



imPULSE

A Periodic Newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission ISSUE 9 • MARCH 2007

2006 in review: 92 awards, grant increases top Hero Fund activity

By Sybil P. Veeder, Chair • Executive Committee • Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

COPS NEED ROLE MODELS TOO



The most recent awardees of the Carnegie Medal, announced in December (see page 5), include the late Jürgen Hapke of Burbank, Calif., who died at age 65 on Dec. 14, 2005,

Mr. Hapke

while rescuing his friend and coworker from a knife attack.

The men, both commercial painters, were at a job site in Beverly Hills, Calif., when, before dawn, a man armed with a kitchen knife approached Hapke's coworker, 71, and without provocation stabbed him repeatedly. The 200-pound assailant, a parolee, had an extensive criminal record.

Hapke was on a ladder at the time. He immediately descended to the pavement and approached his friend of 45 years, speaking to the assailant. The assailant turned on Hapke and stabbed him repeatedly as well, then he fled the scene. Hapke was mortally wounded, but his friend survived.

Dealing with the first murder in Beverly Hills in four years, Chief David L. Snowden of the Beverly Hills Police Department told the Hero Fund that the attack "appeared to have had no other motivation than blind hatred."

"It is not possible to describe (Hapke's) behavior as anything less than truly heroic," Snowden said. "In the final act of his life, he had saved the life of his friend."

A silent tribute to Hapke's memory continued in the police department's detective bureau for months after the event. Shortly after Hapke's death, one of the investigators taped an 8-by-10 photo of Hapke to the metal storage cabinet above his desk. "The photo represents the (continued on page 2)

Maintaining the integrity of the Carnegie Medal as the pre-eminent award for civilian heroism in the U.S. and Canada was a major part of the work of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission in 2006.

During the year, 92 cases were recognized, with the 83 U.S. awardees representing 32 states and the nine Canadians (10% of the total) representing five of the 13 provinces and territories. Canadians have accounted for eight percent of the total awardees traditionally—713 of 9,053. Pennsylvania was the state with the highest number of awardees (10), followed by Indiana (nine) and Wisconsin (six). In Canada, Ontario laid claim to the highest number of awardees (three).

By age, five awardees were younger than 20; 12 were in their 20s; 20 were in their 30s; 30 were in their 40s; 16 were in their 50s; five were in their 60s; (continued on page 2)



Thomas J. Moebler, right, of Bayville, N.J., was one of the youngest awardees of the Carnegie Medal in 2006. He was cited for his 2005 rescue of a friend, Mark K. Stanfield, then 10, left, from an attacking dog outside Thomas's home. The dog turned on Thomas, then 16, biting him about the leg. Both boys required hospital treatment. Photo courtesy of the Asbury Park, N.J., Press.



JOY AND HONOR



By Mark Laskow, President
Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

The 21 members of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission perform a role different from most nonprofit boards of directors, and the difference

makes service on the Commission a uniquely interesting and rewarding experience.

Andrew Carnegie displayed conceptual genius when he created an enduring mission for the Hero Fund and devised a definition of "hero" that is morally compelling and timeless. He was equally thoughtful and practical as he put these ideas into practice, creating the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission and selecting its first panel of Commissioners. Like other nonprofit boards, the Commissioners oversee the Hero Fund's operations and investments. Unlike other boards, the Commission spends much more of its time and energy in a role that is anything but routine. Five times a year, it acts as the jury for the award of the Carnegie Medal.

Before each meeting, the Commission staff distributes a detailed memorandum on each case, allowing Commissioners to study thoroughly the cases under consideration. This advance preparation allows a discussion—sometimes a debate—that quickly focuses on the key issues of each case. That focus is usually the degree of risk to the rescuer's life, but sometimes other issues surface. Did the rescuer somehow cause the victim's peril? Did the rescuer have some duty to undertake the rescue?

The Commissioners offer opinions, consider the views of their fellows, and then vote on the case. The quality of the discussion is a tribute to the quality of the case memoranda prepared by the staff. Indeed, the final decision is very much the product of a partnership between the investigative staff and the board.

This aspect of the Commission's work is both a solemn duty and a joy. It is a solemn duty to decide properly. (In a way, the value of the medal is defined by the cases *not* awarded.) It is a joy to immerse oneself in the details of the acts of our heroes. A joy and an honor.

COPS NEED ROLE MODELS TOO

(continued from cover)

smiling face of a man brimming with the quiet confidence that can only come from the inner peace achieved by knowing what really counts in life," Snowden said.

"I can only hope the photo will be there for a long time. As you can see, cops need role models, too."

2006 in review

(continued from cover)

and four were in their 70s. The youngest awardee was 15-year-old Terry Miller of Ionia, Mich., who braved his neighbor's burning mobile home to rescue two small children, both of whom were badly injured. The oldest awardee was retired dentist Rodger L. Currie, 81, of Palm Beach, Fla., who with a friend saved five people aboard a burning motor yacht in Nantucket Sound. The oldest female awardee in 2006—and third-oldest female ever awarded—was Elizabeth L. Darlington of Columbia, S.C., who at age 77 helped to save her brother-in-law from his burning house. Women comprised six of the year's awardees, or 7%, down from the traditional 9%. Posthumous awards numbered seven, or 8%, also down from the traditional figure of 21%.

The types of awarded cases followed traditional lines, with rescues from burning vehicles being the most prevalent (29), followed by rescues from burning buildings (18). High in recent years, the number of assault rescues (15) topped the number of water rescues (14). "The best we have to offer" is a theme the Hero Fund has been using recently in expanding efforts to publicize the heroes' deeds. That "best" often follows the darker side of human nature: During 2006, at least six of the awardees intervened in presumed suicide attempts.

Outreach efforts centered on personal medal presentations, including the office's hosting of a Montreal awardee, Richard Lemieux, who was given his medal by Thomas L. Wentling, Jr., Committee Vice Chair. Other initiatives include the addition of awardee obituaries to the Website and the design of a medal-looked grave marker to families of deceased awardees. That project will come to fruition in 2007, as will, most likely, the character education curricula that were created by the Heartwood Institute of Pittsburgh with Hero Fund input. Finally, a new tradition may be taking root, that of an annual lecture on the Hero Fund at the Flagler Museum in Palm Beach, Fla. The first offering was by the President and the Executive Director last April, and this year's event is scheduled for Sunday, March 11.

Increases in financial grants were made during the year, including a flat 10% raise in the monthly beneficiary grants for 2007 and an increase in the scholarship allowances. Scholarship giving at \$140,747 went to 33 applicants for an average grant of \$4,265. Figures aside, these grants are well received, some students informing that we are making it possible for them to stay in school.

Beneficiary giving totaled \$261,690 for the year, for an average of \$3,398 to the 77 families receiving benefits for all or part of the year. Four deaths during 2006 are noteworthy: Lula Bell Daniels, 82, of West Point, Miss., who had been receiving a grant since the 1967 death of her husband; Walter F. Ward, 67, of Independence, Kans., who was put on the beneficiary roll after his heroic act in 1957 that left him severely burned; Thelma Mander, 91, of Philadelphia, who had received the grant for the 53 years since her husband's death, and Ralph Allen Kelley, 85, of Hudson, N.H., whose 1938 act left him confined to a wheelchair. Though not a beneficiary at the time of his passing due to his success as a provider of office services, Kelley remained friends with the organization ever since his act, often submitting case nominations. Such the bond of continued care, which we have been seeking to maintain in earnest over the past two years. Beneficiaries from as far away as the Pacific Northwest were visited by staff, and additional visits are slated for 2007.

A highlight of the year was witnessing the rebirth of the German Hero Fund, established by Andrew Carnegie in 1910-1911 but victim in the 1930s of the Nazi regime. Efforts to resume operations were started in 2005 by a private citizen, Andreas Huber, who was then elected president of the re-formed *Carnegie Stiftung fuer Lebensretter*. Formal ceremonies to mark the resumption of the foundation were held in Mannheim in July, and the Hero Fund was represented by the Executive Director and me, joined by representatives of Carnegie hero funds in the U.K., Sweden, and Switzerland, and by one of Carnegie's great-grandchildren, William Thomson of Scotland. We expect good things to result from this new fund, if only because of the enthusiasm of *Herr Huber*. ❁



LOCAL HERO COMPLEMENTS SCHOOL CHARACTER PROGRAM

The entire sixth-grade class—nearly 180 strong—of the Emmet Belknap Middle School in Lockport, N.Y., gathered Nov. 9 in the school’s auditorium and sat in rapt attention as Carnegie Medal Awardee Jeffrey D. Miller (upper right) of Lockport recounted his dramatic rescue in 1999 of a woman clinging to a small tree in the Niagara River just above Niagara Falls. His appearance, along with a short presentation by Douglas R. Chambers, the Commission’s director of external affairs, was one element of the school’s character education program, “Ordinary People Do Extraordinary Things,” the work of Miller’s wife, Paula, a teacher at the school. This was the second year for the assembly, and also the second time that an appearance by Miller’s co-rescuer, Dep. Kevin R. Caffery of the Erie County, N.Y., Sheriff’s Department, was precluded by last-minute duties. Miller more than made up for his absence, evidenced by the many questions and the warm round of applause by the students. The event may be an annual one at the school.

FIRE RESCUE CITED

On the night of Feb. 23 last year, Charles D. Hetrick, right, of Brookville, Pa., rescued a woman from her burning trailer in a mobile home park about 300 feet from Hetrick’s residence. Eleven months later, he was awarded the Carnegie Medal for the rescue in a ceremony attended by Brookville Mayor David “Chip” Wonderling, center; Hetrick’s wife, Karen, left; Commission representatives Douglas R. Chambers, director of external affairs, and Susan L. Marcy, who investigated the case; the borough’s police and fire chiefs, and Hetrick’s friends and relatives. A former firefighter, Hetrick, then 54, was alerted to the blaze by police radio. He responded to the scene and entered the trailer, where he crawled through the smoke-filled living room and found the woman lying on the floor near the burning kitchen. He dragged her to safety. The woman survived but sustained severe smoke inhalation that hospitalized her for six days.



BRAVERY HONORED IN SRI LANKA

The 13th annual awards ceremony of the Foundation for Civilian Bravery of Sri Lanka was held in late October, and the event’s special guest was the country’s president, Mahinda Rajapaksa, center. The Carnegie Hero Fund Commission has long maintained a fraternal association with the organization, whose founder, Kasun P. Chandraratne, pictured to the left of President Rajapaksa, sought the Hero Fund’s advice in the early 1990s while establishing the foundation. Also pictured are the 2006 awardees, including Pakistani engineer Gul Javid Butt, to the right of the president, who was given the Foundation’s medal for civilian bravery in Asia. Other awardees were cited for saving lives in Sri Lanka, including Sekan Sathyamoorthi, to the right of Mr. Butt, who rescued two small children from a burning house in the city of Kandy. The foundation’s 2007 awards ceremony will be held June 14 in Colombo, Sri Lanka’s capital.





25 years ago, heroes emerged in wake of Air Florida crash

GRANDEUR OF HUMAN POTENTIAL IS THE PROMISE OF HEROISM

By Roger Olian • Carnegie Medal Awardee



Most people follow the news to some degree; actually, it's hard to get away from. The events reported don't seem to vary much—generally crime, violence, and corruption. Deplorable actions are pervasive, even involving

trusted business, civic, and religious leaders. Facing this, we easily become disillusioned, finding ourselves helpless witnesses of a depressing and endless decline. We feel indifferent and unmoved as we come to expect the worst and then accept it.

But sometimes there is another type of story. An onlooker heroically catches an infant thrown from the upper floor of a building by a desperate mother caught in a deadly fire. Or a passing motorist pulls an accident victim from a burning car seconds before it explodes. We hear these accounts, and somehow they make us feel lighter. It may sound corny, but to me it's like lighting my wood stove at home and watching the first tentative flames gradually grow until they warm the entire room.

We are drawn to these stories, fascinating accounts of heroic actions performed by individuals who go to the aid of total strangers. They risk their own safety, even their lives, as they face danger for the sake of someone else. They do this not for fame, money, or personal gain—in fact, not for any reason other than that something needed to be done, and they were there. These accounts are like recurring miracles of the grandeur of human potential, and we need to hear them to remind us that, while there may be a corner of darkness in our lives, a great light is also present.

There is another aspect to these heroic accounts, the people themselves. We call them heroes, yet they are generally reluctant to acknowledge the title. What kind of people are they? From their performances, one would think they must be a select and special group, but on examination we do not find a similarity of backgrounds. Their origins, occupations, lifestyles, and beliefs have little in common, a true random sampling of the diversity of society. Further, they are not necessarily professionals, athletes, military commandos, or world-traveled adventurers. They are not larger than life, they *are* life. Each one is a unique example of what is common to them all: they each found the ability to reach beyond their ordinary capabilities to perform the noble deeds demanded by a crisis.

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A U.S. Park Police helicopter piloted by Donald W. Usher acted within minutes of the Air Florida jet's crash into the ice-covered Potomac River. As Usher guided the craft in adverse conditions, Rescue Technician Melvin (Gene) Windsor perched, unattached, on its skids to secure the survivors.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 13, 1982. It had snowed all morning and into the afternoon, and, in the 24-degree air, the accumulation was paralyzing Washington, D.C. By early afternoon, schools, offices, and businesses were closing, and the roadways became choked with the traffic of the storm's refugees.

Roger Olian, 34, a hospital sheet-metal worker, was among those attempting to evacuate the city. His usual route was across the Fourteenth Street Bridge over the Potomac River, but traffic was bumper-to-bumper and Olian had the additional worries of running on a near-empty tank and a low battery. It was around 4 p.m. In another car on the span, **Martin L. ("Lenny") Skutnik III**, 28, was making the same trek. He too had been excused for the day from his job, as a government office services assistant. Skutnik recalls six to eight inches of snow on the bridge, and then people out of their cars looking over the railing.

A few miles to the east, at the headquarters of the Aviation Section of the U.S. Park Police, Chief Pilot **Donald W. Usher**, 31, and Rescue Technician **Melvin E. ("Gene") Windsor**, 31, were sitting out the storm, Usher having concluded it was "absolutely inconceivable that we would fly. Not in this stuff." The unit's jet-powered Bell Ranger helicopter was shuttered in the hangar.

The storm had disrupted operations at Washington National Airport, just south of the bridge, causing delays, including that of Air Florida's Flight 90, which was to depart for Fort Lauderdale. By 4 p.m. the jet was cleared for takeoff, 79 passengers and crewmembers aboard. With an unusually heavy accumulation of snow or ice on the plane, its takeoff was labored, and it lifted off too far down the runway. The jet descended to the level of the bridge, where it struck seven vehicles, killing four people. It then crashed into the ice-covered river and sank. Seventy-four aboard the plane died in the accident; miraculously, six surfaced amidst wreckage and ice floes at points about 120 feet from the bank.

Olian ran to the river, en route hearing the survivors' cries. Thinking as he ran, he knew he had a choice to make: "If I did nothing, I couldn't have lived with myself," he later said. "But I knew I could live with myself if I tried and failed." (See box, this page.) Olian concluded that a visible rescue attempt would buy the survivors time by giving them a measure of hope. He entered the "electrifyingly cold" water, then, with one end of a line, continued out, maneuvering over and

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LATEST AWARDEES
OF THE CARNEGIE MEDAL

SINCE THE LAST ISSUE OF *imPULSE*, THE FOLLOWING 25 INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN AWARDED THE CARNEGIE MEDAL, BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS TO 9,053 SINCE THE HERO FUND'S INCEPTION IN 1904. THE LATEST AWARDS, WHICH WERE ANNOUNCED ON DEC. 21, ARE FULLY DETAILED ON THE COMMISSION'S WEBSITE AT WWW.CARNEGIEHERO.ORG.

New Castle, Del., police officer **Paul D. Allston**, 38, of Dover, Del., helped to save Charles F. Todd from drowning in the Delaware River in New Castle on Aug. 24, 2005. Todd, 35, experienced difficulty in the strong tidal current while swimming in the river. He shouted for help. Allston responded, swam 90 feet to him, and positioned him out of the current against a jetty. He supported him there until a rescue boat arrived and took both to safety.

Wade McDonald, 40, a boilermaker from Brooklyn, N.Y., died after attempting to save Brandon A. Clayton, 15, and Jermaine Cohen, 16, from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean at Rockaway Park, N.Y., on June 5, 2005. When the boys were pulled by a strong current away from the beach, McDonald ran into the water and swam toward them, as did a man on a surfboard. Brandon was secured by the surfer and returned to shore, but McDonald submerged and drowned. Jermaine also died.

Jamie D. W. Robertson rescued his neighbor, Melanie Strong, 26, from an attack in their apartment building in Calgary, Alta., on Oct. 31, 2005. Strong opened her door to a masked man, who then stabbed her repeatedly with a hunting knife. Robertson, 43, a machinist who lived next door, heard the scuffle and responded. He grasped the assailant by the neck and forced him from the building. The assailant fled. Strong required hospitalization for treatment of her wounds.

Three men in a funeral procession left their cars and teamed up to remove a man from his burning automobile after an accident on Jan. 4, 2005, in Indianapolis, Ind. Mark T. Yates, 41, remained in the driver's seat of the burning car as the procession approached. The funeral director, **Gary K. Gray**, 52, of Indianapolis, was in the lead car. He and **Joseph H. Grayson**, 60, of Carmel, Ind., the hearse driver, and **Anthony J. Priami**, 36, of Indianapolis, a police officer, approached the vehicle. Priami opened the front passenger door and entered, followed by Grayson. Gray opened a rear door and also entered. He manipulated the steering wheel and Yates's legs to free him, after which Grayson and Priami pulled Yates across the seat and out of the vehicle. Gray, momentarily trapped in the car when the rear door closed, exited to safety and helped drag Yates away. Within a minute, flames engulfed the car.



Donald C. Wilkinson, Jr., loved to fish. A "winter Texan" from Lincoln, Neb., he was fishing from a pier in Conn Brown Harbor off the Gulf of Mexico at Aransas Pass, Texas, on Feb. 15 last year when a 5-year-old boy on the pier fell into the water. Wilkinson, 67, a retired power plant employee, immediately entered the water for the boy and held him to a piling until a boater arrived and took them to shore. Wilkinson collapsed there and died early the next day.

Plant mechanic **Christopher John Kelsch**, 45, of Hampton Bays, N.Y., attempted to save Richard A. Levin, 60, from drowning in the harbor at Port Jefferson, N.Y., on Dec. 5, 2005. Levin's car entered the harbor in darkness and began to sink. Kelsch witnessed the accident, then jumped into the cold water and swam to the car. He broke out a window, then, with the car submerging, attempted repeatedly to pull Levin out. Incapacitated by the cold, Kelsch drifted away. Firefighters shortly rescued him, and they pulled Levin from his car. Levin died of his injuries two days later.

David S. Parks of Weston, W. Va., and **Warren Bennett** of Kingsland, Ga., rescued Andrew F. Sleigh, Jr., 75, and his wife, Mary G., 83, from their burning hose in Weston on July 17, 2005. The couple was on the second floor of the house after fire broke out there. Visiting in the neighborhood, Parks, 38, deputy sheriff, entered the house and went upstairs. He crawled through dense smoke in the hall and, finding Sleigh, dragged him to the top of the stairs. Bennett, 55, business operator, had responded by then, and he dragged Sleigh downstairs. Parks found Ms. Sleigh standing in the hall. He guided her downstairs and outside to safety.

Jürgen Hapke, 65, of Burbank, Calif., died rescuing his friend and coworker, Helmut Mende, 71, from an armed attacker in Beverly Hills, Calif., on Dec. 14, 2005. Mende and Hapke, commercial painters, were in a parking lot at a job site when a man approached Mende and stabbed him repeatedly with a kitchen knife. From 25 feet away, Hapke approached the assailant, speaking to him, but the assailant turned and stabbed him repeatedly, then fled. Mortally wounded, Hapke fell to the pavement. Mende recovered from his wounds.

Teacher **Jencie Regina Fagan** of Reno, Nev., helped to rescue an indeterminate number of persons from an armed assailant in the school where she taught, in Reno, Nev., on March 14 of last year. A 14-year-old boy entered the school and fired a .38-caliber revolver three times, injuring two students. Fagan, 43, was in the nearby gymnasium when she heard the shots. Seeing the assailant, she moved to within 12 feet of him and convinced him to discard the gun. After he did so, Fagan held him until police arrived.

Michael S. Rucinski of Starkville, Miss., saved Landon, Garrett, and Shari Hoffman from drowning in a drainage pool in Brooksville, Miss., on March 13, 2006. Brothers Landon, 10, and Garrett, 12, fell from a spillway and were carried by the swift current out into the deep pool. Their mother, 41, entered the water for them, as did Rucinski, 35, a maintenance employee who was fishing nearby. Rucinski swam to Landon and took him to the bank, and then he returned for Garrett and took him to safety. Rucinski re-entered the pool again when he saw that Hoffman was having difficulty, and he helped her to safety.

High school student **Cody James Griffin**, 17, of Bethel, Vt., saved Diane M. Brunner from drowning after she fell through ice on the White River in Stockbridge, Vt., on Feb. 21 last year. Dressed only in a basketball uniform, Cody knelt at the edge of the ice and grasped Brunner, 52, by the arms. Although Brunner was fully attired and outweighed Cody, he pulled her from the open water, then took her toward the bank.

Donald C. Wilkinson, Jr., of Lincoln, Neb., died after helping to save a boy from drowning in Aransas Pass, Texas, on Feb. 15, 2006. A 5-year-old boy fell from the end of a pier that extended 60 feet into Conn Brown Harbor off the Gulf of Mexico. Fishing nearby from the pier, Wilkinson, 67, a retired power plant employee, entered the water and grasped the boy. A boater took them to shore, where Wilkinson lost consciousness. He was hospitalized but died the next day of complications of near drowning.

Patrizio Bartolozzi, a 50-year-old baker now of Gleichen, Alta., saved Steven M. A. Hillman, 9, from drowning in the North Saskatchewan River in Edmonton, Alta., on Feb. 24, 2005, after he broke through the ice and was carried by a swift current 1,300 feet downstream in open water. Steven clung to the edge of the inch-thick ice about 250 feet from the bank. Bartolozzi walked and crawled across the ice toward him, then pulled him onto solid ice and carried him from the river. Steven recovered from hypothermia.

Arthur Thorp of Philadelphia, Pa., helped to remove Victoria M. Salukas, 48, from her burning car in Plymouth Meeting, Pa., on Aug. 26, 2004. After a high-way accident, Salukas lay semiconscious on the front seat of the car, on which flames were rapidly spreading from the engine compartment. Thorp, 56, an insurance salesman, stopped at the scene and forced open a rear door, then entered. With flames spreading to the interior, he pulled Salukas into the back seat, and then another man helped in removing her from the vehicle.

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NIAGARA FALLS HEROES

On Feb. 18, 2004, an officer with the Niagara Regional Police Service was questioning a suspect in a driveway off a residential street in Niagara Falls, Ont., when the suspect pulled a loaded gun and fired it at the officer. The shot missed, and a struggle for control of the gun followed. Neighborhood residents Kenton William Boyden and James Trevor Scott intervened and pinned the assailant to the pavement. Other officers arrived soon and disarmed and subdued him. For their actions, Boyden and Scott were chosen to receive the Carnegie Medal last July, and they were presented the medals in an early November ceremony at police headquarters in St. Catharines, Ont. On hand were the department's top officers and a few friends of the awardees. Both men had previously been awarded Canada's Medal of Bravery by the country's Governor General. Boyden (center left) and Scott (center right) are flanked by Wendy Southall, chief of the Niagara Regional Police Service, and Douglas R. Chambers, the Hero Fund's director of external affairs.

ANNUAL REPORT LAUDS 'HEROES OF THE YEAR'

The Hero Fund's 2006 annual report is just off the presses.

The booklet details in traditional fashion the specifics of the heroic acts that the Commission cited last year with the award of the Carnegie Medal. Thousands of facts are reported, presumably all pertinent and, hopefully, accurate. Thanks to the technology of word processing, it is readily known that 18,157 words were used to describe the 92 heroic acts.

Of all those words, "courage" and "bravery" do not appear once, yet the concepts spring from every page. One awardee jumped from a highway bridge into Tampa Bay, then dived and entered a submerged vehicle to rescue an unconscious 7-year-old boy. Another, all of 15 years old, entered his neighbor's burning mobile home to rescue a child after a gas explosion set fire to the kitchen, then he repeated the feat for a second child.

What words do appear repeatedly in the report are unglamorous ones like the conjunction "although" and the reliable preposition "despite" (21 times)—words that link the rescuer's action to the victim's threatening situation: *Although there was no visibility in the basement because of smoke... Despite not knowing the assailant's whereabouts...*

That is the essence of a Carnegie hero, a rescuer's challenge of known and extraordinary life risks while saving or attempting to save the life of another. It's also within the Commission's tradition, now of more than a century in duration, that the success of the deed does not determine an award. The Hero Fund's archives contain many heart-breaking accounts in which the rescuer, the victim, or both perished. What more can you ask of heroes than that they lay aside their own safety while turned to the benefit of others?

That definition of heroism is a classic one, and the Commission does not see it as a relic. *Time* magazine used a mirrored cover at year-end to designate its "Person of the Year," but the Hero Fund prefers to believe that society maintains not only the ethic of extreme care for others, even strangers, but the need and desire to honor and emulate those who practice it.

Copies of the report are available by calling, toll free, 1-800-447-8900, or by writing the Hero Fund at carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org.

LATEST AWARDEES

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David Michael McCartney, 21, a factory worker from Elwood, Ind., and **Lee Pierce**, 29, a cable technician from Clayton, Ind., pulled Elizabeth A. Testerman, 54, from her burning sport utility vehicle in Atlanta, Ind., on Jan. 9, 2006. The car left the highway, went down an embankment, and started to burn in its engine compartment, with flames entering the interior. McCartney witnessed the accident and then kicked in the car's windshield. He cut one of the straps of Testerman's safety belt as Pierce reached through the driver's window and cut the other. The men then pulled Testerman through the windshield and, joined by a third man, carried her to safety. Flames soon engulfed the vehicle and compromised its fuel tank.

Service station employee **Kevin Anthony Venn**, 20, of Richmond, B.C., was working late at night on July 31, 2004, in Richmond when he saw a young woman being assaulted nearby by an intoxicated man. He approached the couple and told the assailant to stop his mistreatment of the woman. The assailant, who was larger than Venn, turned on Venn, striking and kicking him repeatedly and sending him to the ground. Responding police found him a mile away, the victim of what they believed to be a second vicious assault. Venn was severely injured.

On Nov. 21, 2004, near Birchwood, Wis., Terry S. Willers, 47, was deer hunting on private property with several others, including Dennis R. Drew, 55, and **Lauren D. Hesebeck**, 48, an automobile sales manager from Rice Lake, Wis. When they and other members of the party confronted a trespasser, he opened fire on them, wounding Willers, Drew, and Hesebeck and killing three others. Hesebeck remained at the scene to tend the wounded. At the party's cabin, college student **Carter L. Crotteau**, 18, of Haugen, Wis., who was the son and brother of two of the slain hunters, was alerted to the shooting and responded by all-terrain vehicle with another man. They evacuated Willers, with Hesebeck again electing to remain behind. Two other members of the party, **Jessica M. Willers**, 27, a surgical technician from Green Bay, Wis., and **Allan James Laski**, 43, a lumber yard manager from Haugen, also set out for the scene, but en route they too were shot and mortally wounded by the assailant. The assailant reappeared near Hesebeck and fired again at him, then fled. Two other members of the hunting party, including retired union officer **Dennis L. Roux**, 63, of Rice Lake, responded in a pickup and took Hesebeck and Drew to safety, Roux tending Drew in the truck's bed. Drew died the next day of his injuries.

James W. Davies II, 22, a heavy machine operator from Sicklerville, N.J., attempted to rescue Shannon D. Williams, 19, from an attack by her estranged boyfriend in Stratford, N. J., on Aug. 17, 2004. Williams screamed for help as the assailant stabbed her repeatedly outside her apartment door. Davies, whose unit was on the same floor, ran to the assailant, shouting at him to stop. The assailant stabbed Davies in the neck, lacerating a jugular vein. The assailant stabbed Williams again before fleeing. Both victims survived.

25 years ago, heroes emerged

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between ice slabs but often falling and submerging. He shouted encouragement to the victims but to him they seemed “miles and hours” away. Still, he stayed focused. When he was halfway to his goal, there came a welcome sound: A chopper was approaching.

Within minutes of the crash, Usher and Windsor had assembled lines and life jackets and had the ramp plowed. Near whiteout conditions prevailed when they lifted off, Usher following highways to the scene. Freezing rain threatened the helicopter’s rotor system and iced its windshield. Although Usher had extensive flying experience, conditions this day provided new tests. In the water, the chopper’s downdraft raised debris to threaten its rotor system, the river and immediate atmosphere were contaminated by the jetliner’s fuel and its fumes, and ice floes clogging the surface could impinge on the skids should the craft be taken low. On land, the bank was choked with people and emergency vehicles, and small trees lining it had to be minded, even as firefighters pushed branches out of the way. In the air, Windsor would work unsecured through an open door.

Windsor dropped lines to the victims and in repeated efforts with Usher towed five of them toward the bank; the sixth survivor, though offered a line, sank with the wreckage. One of the survivors lost her grip as she was towed toward shore. Weakened, dazed, and blinded by jet fuel, she mouthed, *Help!* Enter Skutnik, literally. Having watched the rescue from its start, he could bear no more. Though untrained in water rescue, Skutnik plunged into the river and swam to the woman. After securing a hold, he started toward the bank, then was met by a firefighter, who took her the rest of the way, Skutnik following.

The four rescuers were widely acclaimed for their actions, including being awarded the Carnegie Medal. But to ask them if they are heroes? Convinced that his was a human reaction, Skutnik shuns the term, believing that if he didn’t act, someone else would have. Consequently, he remains puzzled, sometimes annoyed, by all the attention, the media viewing him as a “prop caught on videotape.” Olian too sees his reaction as the result of his humanity: *Heroes are no different—we all have the capability, and when people get to see that, that’s good.* Still, he does not embrace the designation. “I’ve been called a hero,” he said, “but I don’t believe it about myself.”

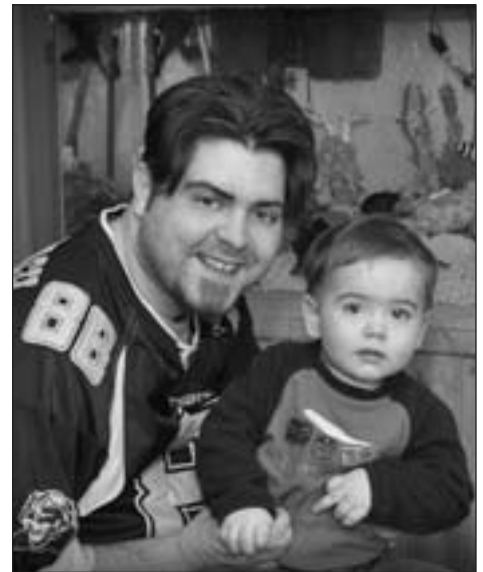
(continued on page 8)



The four men awarded the Carnegie Medal for their actions in behalf of survivors of the Air Florida Flight 90 crash are, from left, Donald W. Usher, Martin L. (Lenny) Skutnik III, Melvin E. Windsor, and Roger Olian. They reunited for the first time in the fall of 2003 on the banks of the Potomac River in Washington, D.C., near the scene of their Jan. 13, 1982, heroism.

WEBSITE FEATURE

Damion DeRobbio of Struthers, Ohio, is the latest Carnegie hero to be featured on the Commission’s Website (www.carnegiehero.org). DeRobbio was awarded the medal for his 2004 rescue of a 6-year-old neighbor girl from her family’s burning house. Shown with him is his son Donovan. Photo by Laura Ruppertsberger, New Castle, Pa.



FRIENDS REMEMBERED

Katherine W. Ellegood, 82, of Fancy Farm, Ky., died in October 2006. She was the widow of Carnegie Medal awardee **G. Lindell Ellegood**, a carpenter who died at age 32 in 1953 attempting to save a man from suffocating at the bottom of a cistern in Fancy Farm. Mrs. Ellegood was a Hero Fund beneficiary from the time of her husband’s 1954 medal presentation until her death.

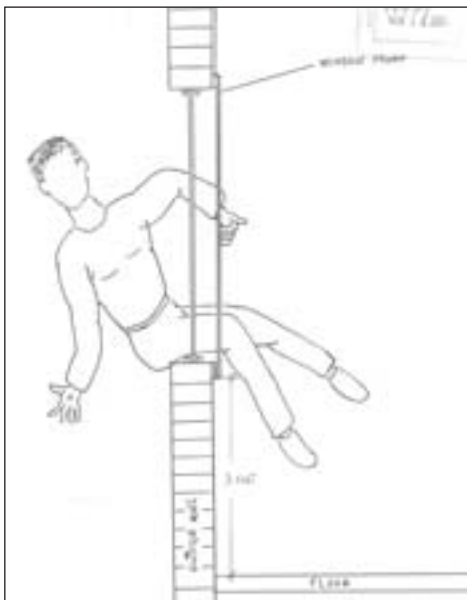
Dessie Hayter Leaming, of Lockwood, Mo., died Jan. 21, at age 100. Leaming, who was featured in the June 2006 issue of *imPULSE*, was a Carnegie Medal awardee in 1934 for saving her niece from being struck by a train. She lost part of her right leg when she was struck and dragged by the train. Leaming lived independently until a month before her death, and two days before dying she recited the 23rd Psalm and sang “Jesus Loves Me.” [Note: Leaming’s obituary appears on the page of the Hero Fund’s Website (www.carnegiehero.org) that features her heroic act. Those having access to obituaries of deceased awardees are urged to submit them for posting. Address to doug@carnegiehero.org, or mail to the office address.]

Thelma D. Mander, of Philadelphia, Pa., died November 26, 2006, in her home, five days after her 91st birthday. She was the widow of Carnegie Medal awardee **Joseph E. Mander, Sr.**, who died in 1952 attempting to save a 7-year-old boy from drowning in the Schuylkill River. Mrs. Mander commenced an association with the Hero Fund from that time as a beneficiary.



OFF-DUTY HEROISM BY FIRE CAPTAIN

Among Quebec's latest awardees of the Carnegie Medal is Richard Lemieux, right, of Montreal, who was cited by the Hero Fund last June for his April 2005 rescue of a teenage boy from a burning apartment. A captain with the Montreal Fire Department, Lemieux, then 46, was off-duty—asleep in bed—when he was alerted to the burning building near his home. He responded to the building's fourth floor but found that flames precluded entering the apartment, in which the boy was screaming for help at a window. Undeterred, Lemieux entered the neighboring apartment and assumed a perch on the sill of a window about four feet from the boy's position. His feet off the floor, Lemieux leaned outward toward the boy—who outweighed him by 70 pounds—then grasped him and pulled him to safety inside the neighboring apartment. Lemieux collected his medal at an informal ceremony last November in the Hero Fund's Pittsburgh offices, where he is shown with Commission member Thomas L. Wentling, Jr., who made the presentation. During the Hero Fund's investigation of the case, Lemieux used his artistic ability (below) to sketch his positioning during the rescue. For more on Lemieux, see the Hero Fund's Website, www.carnegiehero.org.



GERMAN FUND'S HERO MEDALS

Carnegie's German hero fund, formally reorganized last year in Mannheim after 70 years of inactivity, has used traditional elements along with new ones in refashioning its medals. Shown are the front and back of the medal, which is issued in bronze, silver, and gold under the principals instituted in 1911 when the fund—Carnegie Stiftung fuer Lebensretter—was started. The bust of Andrew Carnegie on the front of the medal was sculpted in 1913 by a member of the German Imperial Mint. Lines from the Talmud form the wording on the reverse: "To save one life is as if you have saved the world." They appear with the federal eagle of contemporary Germany and the phrase, "In recognition of a heroic deed." Striped ribbons for displaying the medals are done in red, white, and blue, the heraldic colors of both Scotland (Carnegie's native land) and the United States (his adopted country), and in black, red, and gold, modern Germany's colors. The medals will be presented for the first time to civilian heroes in November. Other awards are being made to the Federal Agency for Technical Relief, the German Life Saving Federation, and the Gutperle Foundation, for its help in India after the 2004 tsunami disaster.

25 years ago, heroes emerged

(continued from page 7)

Usher and Windsor are likewise unimpressed by the title. Windsor maintains that training, experience, planning, teamwork, the skills of his pilot, and even participation by a "higher power" all played pivotal roles. "A hero is spontaneous," he says. "A hero is untrained." Similarly, Usher suspects heroes are "not paid, not expected" to act, and that "they are in hiding until they are actually needed. I don't think I fit into the definition." Having long ago concluded that modesty must be innate in the souls of the bravest, the Commission decided that Usher did fit in, as did his three co-rescuers. In the Hero Fund's thinking, the men assumed extraordinary risk while helping to save others when they had no obligation to do so, the Commission's traditional description of a hero. ☒

"WHATEVER MOVED THESE MEN TO CHALLENGE DEATH ON BEHALF OF THEIR FELLOWS IS NOT PECULIAR TO THEM," WROTE TIME MAGAZINE ESSAYIST ROGER ROSENBLATT. "EVERYONE FEELS THE POSSIBILITY IN HIMSELF. THAT IS THE ABIDING WONDER OF THE STORY. THAT IS WHY WE WOULD NOT LET GO OF IT."

BEHIND THE SCENE

*Brothers' keepers**By Walter F. Rutkowski, Executive Director • Carnegie Hero Fund Commission*


Just out of college in 1973 and armed with a shiny-new liberal arts degree in the first phase of a scheme to change the world, I stepped from the Hero Fund's offices after a round of interviews and concluded I could forego the rest of the day's appointments. Sprouting in my psyche was the realization that I had met some fine people doing a good work and that I wanted to be associated with them.

Thirty-four years later, my favorable assessment of the interviewees—Commission officers—has changed, by deepening. They included David B. Oliver II and Walter F. Toerge, both now deceased, who were compassionate, big-hearted, and self-effacing men, just the type you'd want to run a foundation that recognizes extreme selflessness in others. To this day, their practices linger, even down to phraseology: *We are gratified to know the award is meaningful to you. Please accept our kind regards.*

Long ago I stopped asking what hold does this place have on me, recognizing early that I liked the two tenets that form the organization's philosophical bedrock: There is sanctity of human life and dignity of the individual. Political ideology aside, how else do you explain that hundreds upon hundreds of times every year, members of American and Canadian society willingly respond to the need of others, strangers mostly, despite danger to themselves? What is it that compels them if not that life itself must be preserved?

And apparently mattering not is the station of life of those in need, nor that of the rescuer. This individual dignity likewise extends to the Commission's analysis of the heroic act. Much to its credit, the Hero Fund's awarding board views only the merits of the heroic act—not the resume of the hero—as determining factors in deciding on recognition.

Along these lines, the case of Paul H. Pardun, File 67540-7798, is never far from my mind. On Jan. 30, 1993, Pardun, a married 30-year-old mechanic from Rogersville, Tenn., entered the Holston River in eastern Tennessee for a woman who had jumped from a bridge in a suicide attempt. He delivered the woman safely to emergency personnel on the bank and then, spent, sank from view and was drowned. It was the ultimate purchase, one despairing of life redeemed by the sacrifice of another, a stranger who could well have passed by.

It is an honor to record the last chapter of a life such as Pardun's and a privilege to enunciate the cosmic proportions of a local tragedy. These tasks we do not take lightly, for Pardun and others like him give or risk all as they remind us that our obligations extend to those who deserve a saving hand. We are our brothers' keepers! 



In what was most assuredly not just another day at the office, the Hero Fund's executive director, Walter F. Rutkowski, is escorted by members of the military, including ceremonial dancers, to a 2005 speaking engagement at an army base in Sri Lanka. (See page 3)

CALLING EVERYONE HEROES
CHEAPENS REAL HEROISM*By Judy Sly, Opinions Editor • Modesto (Calif.) Bee*

Consider some of the people who have been referred to as heroes in recent news stories and letters in The Bee:

A Caltrans worker from Oakdale who helped pull a woman from an SUV that fell down a mountainside; a woman, recently deceased, who fed feral cats; a Merced Marine who was killed in action in Iraq; unnamed players on the Merced High School football squad; Mexican immigrants in the United States who are contributing to the Mexican economy.

Baseball player Mark McGwire; young people who volunteer to be designated drivers when they go out with friends; a 17-year-old Wisconsin boy who alerted authorities that his friends were planning an attack on their school; all blood donors; all school custodians.

And this is only a partial list.

The hero label is so overused that it's hard to know what to call someone who truly performs a heroic act, such as the Navy SEAL who threw himself on a grenade to save his friends. What is he? A superhero? That's comic book terminology.

Are the men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan providing courageous service on behalf of our country? Absolutely, with a handful of exceptions. But not every soldier or sailor or airman performs or has the opportunity to perform heroic acts.

The same goes for police officers and firefighters. They are essential public servants who deserve our appreciation, but they're not universally heroes. We should save that label for people such as the New York City firefighters who headed up the stairs of the World Trade Center on 9-11.

When we casually call people heroes, it demeans those distinctions for the people who really deserve them.

(Reprinted with permission. Days after this column appeared in late December, a reader from Modesto replied, "We must have superlatives. 'Hero' is one of them. Not all meaningful, selfless, helpful, or wonderful acts are really heroic. Casual use of the term seems to ignore risk or sacrifice of life.")

GRANDEUR OF HUMAN POTENTIAL

(continued from page 3)

We need to hear these stories to know that people can call upon powers within themselves—unimagined strengths—to accomplish amazing, heart-warming acts of heroism. We need to hear these stories in order to believe the promise they inspire, that what has been true in the past, will always be. We will be forever in the company of heroes, and we need not search to find them because the heroic is within us.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

BOYS ACT AS MEN WATCH

Seventeen-year-old Charles S. Frost of Richmond, Va., risked his life attempting to save a friend from drowning on Sept. 7, 1929. He was visiting his friend, A. Stanley Kratz, Jr., at the Kratz family summer home near Glass, on Virginia's Middle Peninsula.

On that Saturday morning, Stanley, 18, was racing his family's motorboat up and down the Severn River, which flowed into a branch of Chesapeake Bay, when the bow of the boat rose, causing Stanley to lose his balance and fall into the water. The boat's motor died, and the rising tide pulled the vessel away. Struggling about 500 feet from a pier that fronted his family's property, he yelled for help.


Stanley was a poor swimmer. To strengthen his skills, his father was having workmen build a concrete pool on the property. Several workmen on the job witnessed Stanley's difficulty in the water.

Charles, a high school student, was also on shore. He stripped to his underwear, dived into the river from the end of the pier, and swam to Stanley. He grasped his friend and began to tow him to the pier, swimming against the tide. Although a good swimmer, Charles soon tired, and when he was halfway to the pier, he yelled to the workmen for help.

One of the men threw a wooden box into the water, which drifted toward the boys. When it was within his reach, Charles grasped it and tried to pull himself atop it but in so doing lost his hold on Stanley, who was unconscious by then. Charles regained his hold but began to fear that he and his friend were about to drown.

As the men remained on shore, a 10-year-old boy launched a rowboat and took it against the tide to reach Charles and Stanley. The boy crooked one of Stanley's arms over the side of the rowboat, and Charles climbed carefully aboard. Charles, exhausted, held onto Stanley's arm, and the boy rowed to the pier, where the men pulled Stanley and Charles from the water. Stanley could not be revived. Charles regained his strength after two days.

For his effort, Charles was awarded the Carnegie Medal and scholarship funds of \$1,800, which helped to pay his expenses at the College of William and Mary and later at Carnegie Institute (now Carnegie Mellon University), in Pittsburgh.

 Marlin Ross, Case Investigator



Mr. Frost



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 their lives to an extraordinary degree while saving or attempting to save the lives of others. • The Commission also provides financial assistance, which may include scholarship aid and continuing grants, to the heroes and to the dependents of those awardees who are disabled or die as the result of their heroic acts.

Further information is available on-line 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!

Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

425 Sixth Avenue, Ste. 1640 • Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1823

Telephone: 412-281-1302 Toll-free: 800-447-8900

Fax: 412-281-5751

E-mail: carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org

impulse@carnegiehero.org

Website: www.carnegiehero.org

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412-281-1302 • 800-447-8900

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