing, stable and lasting, an irresistible spur to all forms of heroism."

—Pope Paul VI

 CONTINUUM

GRAVE MARKERS Bronze grave markers (below), cast in the likeness of the Carnegie Medal, are available at no cost to the families of recipients 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 recipient'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 (2021-2022) are available online or by contacting the Hero Fund.

IMPULSE ONLINE? Should you wish to receive *Impulse* in PDF rather than in your mailbox, let us know.

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