



CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION
Recognizing civilian heroism in the United States and Canada

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News Release

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**21 CARNEGIE MEDALS AWARDED IN U.S., CANADA
 FOR EXTRAORDINARY CIVILIAN HEROISM**

PITTSBURGH, PA., DECEMBER 20, 2016—In its fourth and final announcement of 2016, the CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION today awarded the CARNEGIE MEDAL to 21 individuals throughout the United States and Canada in recognition of their acts of outstanding civilian heroism. The medal is given to those who risk their lives to an extraordinary degree while saving or attempting to save the lives of others. Four of the awardees announced today died in the performance of their heroic acts.

The heroes announced today bring to 93 the number of awards made in 2016 and to 9,914 the total number since the Pittsburgh-based Fund's inception in 1904. Commission Chair Mark Laskow stated that each of the awardees or their survivors will also receive a financial grant. Throughout the 112 years since the Fund was established by industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, \$38.7 million has been given in one-time grants, scholarship aid, death benefits, and continuing assistance. The awardees are:

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| Peter F. Pontzer | Fairfax, Va. |
| Duncan O. C. Harris | Buffalo Grove, Ill. |
| Ryan P. Rollinger | Harrisburg, S.D. |
| William E. Ramirez | Pembroke Pines, Fla. |
| Natalie Renee Martin, <i>deceased</i> | Sheboygan Falls, Wis. |
| Nathan Ryan Reynolds | Claremont, Calif. |
| R. Wayne Trivette | Metamora, Ohio |
| Timothy A. Holtz II | Sand Creek, Mich. |
| Clark Whitecalf | Gallivan, Sask. |
| Cody Fields | Silver Spring, Md. |
| Brian Nesbitt | Germantown, Md. |
| Shei'Londa S. Brooks | Houston, Texas |
| Lori Doppelheuer Kearney, <i>deceased</i> | Maysville, Ky. |
| Ivan R. Romero, Jr. | Antelope, Calif. |
| Dennis D. Swenson, <i>deceased</i> | Cornucopia, Wis. |
| Calvin Bradley Stein | Madoc, Ont. |
| Kiera Vera Larsen, <i>deceased</i> | El Cajon, Calif. |
| Damian Bell | Pleasant Hill, Iowa |
| Joseph Kolanchick | Albany, N.Y. |
| Joshua Gary Grimmett | Boise, Idaho |
| Robert M. Shaw, Jr. | Wallingford, Conn. |

Resumes of the acts follow. To nominate someone for the Carnegie Medal, write the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, 436 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1101, Pittsburgh, PA 15219; call 1-800-447-8900 (toll free); or email carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org. Fuller information on the Carnegie Medal and the history of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission can be found at carnegiehero.org. Find us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

PETER F. PONTZER
Fairfax, Virginia
DUNCAN O. C. HARRIS
Buffalo Grove, Illinois

Peter F. Pontzer and Duncan O. C. Harris saved a boy from drowning, Emerald Isle, North Carolina, July 28, 2015. While swimming in the Atlantic Ocean, a 13-year-old boy was caught by a strong current that took him farther from shore and kept him from returning in the choppy water. At a point about 350 feet from shore, he called for help. From a house along the beach, Pontzer, 51, administrative judge, was alerted to the boy's plight. Although he was healing from a sprained ankle, Pontzer, who was on vacation, ran to the water, taking with him a rescue tube that was posted on the beach. He entered the surf, and as he waded toward the boy he was joined by Harris, 21, construction worker, who, also on vacation, responded from another house along the beach. Together they swam a diagonal course of about 450 feet to the boy, who was then floating on his back. Pontzer had the boy hold to the tube, and Harris grasped the boy and helped him maintain his hold. Swimming against the current at first, Pontzer towed the tube toward shore, Harris aiding by swimming as best he could while securing the boy. On reaching wadable water, Pontzer and Harris walked the boy to the beach, where he was treated by arriving emergency medical personnel. On report of another boy in the water, Pontzer re-entered the surf to search for him, but on his return to the beach he collapsed. That boy was recovered by others. Pontzer was taken to the hospital, where he was treated for near-exhaustion, from which he recovered in two days, and he sustained a stress fracture in his affected ankle. Harris also required hospital treatment for ill effects of the rescue, and he too recovered.

87588-9894 / 87587-9895

RYAN P. ROLLINGER
Harrisburg, South Dakota

Ryan P. Rollinger rescued Kevin A. Lein from assault, Harrisburg, South Dakota, September 30, 2015. Lein, 56, a high school principal, was in his office when a male student, 16, entered and with a fully loaded, semi-automatic handgun fired a shot at him as he was seated at his desk. The shot struck Lein in an arm, and he fell to the floor. Rollinger, 39, assistant principal, was in his office nearby and heard the gunfire. He ran to a door to Lein's office, where he saw the assailant pointing the gun at Lein. Rollinger then circled the outside of the office to approach the assailant from behind, through another door. Nearing that door, he made eye contact with the assailant, who, still holding the gun, turned his attention to him. As Rollinger approached the assailant, the assailant ran toward and past him and continued to the school's front doors. Rollinger caught up to him and tackled him to the floor, where they struggled for control of the gun. Another administrator responded and helped secure the assailant as Rollinger disarmed him, and police arrived shortly and arrested him. Lein required hospital treatment for his gunshot wound, and Rollinger was treated at the scene for cuts and scrapes, from which he recovered.

87730-9896

WILLIAM E. RAMIREZ
Pembroke Pines, Florida

William E. Ramirez rescued Rosny Obas from assault, Miami, Florida, April 14, 2015. Obas, 28, a police officer, initiated a traffic stop of a male suspect who was driving a taxi on a commercial street. The suspect exited the taxi and fired a semi-automatic pistol at Obas as Obas was getting out of his police car. Obas took cover behind the car and returned fire as the assailant continued to shoot. Arriving at the scene in his van in one of the opposite traffic lanes, Ramirez, 46, business operator, witnessed the assault. As Obas ran from his car to search for other cover, Ramirez drove toward him, opened the sliding door on the driver's side of his van, and called for Obas to get in. Obas safely entered the vehicle, and Ramirez then sped from the scene amid sounds of more gunfire. The assailant stole the police car and drove from the scene but was later located and arrested.

87326-9897

NATALIE RENEE MARTIN, deceased
Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin

Natalie Renee Martin saved Jenna J. Martin and died after attempting to save Benjamin L. Martin and Carter J. Maki from burning, Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin, January 26, 2016. At night, siblings Jenna, 9; Benjamin, 10; and Carter, 7, were in bedrooms on the second floor of their family's two-story house after fire broke out in the basement. Their sister, Natalie, 11, student, discovered the fire and woke Jenna. She led Jenna downstairs, where fire from the basement was starting to enter the kitchen. Taking Jenna to a side door, Natalie opened the door, allowing Jenna to escape the house, and then she turned back into the structure, despite deteriorating conditions. Jenna fled to a neighbor's house to alert help. First responders were initially thwarted by smoke and heat from entering the burning house. In the dense smoke, firefighters then located Natalie, Benjamin, and Carter together in another second-floor bedroom. All were unresponsive and later died of complications from smoke inhalation: Carter that night, Natalie the next morning, and Benjamin one day later. 88025-9898

NATHAN RYAN REYNOLDS
Claremont, California

Nathan Ryan Reynolds saved Aislinn Crooks and Olivia Schreiber from drowning, Marina, California, January 20, 2015. Aislinn, 9, and Schreiber, 75, were the occupants of a sedan that entered a 6-foot-deep retention pond just off the roadway and began to sink nose first in the cold, murky water. Reynolds, 35, hydrogeologist, was driving nearby and witnessed the accident. He ran to the bank of the pond, where he saw Aislinn in the back seat of the car, which was about 45 feet out. Removing his boots, Reynolds waded and then swam to the driver's side of the car, where he told Schreiber to roll down the window of the driver's door. When Aislinn then moved to the front seat, Reynolds helped her through the window and positioned her onto his back. He swam her to the bank and then returned to the car, which was drifting toward the opposite bank. By then, water had entered the passenger compartment as the car continued to submerge. Securing a hold of Schreiber, Reynolds started toward the opposite bank, which was closer. Submerging, he progressed with difficulty. Arriving police officers entered the pond from that bank and aided Schreiber from the water. Reynolds too left the pond, nearly exhausted, and he recovered. 87370-9899

R. WAYNE TRIVETTE
Metamora, Ohio

TIMOTHY A. HOLTZ II
Sand Creek, Michigan

R. Wayne Trivette and Timothy A. Holtz II saved Grace E. Makula from burning, Jasper, Michigan, July 21, 2015. Badly injured and unconscious, Makula, 25, remained in the driver's seat of a sport utility vehicle after it was involved in a head-on collision, left the roadway, and began to smoke in its engine compartment. Traveling on the same highway, Trivette, 67, retired truck driver, witnessed the accident and stopped at the scene. He responded to the sport utility vehicle, where he aided the three children in Makula's care through a window and directed them to safety. Flames were breaking out in the vehicle's engine compartment as Trivette then tried to open its driver's door, but the door was jammed. Holtz, 35, business operator, responded about then from a job site nearby. Obtaining fire extinguishers from his truck and other motorists who stopped at the scene, he and Trivette fought the flames, but to limited effect. As Holtz was unable to open the burning vehicle's doors, he returned to his truck for a large wrench, which he used to break out the windows of the vehicle's front doors. With flames growing and spreading on the front of the vehicle, Holtz leaned through the window opening of the driver's door and cut Makula's safety belt. He and Trivette then worked to force that door open partially, after which they reached inside the vehicle, grasped Makula, and, pulling her free, carried her to safety, flames beginning to enter the front of the passenger compartment. Makula required hospitalization for treatment of severe injuries, but she was not burned. Holtz recovered from minor burns to his hands and arms. 87652-9900 / 87896-9901

CLARK WHITECALF
Gallivan, Saskatchewan

Clark Whitecalf rescued Jolei D. A. Farness from burning, Gallivan, Saskatchewan, August 31, 2015. At night, Farness, 18, was asleep in the living room of her family's one-story house after fire broke out in the adjacent kitchen. In a passing vehicle, Whitecalf, 41, unemployed construction worker, and his family saw that flames had broken through the kitchen window, and they stopped at the scene. Whitecalf kicked in the front door to the house, which opened to the living room, but he could not see inside because of dark smoke. He ran into the attached garage and opened a door to the kitchen, but flames there blocked his entering that room. Exiting the garage, Whitecalf returned to the front of the house, where he learned that his family heard Farness coughing. Whitecalf crawled into the living room through the front door and found Farness unresponsive on a couch along the opposite wall of the room. After struggling to move her, Whitecalf exited for fresh air. He then re-entered the house, grabbed Farness under the arms, and dragged her to and through the front door to safety. Flames grew to engulf and destroy the house and a vehicle parked outside. Farness required hospitalization for treatment of burns, and Whitecalf inhaled smoke but declined treatment. He recovered. 87757-9902

CODY FIELDS
Silver Spring, Maryland

BRIAN NESBITT
Germantown, Maryland

Cody Fields and Brian Nesbitt rescued Rashad X. Isreal from burning, Silver Spring, Maryland, September 1, 2015. Isreal, 33, was unconscious in the driver's seat of a burning car after an interstate highway accident in which the car came to rest in the emergency lane, its driver's side flush against the concrete medial barrier. On duty, Fields, 24, county police officer, responded to the scene. Flames by then covered the front end of the car and, burning intensely, were moving toward its passenger side. Finding both passenger-side doors locked, Fields broke out the window of the rear door with his service baton and leaned inside and unlocked both doors. He then opened the rear door and entered but withdrew and advanced to the front door. Another on-duty county officer, Nesbitt, 35, arrived, and he entered the car through its rear door as Fields leaned in through the front door. The car was filled with smoke, and the intense heat was compromising the windshield and dashboard. Both officers grasped Isreal and with difficulty pulled him over the center console to the front door. Nesbitt exited the vehicle, and, next to Fields, who was standing among flames, assisted Fields in pulling Isreal from the car. The officers dragged Isreal to a point of safety moments before firefighters arrived. Isreal required hospital treatment, and Fields was treated at the scene for heat exposure and smoke inhalation. He recovered.

88138-9903 / 88139-9904

SHEI'LONDA S. BROOKS
Houston, Texas

Shei'Londa S. Brooks helped to rescue Austin I. Stoney from burning, Houston, Texas, February 29, 2016. Stoney, 39, was the driver of a compact sport utility vehicle that, in a nighttime accident, left the roadway, struck a concrete wall, and came to rest on a grassy berm. He lay face down across the front seats as a small fire broke out under the hood on the passenger side of the vehicle. Another motorist, Brooks, 25, office manager, witnessed the accident. She stopped at the scene, ran to the vehicle, and opened its driver's door. Brooks put one foot on the floor at the driver's seat, leaned inside to grasp Stoney by his attire, and then pulled on him, getting his legs outside the vehicle. An explosion at the car at that time set fire to her clothing and forced her back. Others responding to the scene fully removed Stoney before the vehicle burned completely. Stoney and Brooks both required hospital treatment for their burns, Brooks sustaining burns of up to second degree to her face, arms, chest, and legs. They recovered. 88143-9905

LORI DOPPELHEUER KEARNEY, *deceased*
Maysville, Kentucky

Lori Doppelheuer Kearney died attempting to save Christopher I. Kearney and Kieran C. and Eagan S. Hargis from burning, Maysville, Kentucky, October 20, 2015. At night, Christopher, 10, and his brothers, Kieran, 20 months, and Eagan, 3, were in bedrooms on the second floor of their family's row house after flames broke out in an adjacent unit and spread into the rear of their building. On the first floor, the boys' mother, Kearney, 35, utility worker, awoke and discovered the fire. She went to the front door and unlocked and opened it, enabling four other occupants of the house to flee, and was last seen running through dense smoke up the stairs to the second floor. Flames grew and spread, blocking the stairway and eventually engulfing the house. After the fire was brought under control, Kearney was found on the floor of the younger boys' bedroom, cradling Kieran, with Eagan and Christopher lying nearby. They had died of smoke inhalation. 87801-9906

IVAN R. ROMERO, JR.
Antelope, California

Ivan R. Romero, Jr., saved Leanne M. Cameron from burning, West Sacramento, California, July 21, 2015. Semiconscious, Cameron, 30, remained in the driver's seat of her sedan after an interstate highway accident in which the vehicle was struck from behind by a truck tractor that was pulling a tank trailer. Virtually demolished, the car was lodged under the front end of the truck and caught fire, as did the tractor. Another motorist, Romero, 39, plumber, witnessed the accident. Despite flames about 3 feet high igniting fluids that had spilled onto the roadway and surrounded Cameron's vehicle, he advanced to its driver's window, spraying a fire extinguisher to make a path through the flames. He then held the fire extinguisher with one hand, aiming it through the back window at flames in the backseat, and with his other hand he reached through the driver's window, grasped Cameron about the shoulders, and pulled on her, but she did not move. Cameron then released her safety belt. With flames spreading to the back of the front seats, Romero dropped the fire extinguisher, extended his upper body through the driver's window, and bear-hugged Cameron. Backing from the vehicle, he pulled her from the car to safety. Cameron required hospital treatment for injuries sustained in the accident, but she was not burned. Romero suffered from a sore back in the following days but recovered fully. 87619-9907

DENNIS D. SWENSON, *deceased*
Cornucopia, Wisconsin

Dennis D. Swenson died attempting to save Dorothy H. Swenson from burning, Cornucopia, Wisconsin, May 1, 2015. At night, Dorothy, 95, was inside the one-story house she shared with her son, Dennis, 62, campground operator, after a fire broke out in the basement and spread. Dennis became alerted to the fire and was seen outside the house by a responding neighbor using a fire extinguisher against flames that were issuing from underneath the porch. Taking a second fire extinguisher with him, Dennis entered the structure, telling the neighbor he was going to get his mother. Flames grew quickly to engulf the house, and he was not seen again. Responding firefighters found the bodies of Dennis and Dorothy in one of the bedrooms of the house. They had succumbed to effects of the fire. 88119-9908

CALVIN BRADLEY STEIN
Madoc, Ontario

Calvin Bradley Stein saved Rylee Vilneff from being struck by runaway ponies, Tweed, Ontario, July 9, 2016. Rylee, 3, was standing inside the track at a fairground when a team of two ponies, each weighing about 600 pounds, broke free and, harnessed together, ran away at full speed. Seeing that, Stein, 51, utility worker, who was also inside the track, moved toward a position to intercept them, but they changed course and headed directly toward Rylee. Stein then ran about 55 feet to the girl and scooped her into his hands to throw her clear of the path of the runaways, and she landed about 4 feet away. The ponies struck Stein, knocking him to the ground, and dragged him a distance before coming to a stop. Stein was taken to the hospital, where he was treated for a concussion, facial fractures, and lacerations, which required suturing. Rylee was also taken to the hospital, but she suffered only minor injuries. She recovered. 88402-9909

KIERA VERA LARSEN, *deceased*
El Cajon, California

Kiera Vera Larsen died saving Emmah Gusich from being struck by a runaway vehicle, El Cajon, California, February 22, 2016. Emmah, 2, was playing on a sloped residential driveway behind a parked sport utility vehicle when the vehicle began rolling backward toward her. Kiera, 10, student, had been on the deck of the nearby residence and when next seen was running alongside the moving vehicle toward Emmah. Entering the vehicle's path, Kiera pushed Emmah aside, but the vehicle then struck Kiera, knocked her down, and dragged her several feet before it was stopped. Emmah sustained only minor scrapes, but Kiera died of her injuries. 88101-9910

DAMIAN BELL
Pleasant Hill, Iowa

Damian Bell helped to save Richard G. Rauzi from drowning, Indianola, Iowa, February 14, 2016. Rauzi, 57, was snowshoeing on ice atop Lake Ahquabi near an area of open water when, at a point about 150 feet from the closer bank, the ice broke beneath him, plunging him into the frigid water. Unable to lift himself back onto solid ice, he yelled for help. Across the lake, an ice fisherman, Bell, 35, technology manager, was alerted to Rauzi's shouts. Bell drove around the lake to access the closer bank. Taking a 17-foot canoe that was stored there and a length of rope, Bell went onto the ice and skirted the open water to reach Rauzi. At the hole that Rauzi's fall had created, Bell entered the canoe and reached for Rauzi, the front of the canoe then breaking through the ice. Unable to lift Rauzi aboard, as the canoe was threatening to tip over, Bell helped him hold onto one of its seats and secured him to the canoe with the rope. Bell then stepped from the canoe onto solid ice and attempted to pull Rauzi from the open water with the rope, but again his efforts were not successful, and Bell was tiring and cold in the 20-degree air temperature. Firefighters responding about then launched a rescue boat, made their way across the open water, and with help from Bell, who entered the boat, took Rauzi aboard. Others on the bank used a rope to pull the boat to safety. Rauzi was hospitalized two days for treatment of hypothermia, and he recovered. Bell was nearly exhausted. 88096-9911

JOSEPH KOLANCHICK
Albany, New York

Joseph Kolanchick saved David G. Hitchcock from drowning, Scotia, New York, February 18, 2016. While skating, Hitchcock, 51, broke through ice covering much of Collins Lake, at a point about 30 feet from a bank that was difficult to access. Holding to the edge of solid ice, he shouted for help. Kolanchick, 34, mason, who was ice fishing about 900 feet away, ran across the ice to a point about 10 feet from the edge of the hole created by Hitchcock's fall. He tied a rope around a stick and threw it to Hitchcock, who grasped it, but as Kolanchick pulled, the rope slipped off the stick. Kolanchick then maneuvered to the edge of the hole, where he tossed one end of the rope to Hitchcock. The ice bent under Kolanchick's weight as he did so, and the 38-degree water flowed onto it and soaked Kolanchick's clothes. Kolanchick attempted to pull Hitchcock from the hole by means of the rope, but he slid on the ice. He then tied the rope around Hitchcock's wrist, backed from him, and drilled a hole in the ice using his ice auger. Sitting on the ice, he stuck a heel in the hole for leverage and pulled Hitchcock from the open water. Kolanchick then towed Hitchcock on his sled over a 1,500-foot course on stable ice to an accessible point of the bank. Hitchcock was taken to the hospital, where he was treated for hypothermia. Kolanchick sustained only minor ill effects and did not seek medical attention. Both men fully recovered. 88114-9912

JOSHUA GARY GRIMMETT
Boise, Idaho

Joshua Gary Grimmatt saved a woman from drowning, Boise, Idaho, May 25, 2016. Severely injured, a 23-year-old woman was floating on her back in the approximate center of Mores Creek, or at a point about 275 feet from either bank. His attention having been attracted to her earlier, Grimmatt, 33, business operator, descended the steep bank to the water's edge, where he removed his shirt and shoes. He entered the 50-degree water and, navigating among large boulders at the bank, waded and then swam to the woman. Grasping her by the back of her shirt, Grimmatt towed her toward the bank. Halfway there, he stopped and, floating on his back, attempted to catch his breath. Unable to do so, Grimmatt resumed towing the woman the remaining distance to the bank, where he was met by others who were responding. The woman was evacuated from the scene by boat and then flown to the hospital, where she was detained for treatment of her injuries. She recovered. Grimmatt was tired and cold after the rescue but fully recovered. 88319-9913

ROBERT M. SHAW, JR.
Wallingford, Connecticut

Robert M. Shaw, Jr., saved Robert R. Angiletta, Jr., from burning, Meriden, Connecticut, July 13, 2015. Angiletta, 36, was driving a tank truck on an interstate highway when the vehicle malfunctioned and crashed into a concrete support column of an overpass. The truck's cargo tank, which contained 2,700 gallons of heating oil, detached from its frame and, compromised, released its contents to the underside of the overpass and to the roadway and median. The badly damaged remains of the vehicle came to rest beneath the overpass, with Angiletta, wet from the fuel, hanging by his safety belt from the driver's side of the cab. The spilled fuel caught fire in the vicinity of the wreckage. Shaw, 54, truck driver, had been driving behind the tank truck and witnessed the accident. He stopped at the scene and heard Angiletta moaning. Shaw went underneath the overpass, which was dripping spilled fuel, approached the wreckage of the cab, and saw Angiletta. Standing in fuel with flames nearby, Shaw grasped Angiletta by the arms and pulled on him but then realized that he was caught by his safety belt. Shaw reached into the cab and removed the belt to free him. He then grasped Angiletta by the arms again and pulled him away from the cab and burning fuel. Angiletta was hospitalized for treatment of his injuries, but he was not burned. 87549-9914