



imPULSE

A Periodic Newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission ISSUE 49 • MARCH 2017



ANGEL IN HEAVEN HERO ON EARTH

Those words were engraved in stone to memorialize **Kiera Vera Larsen**, who died at age 10 last year while saving a toddler from being struck by a runaway vehicle.

For her actions, Kiera was awarded the Carnegie Medal posthumously in December, becoming not only the youngest awardee in 2016 but the youngest in 18 years, since **Misty Nacole Waters**, also 10, of Nahunta, Ga., was cited posthumously in 1998 for attempting to save two younger brothers from drowning in the Satilla River where they had been wading.

Kiera, an elementary school student from El Cajon, Calif., and other children were playing in the yard of Kiera's family's residence on Feb. 22, 2016, when a sport utility vehicle parked nearby began to roll backward. In its path was neighbor Emmah Gusich, 2, whom Kiera had known since birth. Kiera ran to the tot and pushed her aside but could not clear the vehicle in time. Emmah suffered only minor scrapes.

Alyssa Gusich, Emmah's mother, told a reporter from *The San Diego Union-Tribune* that Kiera "will forever be Emmah's guardian angel." Kiera was the daughter of Hans and Cherise Larsen of El Cajon and Ginnifer Davis of Santa Rosa, Calif.

Another young girl was also named a posthumous recipient of the Carnegie Medal in December.

Natalie Renee Martin, 11, of Sheboygan Falls, Wis., died after saving her sister and attempting to save two brothers from a fire in the family's home. She and Kiera were among the 21 awardees of the medal announced in December. Descriptions of the awardees' heroic acts appear on pages 10-14.



Calvin Bradley Stein of Madoc, Ont., works his team of Belgian-breed work horses—Jerry and Jake—each of which weighs about 2,300 pounds. One of 93 awardees of the Carnegie Medal in 2016, Stein was cited for saving a small girl from the path of a runaway team of ponies at an agricultural fair last July (see page 13). Stein and his brother run family farms in Ontario, where their teams compete in pulling competitions. Photo courtesy of Sue Whittaker photography.

2016 in review: 93 given Carnegie Medals as Hero Fund extends founder's vision

*By Sybil P. Veeder, Ph.D., Chair, Executive Committee
Carnegie Hero Fund Commission*

Late last year, 1973 Carnegie Hero **William R. Whitacre** of Salinas, Calif., returned his medal to the Hero Fund's office with a request for assistance in enhancing its presentation. The medal was encased in a block of Lucite (which was the Hero Fund's practice at the time) and Whitacre wanted to break it free. "It may seem silly," he wrote, "but I have always missed not being able to touch the medal." Even so, surrendering it for the purpose was something of a sacrifice: Whitacre is a decorated veteran, with his Purple Heart the only other award

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BOARD NOTES

FROM SELFISH GENES COME BETTER ANGELS

By Mark Laskow, Chair
Carnegie Hero Fund Commission



The Carnegie Hero Fund is dedicated to telling the stories of the heroes who have earned the Carnegie Medal. But, why? Is it not enough that the hero receives his or her medal? Why is it so important to spread the news of what they did to earn it?

First, of course, we tell these stories as a modest reward to the hero. Their friends and neighbors *should* know what they did and appreciate the risk they took. The heroes are unlikely to do much storytelling about themselves, so we do it for them. They deserve it.

Second, we are convinced that every story of altruistic heroism told weaves another thread into the fabric of our civilization. Spreading the news of these selfless acts strengthens a culture that makes all our lives better.

That is a big claim, but it is nicely supported by two interesting books bearing on altruism and both genetic and social evolution. I refer to Richard Dawkins's *The Selfish Gene* (2006) and Steven Pinker's *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* (2012). Taken together, they left me much more optimistic about the future of humanity and more convinced of the importance of telling the stories of our heroes.

Dawkins vividly describes how the pressures of genetic selection work against any tendency to act altruistically toward those who are not close kin. Simply put, the pressures of selection should over time eliminate genes which cause (or even permit) an individual to seriously risk death to benefit someone who does not carry the same gene. This seems like grim news for us and for our heroes. Happily, Dawkins finds a way through this. He notes that genetic selection is strictly backward-looking. It "knows" nothing of the future, or even of today. It only knows and selects for what has worked in the past. Humans, though, evolved another remarkable capacity that changed everything: a conscious imagination which allows us to consider what might happen in the future. We can imagine a future which might differ from the past, a future which might be better if we were to modify our behavior in one way or another. This consciousness also allows us to create ideas that can take on a life of their own. Dawkins describes these as *memes* (yes, he seems to

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2016 in review

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displayed in his home, and the temporary absence of the medal "shall be the longest we have ever been apart."

"Such is the import of the Carnegie Medal," he concluded.

Such is the import of the work of the Commission's Executive Committee: to make certain that the medal is awarded to the most deserving of the hundreds of cases called to its attention each year. Nominations of new cases numbered 859 during the year, and 93 cases were felt by the Committee to fall within the awarding requirements. The total number of awardees over the life of the Hero Fund is now 9,914, and if our current award rate continues, we will reach the 10,000-awardee milestone within a year.

Awardees

As usual, the awardees represented a broad geographical range in 2016, with the 84 U.S. heroes coming from 32 states and the nine Canadians from four of the 13 provinces and territories. In the U.S., Maryland and Michigan were home to the most awardees (seven each), followed by California and Illinois (six each). In Canada, Ontario claimed the most, four. At 9.7% of the year's total, the ratio of Canadian heroes was similar to the historical rate of 7.7% over the life of the fund.

Likewise, the number of female awardees last year—seven, or 7.5% of the total—was similar, albeit slightly less, than the historical rate of 8.9%. Death cases in 2016 were at 11.8% of the total, as compared with the historical rate of 20.4%. In eight of the 11 death cases, the hero acted in behalf of family or extended-family members, including **Natalie Renee Martin**, who at age 11 discovered a fire in the basement of the family's house at night and then made two trips to second-floor bedrooms to alert her siblings.

Natalie was the second-youngest of the year's awardees, the youngest of whom, 10-year-old **Kiera Vera Larsen**, managed to save a tot from the path of a runaway sport utility vehicle but was then struck and killed by it. (See page 1.) The year's oldest hero also died in the performance of her act: **Glenda Clement Beech** at 69 attempted to save two grandchildren and a brother from their burning home. The ages of the heroes in the 2016 range of 10 to 69 years included six under 20; 12 in their 20s; 26 in their 30s; 24 in their 40s; 19 in their 50s; and six over 60.

By type of act, most of the cases were fire-related, with burning-building and burning-vehicle rescues each numbering 27. Water-related cases at 15 (including one submerged vehicle and four ice) were fewer than in the past and tied with the number of assault cases, which have increased over recent years. Animal-attack rescues—one shark and four dog—were the next populated category, followed by three "moving vehicle, path" rescues. In one of them, the "vehicle" was an animal, or more precisely a team of two 600-pound ponies that had broken loose at an agricultural fair and were headed toward a 3-year-old. In stepped **Calvin Bradley Stein**, who scooped the child up but then was knocked down and dragged by the animals. He survived albeit badly injured. His photo appears on page 1.

Grants

Each of the year's awardees received a one-time grant of \$5,000 and the pre-retirement awardees became eligible for scholarship assistance, defined as aid applied toward the academic costs of tuition, books, and fees. Inestimable is the value placed on the latter program by the recipients (28 in 2016), one of whom is first in her class at Tulane University Law School, New Orleans, La., where yearly tuition is \$48,000. Regarding the beneficiaries, who are primarily the widows of posthumous awardees, \$292,250 was paid in 2016 in monthly installments to 58 recipients. Each of the beneficiaries receives an annual review, with staff sympathetic to increased need. The Hero Fund's philanthropic giving totaled \$1,033,908 during the year.

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CBS Sunday Morning guest correspondent Scott Simon, left, of National Public Radio talks with Carnegie Medal recipient Andrew Baugh, right, of Mason City, Ill., and Chase W. McDermand, who was rescued by Baugh from a burning midget race car in 2015. The segment aired in December. (Story on page 15.)

2016 in review

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Outreach

The Commission was featured in the lead segment of the Dec. 11 edition of *CBS Sunday Morning* through the efforts of Committee member Eric Zahren. The initiative was one of several that he conceived or enhanced, including the expanded use of our website and social media applications (Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, etc.) and the increased number of personal medal presentations, by either local government representatives or past awardees. In September, for instance, Zahren coordinated personal presentations in 20 of the 25 awarded cases, and presentations were made by him in Illinois and by our former director of external affairs, Doug Chambers. Chambers was accompanied by Committee member Nathalie Lemieux in giving the medal to four awardees at a dinner in Toronto early in the year, and at mid-year he hosted two other Canadian awardees at a dinner in Nova Scotia. Locally, two other staffers joined Chambers at a church-sponsored presentation in New Bethlehem, Pa. The newsletter regularly covers events of the type in its “Presenting” feature (see pages 17-18).

Abroad

The Commission continued its oversight in 2016 of the newly formed Carnegie Hero Funds Word Committee, which comprises the nine remaining of Carnegie’s original 11 hero funds. As the World Committee meets regularly in odd years during the presentation of the biennial Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy and even-year meetings are attempted, a meeting was set for October 2016 in The Hague. Fifteen representatives of six of the funds were in attendance, including Zahren and Walter Rutkowski from the Commission. That committee’s leadership is shared by Commission Chair Mark Laskow and William Thomson of Scotland, one of the Carnegie great-grandchildren. They have significant interest in the survival of the funds and the vision to keep the World Committee initiative tenable.

At home

No changes were made at board level during what was a stable year, and significant anniversaries of two of our primary “stabilizers” were marked

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BOARD NOTES

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have invented the term), and demonstrates that these memes themselves may undergo a process similar to genetic selection.

Dawkins is a hard-core scientist who leaves no doubt that genetic selection is a mechanistic, unsentimental business. Yet without relaxing his scientific rigor, he finds room for the creation of our...*humanity*. Our genes exercise tremendous influence over our lives, but they do not rule us or mechanically determine our actions. Dawkins left room for humanity, and heroism.

Pinker picks up where Dawkins leaves off. He begins by tracing a long and steep decline in human violence that continues to this day. He demonstrates this decline both in wars and in interpersonal violence such as murder, rape and robbery. I don’t know about you, but I often find myself so caught up in the daily news of crime and conflict that I lose the big picture. Pinker brings the good news, and lots of data to support it: Violence has been in a long decline, the decline has been significant, and it continues today. But even better is his explanation of why that decline occurred. This is the part that interests us here.

Pinker explains that over time mankind has evolved social institutions to reduce violence. Rulers began slowly to use force to curb casual violence among the population. Perhaps the ruler was just claiming a monopoly on the use of force for himself, but things ran better when he did. Over time, though, other institutions began to reduce violence through encouragement rather than coercion. This might occur in subtle ways. Pinker credits the printing press and books, including fiction, with spreading the idea that strangers were people rather like ourselves and worthy of some consideration. The growth of trade and commerce gave individuals a stake in the wellbeing of their customers and trading partners. No one of these developments would have been sufficient by itself, but together they began to weave the fabric of a less violent civil society. You might say that collectively we learned to be less violent and to benefit from that. We learned that if we could forgo the short-term rewards of robbery or revenge, we could live better lives overall.

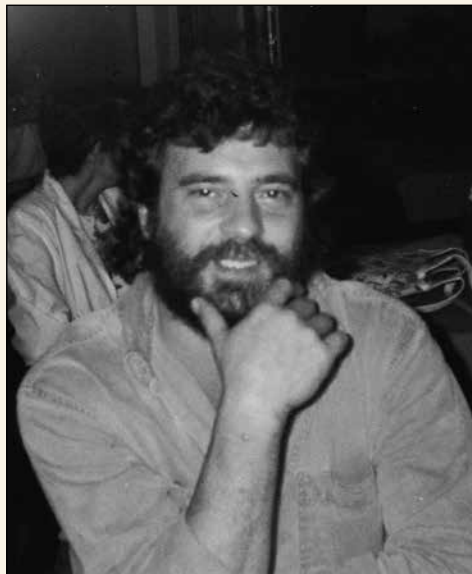
Heroic altruism takes the next logical step: not only will I refrain from harming my neighbor, but I will take personal risk to benefit him. This benefits the person rescued, but it benefits society as well. How? The complex of civil institutions and culture that Pinker credits for the reduction in violence depends on a sense of long-term reciprocity among the citizenry. If we are to pass up short-term rewards to live in a better world, we expect our fellow citizens to do the same. If that expectation breaks down, so does our world.

Each selfless act by one of our heroes brilliantly reinforces our confidence in that expectation of reciprocity. Each rescue strengthens the culture that has so improved our lives. That is why each story of the heroes is worth telling, and retelling. So we will.



2016 in review

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BELOVED LITTLE BROTHER STILL MAKES HER LAUGH

By Deborah Badgett Wilcox
Greensboro, N.C.

When I was a teenager it was my job to clean up the dirty dishes after dinner. And it was “my job” to pick up my little brother, Douglas, when he was about 2 or 3 years old, put him on the counter, and sing to him while I was washing the dishes. I did this almost every day—it was our little ritual, among many others.

“Dougie,” which I always called him (and still do today), was **Bruce Douglas Badgett**, the next-to-the-last of five children in our family. I cannot explain the bond we had, but it was very real. We just “knew.” No matter what we did, the bond was solid. We loved each other. Period.

Then a horrible thing happened on Jan. 8, 1995, when I had a massive hemorrhagic stroke. I was down for the count, but not by Dougie’s standards. He worked at Carolina Wood Turning in Dunn, N.C., as the plant manager, and I was the president of Imprint Graphics in Greensboro. He came immediately to my side, almost 90 miles. To make a long story short, while I remained in Dunn to try to get my life under control, Dougie would come every day. I can still see him sitting on his haunches by my bed, telling me what he did for me that day. I could not speak then, but I could smile! I knew that Dougie was giving all he had to make me feel better again.

We were cruising right along, me in rehab, Dougie working. I still could not talk, but sometimes he would take me to work with him! The wood turning was hard, but Dougie was tenacious, a genius at

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Dr. Veeder, a member of the Commission since 1992, has chaired the Executive Committee since 2002.

at the year’s annual meeting: Frank Brooks Robinson reached 50 years of membership on the Commission and Thomas L. Wentling, Jr., 25. With both of them active on the executive and finance committees, it is hard to overstate the value of their contributions. At staff level, Chambers retired at mid-year after 14 years of service and we welcomed Zahren as executive director with every expectation Carnegie’s legacy will be enhanced and kept strong. To those involved with this work, including the hard-working staff, I offer my sincere appreciation for your efforts. We could not move forward without you.

OLD FRIENDS

Carnegie Medal awardee **Paul J. Archambault** and his wife, Jacquelyn, center, of Corona, Calif., are fans of Pittsburgh’s football and hockey teams, and in early December they planned a trip to the city to watch the Steelers play the New York Giants at Heinz Field (Pittsburgh won, 24-14) and the Penguins play the Ottawa Senators at PPG Paints Arena (Pittsburgh again, 8-5). Turns out the Hero Fund is a fan of the Archambaults and hosted them on a tour of the office and at lunch. Archambault and a co-rescuer, **John Augustus Rose II**, were each awarded the medal in 2004 in recognition of their harrowing rescue of an elderly woman from her cabin in the San Gabriel Canyon, Azusa, Calif., on Sept. 1, 2002, during a massive fire in the Angeles National Forest. Deputies for the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department, Archambault, then 43, and Rose exceeded their duties by driving 9 miles past a roadblock to reach the woman. Their vehicle’s tires flattening, they returned through dense smoke, intense heat, flames flaring on either side, and debris in the roadway to take her to safety. For Archambault, it was “the most terrifying time of my life.” He and the woman stay in touch; just the week before their Pittsburgh visit they communicated. Archambault is now a reserve deputy for his department.



From left: Susan M. Rizza, Hero Fund investigator (seated); Melissa A. McLaughlin, case investigator; Julia M. Panian, case investigator and social media coordinator; Mr. and Mrs. Archambault; Eric P. Zahren, executive director; and Christopher M. Foreman, case investigator.

Restored memorial to Carnegie Hero spurs grandson's journey back in time

By Kyle Spurr
The Bulletin, Bend Ore.

On the bank of the Deschutes River in Drake Park, Bend, Ore., an oft-forgotten memorial draws few visitors with one exception. Philip Mickel stops nearly every week to connect with the most heroic – and tragic – part of his family history. His grandfather, **Frank T. Johns**, who was the Socialist Labor Party presidential candidate in 1928, died near there while attempting to save a young boy who fell in the river.

For years, Mickel felt an added sadness whenever he visited the memorial, which was created in 1970. Vandals had completely scraped away the photo of his grandfather. “Why people do things like that, I’ll never understand, but they do,” he said. “I don’t have many memories of it being complete and not vandalized. It was always damaged and the picture was missing.”

That changed in November when Mickel, with the help of the Deschutes Historical Society, replaced the photograph of Johns on the etched-bronze memorial. The memorial marks a significant historical moment in Bend’s history. It also has a deep personal meaning to Mickel and his family.

Mickel, a 70-year-old retired Oregon State Police trooper, grew up in the neighborhood across the river from the memorial before his family moved to Prineville, where he still lives today with his wife, Linda. “It’s a roots thing for me. It connects me with my former home as well as my ancestors,” Mickel said.

Local historian Nathan Pedersen – president of the Deschutes County Historical Society and community librarian with Deschutes Public Library – took an

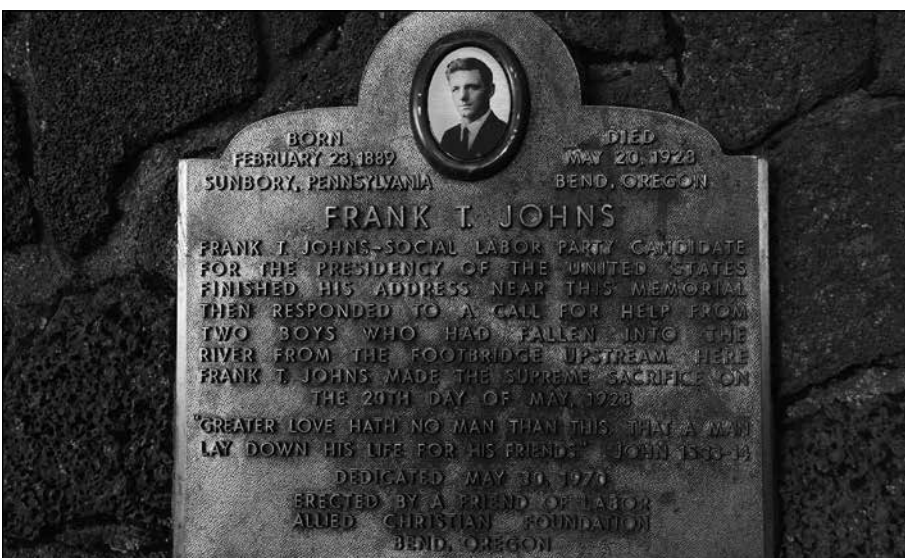


Mr. Johns

interest in the story while preparing lectures and articles on Johns. Pedersen reached out to Mickel, one of the few local descendants of Johns, for any photographs or written materials. “He filled in a lot of empty spots on the map of Frank’s life story,” Pedersen said.

While researching together, Pedersen and Mickel decided to restore the dilapidated photograph on the memorial. Mickel said he was not surprised by the vandalism in the public park. He spent

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The Johns memorial. Photo by Joe Kline of The Bulletin, Bend, Ore.

15:13

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figuring things out and making them work. The employees loved and respected him—I could see it in their smiling faces when they came to work. It was obvious. Once we did cut-out pieces of Easter bunnies, huge, Dougie doing the woodworking and I doing the painting, one-handed. He sold them all over the U.S. just because he could say, “Look what Debbe did! It’s absolutely great!”

Then another horrible thing happened. When Dougie went home from work on April 17, 1996, he heard two girls, ages 11 and 13, screaming from a capsized canoe on nearby Maynard Lake. He immediately ran into the cold water to save them. While the older girl returned to the bank, Dougie swam out to the younger one and gave her a push. He then submerged. That girl’s father arrived and aided her to safety, but Dougie remained beneath the surface of the water. He was recovered several minutes later by first responders and taken to the hospital, but there was no hope. He died the next day. We were planning to live at Topsail Island and Dougie would go down on the weekends from Dunn. All arranged. I almost never cry but that time my heart was broken. Literally.

I decided to talk to Dougie after he was gone, and I’ve been doing it ever since. It makes me rounded somehow. He makes me laugh 24/7, and I can hear him laughing like crazy! That’s my Dougie!

15:13 calls to mind those in the Hero Fund’s 113-year history whose lives were sacrificed in the performance of their heroic acts. The name identifies the chapter and verse of the Gospel of John that appears on every medal: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Of the 9,914 medal awardees to date, 2,023, or 20% of the total, were recognized posthumously. They are not forgotten.



Ms. Wilcox



Carnegie Medal awardee Liane Heather Wood was matched with her service dog, Harley, in 2015. They appeared in the show, "Collar of Duty," on Animal Planet in Canada.

HERO WITH SERVICE DOG PROFILED IN NEW SHOW

Liane Heather Wood recounted her role in a 2013 river rescue in Ontario for a new documentary series chronicling the positive effect of service animals. Wood and her service dog, Harley, were profiled in an episode of "Collar of Duty," which made its debut on the Animal Planet station in Canada in January.

Wood and her husband, **Daniel Marvin Wood**, banded together on Feb. 6, 2013, to save a 13-year-old girl from a partially submerged vehicle that entered the Trent River at night outside the Frankford, Ont., church where Daniel was the pastor.

After recovering from symptoms of hypothermia, Wood struggled to cope with post-traumatic stress disorder related to the incident, which took place in frigid, fast-moving water. A nonprofit organization, Dominion Assistance Dogs, matched Wood with Harley, a Labrador retriever, in 2015.

"I was really in a dark place, and was struggling with nightmares, flashbacks and anxieties," Wood told *The Belleville (Ont.) Intelligencer* before the show aired. "Having Harley hasn't eliminated all of those things, but Harley has made it manageable. Where I really wasn't living my life before, Harley has helped me gain back a lot of my life."

During filming, the Woods spoke about receiving the Carnegie Medal, which the Commission awarded to each in September 2015. With the assistance of a grant from the Hero Fund, Wood is enrolled in a spiritual psychotherapy training program in Ontario.—Chris Foreman, Case Investigator



Philip Mickel at riverside memorial to his grandfather, Carnegie Medal awardee Frank T. Johns. Photo by Joe Kline and provided as a courtesy by The Bulletin, Bend, Ore.

Journey back in time

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\$117 to replace the photograph, which was unveiled Nov. 10. "It was pretty awful before," Mickel said. "It was just a scratched up old plate."

Through the whole experience, Mickel learned more about his grandfather and what happened that day.

Johns, a 39-year-old presidential candidate from Portland, was giving a stump speech on May 20, 1928, along the Deschutes River when he heard cries for help, according to the historical society. A 10-year-old boy, Jack Rhodes, was fishing off a footbridge when his fishing line got caught underneath the bridge. He leaned over the railing to free the line and fell into the water. Johns threw off his coat and jumped in the river. Both were swept away by the current and drowned.

"He leaped from the speakers' stand, ran to the river bank, and jumped into the water," according to an account in *The Bulletin*. "He had to swim about 75 yards to reach the lad. Both sank once as he was attempting to tow the boy to shore. When they came up, Johns gave the boy a push toward shore and sank. The boy disappeared about the same time."

Kelly Cannon-Miller, director of the Deschutes Historical Museum, said the story has become a part of the local lore. People often come into the museum and ask: Did a presidential candidate really drown trying to save a child? "It's definitely one of those urban legend stories that we can confirm," Cannon-Miller said.

Following Johns's death, the Bend community rallied together and raised \$700 for Johns's widow, Ruth Johns, and their two daughters, Margaret and Mildred. The boy's father, John Rhodes, helped spearhead an effort to have Johns awarded the Carnegie Medal, and the award came with a pension for Johns's widow and two daughters.

"What I love about the story is how the community responded," Cannon-Miller said. "The fact that our community rallied around his family, and the fact that he cared so much meant so much to the community."

Johns's body was sent by train back to Portland, where he is buried. A memorial service was held for him at the public library in Portland, where the Socialist Labor Party rented space on many occasions for lectures and meetings. Mickel's mother, Margaret Mickel, was 13 when her father drowned. "I never heard her talk much about it," Mickel said. "I'm sure it was too painful."

A photograph of Johns always hung prominently in Mickel's childhood homes. Mickel remembers handling the Carnegie Medal and reading a newspaper

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FRIENDS REMEMBERED



Mr. Diggins

Ronald Leon Diggins, 76, formerly of Milton-Freewater, Ore., died Dec. 26. Diggins was awarded the Carnegie Medal in 1969 for saving a worker from the burning structure of an off-shore well in the Gulf of Mexico near Grand Isle, La., on Aug. 21, 1968. The man had climbed to the roof of the structure's engine house and would not jump into the water, as other workers were doing, for rescue by boat and helicopter. Diggins, then 28, the pilot of one of the responding helicopters, cautiously took his craft perilously close to the structure's derrick, even though heat-created turbulence made control of it difficult. The man leapt onto one of the helicopter's pontoons, and Diggins

immediately moved the craft away, keeping it tilted to counterbalance the man's weight. The man was severely burned but recovered.

Ruth Ella Thomas, 84, of SeaTac, Wash., died Dec. 21. She was the widow of **Norman J. Thomas**, who was posthumously awarded the medal in 1990 in recognition of his July 30, 1989, attempt to save four teenage girls from drowning in the Pacific Ocean at Ocean Park, Wash. In keeping with Andrew Carnegie's wishes that dependents of those who give their lives for others "should not suffer pecuniarily," Mrs. Thomas was given periodic assistance to help with living costs.

William R. Wimble, 84, of Valrico, Fla., died April 24, 2016. He was one of five men awarded the medal in 1963 for that year's Feb. 14 rescue of the driver of a burning race car at the Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway. Wimble, then 31, sustained burns to both hands and wrists in the rescue, during which he and others lifted the overturned vehicle to allow the driver, who was severely burned, to open the car's door. Others then pulled the driver from the vehicle. Wimble was a storied NASCAR driver who in addition to winning many track championships won the NASCAR point championships in 1960 and 1961. He became "big friends" with the man he helped to rescue, Marvin Panch, who died at age 89 in 2015.



Mr. Wimble

TO THE HERO FUND

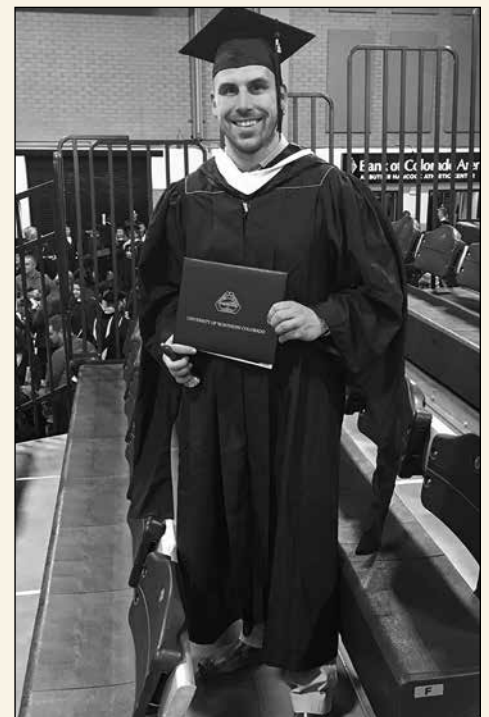
REACHING GOALS

I am writing to express to you my gratitude for allowing me the opportunity to pursue my career in education. Because of your help, I have not only been able to achieve everything I have wanted to as a teacher and coach, but I have been able to complete my master's in educational leadership and policy studies at the University of Northern Colorado.

As you know, I pursued education because of the impact that you can have on people. I discovered this both before I began my pursuit of education and since I have been a teacher myself. When I was a senior in high school, I lost my father and grandfather in a tragic accident. While it was devastating at the time, I gained many things from it, including a heightened sense of responsibility and the impact that you can have on individuals and an entire community. It has been a goal of mine to obtain an opportunity to serve as an administrator and become a leader in a community like the one that swooped me up and made me their own when I lost my father and grandfather.

I can honestly say that I would not be anywhere near reaching my goals if it was not for the

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Writer **John Thanos** is a son of **Mark John Thanos** and grandson of **John Mikel Thanos**, both of whom were posthumously awarded the Carnegie Medal in 2009 in recognition of their attempts to save a boy from drowning in a flooded culvert in 2008 in Chesterton, Ind.

Journey back in time

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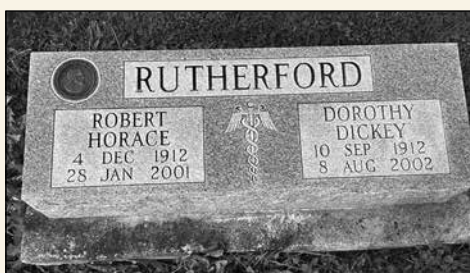
clipping about the incident. The medal and Johns's pocket watch, given to him by the Socialist Labor Party, are on display in the Deschutes Historical Museum. "That's all I knew about it until Nate started to open this window into my family history," Mickel said. "I had no idea anybody else was interested in grandpa and the family until then."

Johns is remembered proudly, and is probably the most heroic person in the family, Mickel said. Or at least the most heroic who has had the chance, he said. "You never know one moment to the next," Mickel said. "Any of us could be heroic, or maybe not, depending on our decisions."

The week after the memorial was unveiled, Mickel visited to see the repairs. For years, Mickel was often the only person around when he came by to pay his respects. The memorial is in a sheltered part of the park, down a hill near the bank of the river. As he approached, Mickel noticed a group of adults and children surrounding the memorial. One child was climbing on it, while others were reading the text below Johns's photograph. The memorial, left in disrepair for years, had come back to life.

"In all the times I'd been going there, I never found anyone when I arrived," Mickel said. "I thought it was wonderful." ❧

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AWARDEES' GRAVES MARKED WITH HERO FUND MEDALLIONS

Graves of two Midwestern Carnegie heroes were recently marked with the installation of bronze medallions cast in the likeness of the Carnegie Medal that the Hero Fund makes available to the families of deceased awardees (see back page).



Dr. Rutherford

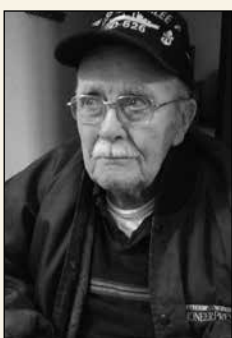
Robert H. Rutherford, who died Jan. 28, 2001, was a long-time physician serving Macoupin County, Ill. He was awarded a silver Carnegie Medal in 1932 for rescuing a man from a collapsing well in Girard, Ill., in 1931, when he

was a college student. The man was buried at the bottom of a 20-foot-well by bricks and earth that collapsed into it. Rutherford, then 19, descended to the top of the debris, freed the man, and then with him climbed out of the well to safety as the well continued to collapse. With tuition assistance from the Hero Fund, Rutherford went on to attend medical school at Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., and on graduating in 1936 practiced medicine for 50 years.

Son Jack Rutherford of Carlinville, Ill., the youngest of five children of Dr. Rutherford and his wife of 53 years, Dorothy, said it wasn't until last August that he and his siblings first saw their father's Carnegie Medal. From the date of its presentation, he said, the medal was held by his father's parents and then by his younger sister. It surfaced last summer for a ceremony sponsored by the Macoupin County

Historical Society to honor Carnegie heroes from that part of southern Illinois. "We never dreamed we would ever know all of our father's Carnegie story," Jack said.

The Minneapolis, Minn., grave of **Paul H. Olson** was also



Mr. Olson

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Santa Claus, a.k.a. Dennis Francis Keefe, and fans.

Retiree's avocation of playing Santa Claus is fitting for hero of Christmas Day rescue

Dennis Francis Keefe played Santa of a sort on Christmas Day 1974 when he gave the precious gift of rescued lives to a Bronx, N.Y., family. It's 42 years later, and the Carnegie Medal awardee of Lincroft, N.J., is firmly established in his "retirement career" of playing Santa Claus throughout the greater New York City area, his stage extending into parts of New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

He's got the bona fides: Physique, white beard, and bright blue eyes aside, Keefe, 66, has an associate of arts degree in "SantaClausology" from the International University of Santa Claus, and he is a certified member in good standing of the International Brotherhood of Real-Bearded Santas. Though having sported a beard through most of his adult life, the Santa identity came fairly recently, when Keefe and his wife were visiting Disney World with grandchildren in 2013. Some of the Disney characters took note of him, telling the crowd, "Now we know where Santa Claus goes on vacation!"

"The kids all stared at me," Keefe said, launching him into his current avocation. Back home, he bought a Santa suit that November and made his debut at a soup kitchen. Since then, he has linked up with Holiday Express, a Tinton Falls, N.J.,-based non-profit, non-sectarian organization that works year-round to deliver music, food, gifts, and human kindness to those in need, including the mentally and physically disabled, the isolated, individuals in recovery programs, the poor and homeless, and children with illnesses.

During the 2016 holiday season, 1,600 Holiday Express volunteers, including professional singers and musicians, participated in 90 events, and the goal is 100 for 2017. Keefe worked 13 of the shows, entering to a drum roll to greet and give gifts to his audience. Having completed its 24th season since being founded in 1993 by Tim McLoone of Little Silver, N.J., Holiday Express has a constituency of more than 24,000 throughout the tri-state area, for whom shows are given

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Christmas Day rescue


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in developmental centers, schools for those with special needs, children's and psychiatric hospitals, recovery and shelter residences, and other venues.

"The kids all want to hug me," Keefe says. "It's so much fun being Santa Claus." He credits his success to a mentor, family friend Charles "Chick" Roemmele of Highlands, N.J., who has played Santa for Keefe's own family for 30 years. Keefe and his wife have four daughters and seven grandchildren. A Vietnam Vet, Keefe retired last year after a 38-year career as a locomotive engineer for Conrail and Amtrak. Wearing his Santa cap on the job and waving to those the train was passing was not unusual for him.

Keefe was awarded the Carnegie Medal in 1976 in recognition of his heroic act two years earlier. It was late in the afternoon that Christmas Day, and Keefe, then a 23-year-old college student living in Staten Island, N.Y., was driving in light traffic on Bruckner Boulevard, Bronx, accompanied by his mother and three younger siblings. Ahead of them was a two-door car containing a couple and seven children, aged 4 to 15. The sedan suddenly swerved sharply, overturned onto its top, and slid along the pavement, flames appearing at its rear end.

Keefe stopped at the scene and approached the burning vehicle, the driver of which by then had exited and removed one of the children through the passenger door. Despite gasoline flowing from the then-elevated fuel tank and burning under the vehicle, Keefe reached through the opened door and removed another of the children. He and the driver then alternated in removing the remaining children as flames were spreading inside the vehicle, at one point Keefe's jeans catching fire. None of the children was burned, but the couple required hospitalization for treatment of second- and third-degree burns. Keefe was also hospitalized, as he had inhaled hot air and sustained burns of up to third-degree to his face, hands, and a knee. He fully recovered.

In addition to the Carnegie Medal, Keefe received other awards, some including financial grants, and, true to the latent Santa Claus in him, Keefe gave the money to the family he helped to rescue. He cherishes his Carnegie Medal, once handing it to Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, Archbishop of New York, at a church function. "He blessed my medal," Keefe said, "and if he ever becomes pope I'll find a way to get it blessed again." 



Santa in his civvies.

AWARDEES' GRAVES

(continued from page 8)

designated with the marker. Olson, of Anoka, Minn., who died at age 92 in 2015, was awarded the medal in 1961 for saving a woman from drowning in the Mississippi River in Minneapolis. Then a taxi driver, 38, Olson had seen the fully clothed woman walk slowly along the steep river bank, and he became suspicious of her actions. After she ran down the bank and plunged into the water, Olson removed his outer clothing, entered the river, and swam about 75 feet to her. He returned her to the bank even though she resisted him halfway back. Both were taken to the hospital for treatment of exposure. "He was very proud of his medal," according to daughter Paula Olson Orth, writing at the time of his June 9, 2015, passing.



HERO FUND TRIBUTE TO HARWICK MINE VICTIMS

Jan. 25 marked the 113th anniversary of the Harwick (Pa.) mine disaster, which in 1904 claimed 181 lives and remains one of the 10 deadliest coal-mine disasters in the U.S. Greatly touched by the deaths of two men who entered the stricken mine in lifesaving attempts, Andrew Carnegie issued medals to their families and within a few months, acting on a long-held notion, established a commission to recognize civilian heroism throughout the United States and Canada. Eric P. Zahren, executive director of what is now the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, laid flowers at the miners' mass grave in Springdale, Pa., on the anniversary date to pay tribute to the victims of the disaster.





LATEST AWARDEES OF THE CARNEGIE MEDAL

SINCE THE LAST ISSUE OF *imPULSE*, THE FOLLOWING 21 INDIVIDUALS HAVE EACH BEEN AWARDED THE CARNEGIE MEDAL, BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS TO 9,914 SINCE THE HERO FUND'S INCEPTION IN 1904. THE LATEST AWARDS, WHICH WERE ANNOUNCED ON DEC. 20, ARE DETAILED ON THE COMMISSION'S WEBSITE AT WWW.CARNEGIEHERO.ORG.

THE NEXT ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARDEES WILL BE MADE ON MARCH 22.

Peter F. Pontzer, 51, an administrative judge from Fairfax, Va., and construction worker **Duncan O. C. Harris**, 21, of Buffalo Grove, Ill., saved a boy from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean at Emerald Isle, N.C., on July 28, 2015. While swimming, the boy, 13, was caught by a strong current that took him farther from shore and kept him from returning in the choppy water. Then about 350 feet out, he called for help. From a house along the beach, Pontzer was alerted, and, although he was healing from a sprained ankle, he ran to the water and entered, taking a rescue tube. As he waded toward the boy, he was joined by Harris, who responded from another beach house. Together the men swam a diagonal course of about 450 feet to the boy. Pontzer had the boy hold to the tube, and Harris grasped him and helped him maintain his hold. Swimming against the current at first, Pontzer towed the tube toward shore, Harris aiding by securing the boy while swimming. On reaching wadable water, the men walked the boy to the beach. Pontzer and Harris both required hospital treatment for ill effects of the rescue.

Ryan P. Rollinger, 39, of Harrisburg, S.D., rescued Kevin A. Lein, 56, a high school principal, from an assault by a 16-year-old male student in Harrisburg on Sept. 30, 2015. Lein was in his office when the boy entered and with a fully loaded, semi-automatic handgun fired a shot at him. Struck in the arm, Lein fell to the floor. From his office nearby, Rollinger, the



Ryan P. Rollinger, right, is the assistant principal at Harrisburg (S.D.) High School and was in his office when he heard gunfire nearby. Finding that a 16-year-old student had shot principal Kevin A. Lein, left, and was keeping him at gunpoint, Rollinger approached the armed boy and tackled him. "He's just a guy you can count on," a father of one the school's students said of Rollinger. Photo by Roxanne Bicknase.

assistant principal, heard the gunfire and ran to a door to Lein's office, where he saw the assailant pointing the gun at Lein. Rollinger 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 turned his attention to him. As Rollinger approached, the assailant ran past him and continued to the school's front doors. Rollinger caught up to him, tackled him, and struggled against him for control of the gun. Another administrator helped secure the assailant as

Rollinger disarmed him, and police arrived shortly and arrested him.

William E. Ramirez, 46, a business operator from Pembroke Pines, Fla., rescued a Miami, Fla., police officer, Rosny

Obas, 28, from an assault in Miami on April 14, 2015. Obas 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 he 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 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 away but was later arrested.

Natalie Renee Martin, 11, saved Jenna J. Martin from their family's burning house in Sheboygan Falls, Wis., on Jan. 26 last year and died after attempting to save Benjamin L. Martin and Carter J. Maki. At night, siblings



Mr. Ramirez



Mr. Reynolds



Mr. Trivette

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LATEST AWARDEES

(continued from page 10)

Jenna, 9; Benjamin, 10; and Carter, 7, were in bedrooms on the second floor of the two-story house after fire broke out in the basement. Their sister, Natalie, a student, discovered the fire and woke Jenna. She led Jenna downstairs, where flames were starting to enter the kitchen. Taking Jenna to a side door, Natalie opened the door, allowing Jenna to escape, 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.

Hydrogeologist **Nathan Ryan Reynolds**, 35, of Claremont, Calif., saved Aislinn Crooks, 9, and Olivia Schreiber, 75, from drowning in a retention pond in Marina, Calif., on Jan. 20, 2015. Aislinn and Schreiber were the occupants of a sedan that entered the 6-foot-deep pond and began to sink in the cold, murky water. Driving nearby, Reynolds witnessed the accident. He ran to the pond, where he saw Aislinn in the



After witnessing the car in front of her crash into a concrete wall and catch fire, Shei'Londa S. Brooks started to pull the driver out. The vehicle exploded as she did so, inflicting extensive burns on Brooks and the driver, who survived. Photo by Karen Warren/Houston Chronicle and used with permission.

II



Administrative judge Peter F. Pontzer helped to save a boy from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean while on vacation in North Carolina. "A basic belief I learned in church and from my family" is what he said spurred him into acting in behalf of someone in need.

backseat of the car, which was about 45 feet out. Reynolds waded and then swam to the car's driver's side, where he helped Aislinn through the driver's window and positioned her onto his back. He swam her to the bank and then returned to the car. 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.

R. Wayne Trivette and **Timothy A. Holtz II** saved Grace E. Makula from a burning car after an accident in Jasper, Mich., on July 21, 2015. Badly injured and unconscious, Makula, 25, remained in the driver's seat after the vehicle left the roadway and began to smoke in its engine compartment. Trivette, 67, a retired truck driver from Metamora, Ohio, witnessed the accident and responded to the vehicle, where he aided

three children through a window. Flames were breaking out in the engine compartment as Trivette then tried to open the driver's door. Holtz, 35, a business operator from Sand Creek, Mich., responded about then from a job site nearby. Obtaining fire extinguishers, he and Trivette fought the flames, but to limited effect. As Holtz was unable to open the vehicle's doors, he returned to his truck for a large wrench, which he used to break out the windows of the front doors. With flames growing and spreading on the car, Holtz leaned through the driver's window opening and cut Makula's safety belt. He and Trivette then forced that door open, after which they grasped Makula, pulled her free, and carried her to safety, flames entering the passenger compartment. Holtz sustained minor burns to his hands and arms.

Clark Whitecalf of Gallivan, Sask., rescued Jolei D. A. Farness from her family's burning house in Gallivan on Aug. 31, 2015. At night, Farness, 18, was asleep in the living room after fire broke out in the adjacent kitchen. In

(continued on page 12)

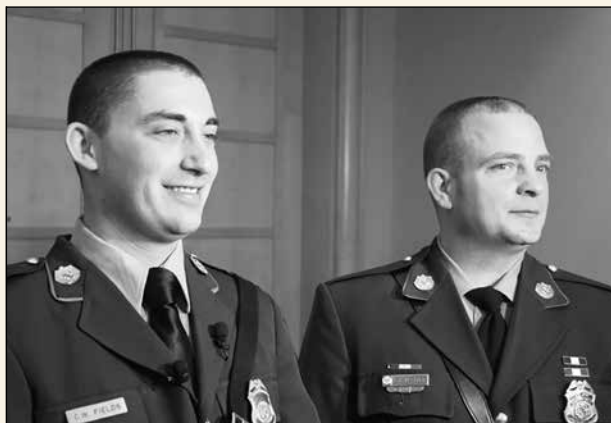


LATEST AWARDEES

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a passing vehicle, Whitecalf, 41, unemployed construction worker, saw flames that had broken through the kitchen window, and he stopped at the scene. Whitecalf kicked in the front door to the house but could not see inside because of dark smoke. He tried another door, but flames blocked his course. Returning to the front of the house, Whitecalf crawled into the living room and found Farness unresponsive on a couch along the opposite wall. After struggling to move her, Whitecalf exited for air. He then re-entered, grabbed Farness under the arms, and dragged her to and through the front door to safety. Flames grew to engulf and destroy the house. Whitecalf inhaled smoke but recovered.

Montgomery County (Md.) Police Officers **Cody Fields**, 24, of Silver Spring, Md., and **Brian Nesbitt**, 35, of Germantown, Md., rescued Rashad X. Isreal, 33, from his burning car in Silver Spring on Sept. 1, 2015. Isreal was unconscious in the driver's seat after an interstate highway accident in which his car came to rest with its driver's side flush against the concrete medial barrier. On duty, Fields responded to the scene, finding flames covering the front end of the car and, burning intensely, moving toward its passenger side. As both passenger-side doors were locked, Fields broke out the window of the rear door, leaned inside, and unlocked both doors. Also on duty, Nesbitt arrived and 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. The officers grasped Isreal and with difficulty pulled him to the front door. Nesbitt exited the vehicle and, next to Fields, who was standing among flames, assisted Fields in pulling Isreal out and dragging him to safety. Fields needed treatment for heat exposure and smoke inhalation.



Dramatic dash-cam video captured the rescue of a man from his burning car on Interstate 495 in Silver Spring, Md., by Montgomery County (Md.) Police Officers Cody Fields, left, and Brian Nesbitt. The officers were given their department's medal of valor, its highest award, for going above and beyond the call of duty.

Office manager **Shei'Londa S. Brooks**, 25, of Houston, Texas, helped to rescue Austin I. Stoney, 39, from his burning car after an accident in Houston on Feb. 29, 2016. In a nighttime accident, Stoney's compact sport utility vehicle 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 of the vehicle. Brooks, another motorist, witnessed the accident and, stopping at the scene, ran to the vehicle and opened its driver's door. She put one foot on the

floor at the driver's seat, leaned inside to grasp Stoney, 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 fully removed Stoney before the vehicle burned completely. Brooks required hospital treatment for burns of up to second degree to her face, arms, chest, and legs.

Lori Doppelheuer Kearney of Maysville, Ky., died attempting to save Christopher I. Kearney and Kieran C. and Eagan S. Hargis from the family's burning house on Oct. 20, 2015. At night, Christopher, 10, and his brothers, Kieran, 20 months, and Eagan, 3, were in bedrooms on the second floor of the 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



Mr. Whitecalf



Ms. Kearney



Mr. Romero



Mr. Grimmert

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LATEST AWARDEES

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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.

Ivan R. Romero, Jr., 39, a plumber from Antelope, Calif., saved Leanne M. Cameron, 30, from her burning car after an interstate highway accident in West Sacramento, Calif., on July 21, 2015. Semiconscious, Cameron remained in the driver's seat after her car was struck from behind by a tractor-trailer. Virtually demolished, the car was lodged under the front of the truck and caught fire, as did the tractor. Romero witnessed the accident and, despite fire on the roadway surrounding Cameron's vehicle, advanced to its driver's side, spraying a fire extinguisher to make a path through the flames. He then aimed the fire extinguisher through a window as he reached inside, grasped Cameron, and pulled on her, but she did not move. Cameron then released her safety belt, and, with flames spreading to the back of the front seats, Romero extended his upper body through the driver's window and bear-hugged her. Backing from the vehicle, he pulled her from the car to safety.

Dennis D. Swenson died attempting to save his mother, Dorothy H. Swenson, from their burning house in Cornucopia, Wis., on May 1, 2015. At night, Dorothy, 95, was inside the one-story house after a fire broke out in the basement and spread. Dennis, 62, a campground operator, 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.

Utility worker **Calvin Bradley Stein**, 51, of Madoc, Ont., saved Rylee Vilneff from being struck by runaway ponies during an agricultural fair in Tweed, Ont., on July 9 last year. 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,



Lucky for Richard G. Rauzi, center, that when he broke through the ice on a lake while snowshoeing, friends Damian Bell, left, and Jesse Bannon, right, were ice fishing within shouting distance along with their sons Konnor, left, and Ethan. The boys heard Rauzi calling for help, and their fathers set about to rescue him by locating a canoe and a length of rope. Bell pushed the canoe over the ice to reach Rauzi and then made multiple attempts to pull him from the open water. He remained with Rauzi until first responders joined in the effort, which was then successful.

ran away at full speed. Seeing that, Stein, 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 suffered only minor injuries.

Kiera Vera Larsen, 10, a student from El Cajon, Calif., died saving Emmah Gusich from being struck by a runaway vehicle in El Cajon on Feb. 22 last year. Emmah, 2, was playing on a sloped residential driveway behind a parked sport utility vehicle when the vehicle began rolling backward toward her. Kiera 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.

Damian Bell of Pleasant Hill, Iowa, helped to save Richard G. Rauzi from drowning in Lake Ahquabi, Indianola, Iowa, on Feb. 14, 2016. Rauzi, 57, was snowshoeing on ice atop the lake near an area of open water when he broke through, entering the frigid water at a point about 150 feet from the bank. He yelled for help, attracting the attention of Bell, 35, a technology manager who was ice fishing across the lake. Bell left the ice and drove to a point to access the closer bank. Taking a canoe that was stored there and a rope, he went onto the ice, skirting the open water to reach Rauzi. He then entered the canoe and reached for Rauzi, but the front of the canoe broke through the ice. Unable to lift Rauzi aboard, Bell secured him to the canoe

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LATEST AWARDEES

(continued from page 13)

with the rope and then stepped onto solid ice and attempted to pull him from the water. Again his efforts were not successful, and Bell was tiring and cold in the 20-degree air. Firefighters responding about then launched a rescue boat and, with help from Bell, took Rauzi aboard. Others on the bank used a rope to pull the boat to safety. Rauzi recovered from hypothermia, and Bell was nearly exhausted.

Joseph Kolanchick, 34, a mason from Albany, N.Y., saved David G. Hitchcock from drowning in Collins Lake, Scotia, N.Y., on Feb. 18, 2016. While skating, Hitchcock, 51, broke through ice covering much of the lake at a point about 30 feet from a bank that was difficult to access. He shouted for help. Ice fishing about 900 feet away, Kolanchick ran toward Hitchcock and then tied a rope around a stick and threw the stick to him. When Kolanchick pulled on the rope, it slipped off the stick. Kolanchick then maneuvered closer and tossed one end of the rope to Hitchcock. The ice bent under his weight, and the 38-degree water flowed onto it and soaked his clothes. Kolanchick tried to pull Hitchcock out with the rope, but he slid on the ice. He then tied the rope around Hitchcock's wrist, drilled a hole in the ice with



Joseph Kolanchick was ice fishing on a pond when he saw that a man who was skating had broken through the ice about 900 feet away. Taking his gear with him, Kolanchick pulled the man back to solid ice and then towed him to the bank. "It was all I could do to get him out of the water," Kolanchick told a reporter. Photo, by Peter R. Barber, is courtesy of The Daily Gazette, Schenectady, N.Y.



Dennis D. Swenson, a 27-year emergency medical technician for Bayfield County, Wis., died in a fire in his home while attempting to save his mother, Dorothy H. Swenson. His death was "an incredible loss to our community," said an emergency medical services director.

his auger, and, sitting, stuck a heel in the hole for leverage as he pulled Hitchcock from the water. Kolanchick then towed Hitchcock on his sled over a 1,500-foot course on stable ice to an accessible point of the bank.

Joshua Gary Grimmert of Boise, Idaho, saved a woman from drowning in Mores Creek at Boise on May 25 last year. Severely injured, a 23-year-old woman was floating on her back in the approximate center of the creek, or at a point about 275 feet from either bank. His attention having been attracted to her earlier, Grimmert, 33, a 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 waded and then swam to the woman. Grasping her by the back of her shirt, Grimmert towed her toward the bank. Halfway there, he stopped and, floating on his back, attempted to catch his breath. Unable to do so, Grimmert resumed towing the woman the remaining distance to the bank, where he was met by others who were responding. Grimmert was tired and cold, but he recovered.

Truck driver **Robert M. Shaw, Jr.**, 54, of Wallingford, Conn., saved Robert R. Angiletta, Jr., from burning, Meriden, Conn., July 13, 2015. Angiletta, 35, was driving a tank truck on an interstate highway when the vehicle 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 released its contents to the underside of the overpass and to the roadway and median. The remains of the vehicle came to rest beneath the overpass, with Angiletta, wet from the fuel, hanging by his safety belt from the cab. The spilled fuel caught fire. Shaw had been driving behind the truck and witnessed the accident. Stopping, he heard Angiletta moaning. Shaw went underneath the overpass, which was dripping spilled fuel, approached the wreckage, and saw Angiletta. Standing in fuel with flames nearby, Shaw grasped Angiletta and pulled on him but then realized that he was caught by his safety belt. Shaw reached into the cab and removed the belt and then grasped Angiletta by the arms and pulled him away from the cab and burning fuel.



'CBS Sunday Morning' segment widely viewed, reaction favorable

The *CBS Sunday Morning* cover story on the Hero Fund, which aired on Dec. 11, was seen by an estimated 6.24 million viewers. "The national television profile went a long way to raise the visibility of the Hero Fund and its work," said Eric Zahren, the Commission's executive director, "most importantly by taking stories of heroes past and present to a wide audience." Julia Panian, social media coordinator, analyzed the Hero Fund's website, Facebook, and Twitter accounts in the days after the show aired and found that their usage metrics "skyrocketed."

Filming for the piece was done in August and September, both at the Hero Fund's offices in Pittsburgh (photo above) and at sites in Illinois, where Scott Simon of National Public Radio interviewed two Carnegie Medal awardees (photo, page 3). In Pittsburgh, board chair Mark Laskow and Commission member Linda T. Hills answered Simon's questions.

Simon: While lots of people think they know what a hero is, Mark Laskow...has a particular definition:

Laskow: It's a person who's under no obligation to act, leaves a place of safety, puts himself or herself in serious risk of death or major injury to save the life of another human being. These people are almost always rescuing strangers. They're not bound to them by family or tribe or any personal interest.

Hills: A tragedy or something terrible can be taking place and a whole bunch of people are just standing there and going, 'Oh my God, what do we do?' Or they don't do anything, or they run the other way. And then this individual somehow finds that deeper, inner strength that they're compelled to help this person in need.

Reaction to the show was favorable. Many viewers—who either tuned in or viewed it on the internet—described a sense of inspiration from hearing about the heroes and showed appreciation for the Commission's work. Some volunteered their time to help the Hero Fund, and others offered to make a financial contribution. A sampling of the reaction:

Dennis Salata of Wayne, N.J., teaches a lifelong-learning class at a library and requested additional information on the Hero Fund for a presentation. "Also," he wrote, "I learned that my next-door neighbor and good friend, **Anthony G. Falzo**, is a recipient of the award." Falzo received the medal in 1989 for saving two small boys from being struck by a train.

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OVERHEARD

Wow, is that us?—Reaction of **Cody Fields**, Carnegie Medal awardee #9903, on seeing a video of himself and a co-rescuer pulling man from a burning car.

We prayed together, to let God know that "today isn't the day."—**Damian Bell**, Carnegie Medal awardee #9911, on his efforts at pulling man from open water after he broke through ice on a lake.

The textbook definition of a hero is someone who voluntarily puts themselves in harm's way for the betterment of others. That happens on occasion and it is a ridiculously overused word because it's short-hand for accomplishment.—Actor **Tom Hanks** on playing pilot Chesley Sullenberger in the film, *Sully*.

If it were up to me, his would be the fifth head up there on Mt. Rushmore and his birthday, Nov. 25, would be a national holiday.—**Burt Prelutski** writing on Andrew Carnegie in *The Patriot Post*, Nov. 21, 2016.

The dimmed illumination affects the bronze wondrously, beautifully. I do not know that I find greater personal richness in any other thing I have ever possessed.—Carnegie Medal awardee #6011 **William R. Whitacre**, commenting on his newly refinished medal.

Do it one more time, Victor. Do it one more time.—Carnegie Medal nominee #88536 **Victor M. Ortiz**, encouraging himself as he worked to pull a large man from the path of an oncoming subway train.

I think you can describe events that day as a case of "instinct over intellect."—**Matthew J. Kalafat**, Carnegie Medal nominee #88629, who saved a woman from drowning.

REACHING GOALS

(continued from page 7)

Carnegie Hero Fund Commission. Because you have been so generous and willing to help me serve in my father's and grandfather's memory, I have already been able to impact people in some way within education.

I cannot thank Commission enough for the opportunities that it has provided me and all that they have allowed me to do. I will likely never be able to pay back what I have been given by the Commission, but I can promise that I never take this for granted and that I will continue to try and make that impact grow with everything I do. I intend to be a school leader for many, many years, and to pursue my doctorate, so that I can become a district leader (hopefully a superintendent) in the future.

—John Thanos, Broomfield, Colo.



2015-16 ANNUAL REPORTS CITE 'PERSISTENT HEROIC SPIRIT'

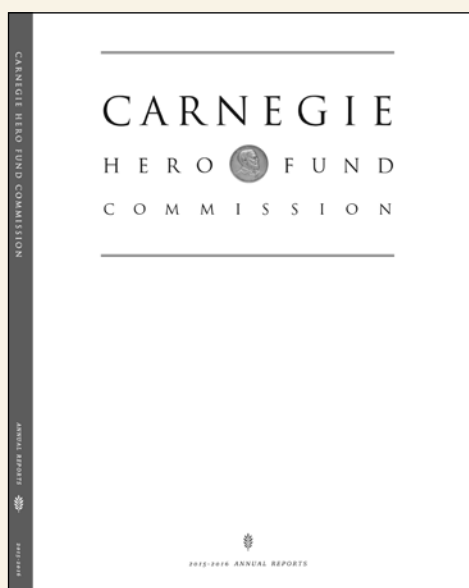
Reports summarizing the activities of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission in 2015 and 2016 have been combined into a 132-page booklet that is soon to be fresh off the presses. Featured in the book are the case resumes of the 177 individuals throughout the U.S. and Canada who were given the medal, 84 in 2015 and 93 in 2016. Of them, 23 died in the performance of their heroic acts.

In his introductory comments, Commission Chair Mark Laskow writes, "If you pass through these pages and read the acts of heroism described in them, you will surely realize that the real memorial is in the lives of those rescued." Laskow notes that "the persistence of the heroic spirit among human beings" has never "flickered or faltered in the century-plus that we have been observing and recording the acts of these heroes."

The book also lists \$2.02 million in charitable giving during the two years, including grants made for continuing education for pre-retirement awardees and the dependents of posthumous and disabled awardees, and ongoing assistance for disabled awardees and the dependents of posthumous ones. Philanthropic giving by the Hero Fund over its 112-year life totals \$38.6 million.

The reports are being mailed to all of the years' awardees and distributed to libraries and newspapers throughout the U.S. and Canada. In his 1904 Deed of Trust establishing the Hero Fund, Andrew Carnegie specified that "an annual report, including a detailed statement of sums and medals granted and reasons therefor, shall be made each year and published in at least one newspaper in the principal cities of the countries embraced by the Fund."

Copies of the book are available by calling the Hero Fund (800-447-8900) or emailing Gloria Barber: gloria@carnegiehero.org.



'CBS Sunday Morning' segment

(continued from page 15)

Bonnie Walsh of Temecula, Calif., grew up in western Pennsylvania and knew of Andrew Carnegie. "I think it is a bright spot in our world that everyday persons get a medal for heroism, for doing something for someone without motive or promise of reward," she wrote.

From Roberta Noss of Munising, Mich.: "I was very moved by this! I was wondering if anyone has compiled the stories into a book form or other media. I would love to learn more about the everyday heroes!" Gail Hurley of Port Matilda, Pa., said she and her husband "were moved by the incredible generosity of Andrew Carnegie and the individuals who have been named as recipients... We would love to be part of this incredibly inspiring endeavor." From Dennis Allen of Des Moines, Iowa: "I believe in your purpose and beliefs."

"This is a very nice award. My son and I have the honor of sharing this award for our action. It made a difficult time more easy to bear." —**Kirk P. Yankasky**, Carnegie Medal awardee #9844, of Glendale, Ariz. "We need to make Americans aware of these everyday heroes. It is so uplifting. Thank you!" — Brenda Schrimmer.

The *CBS Sunday Morning* Facebook page had these comments:

"Brings tears to my eyes to see such stand up people, doing what's right, selflessly ... excellent story" — Wesley Secrest.

"The word 'hero' gets tossed around so loosely these days. These medalists are TRUE heroes! Great segment!" — Linda Andrews.

From Twitter:

"Thanks for your work and recognizing those that do things with the most concern from others and saving lives!" — @Boston2Indy

"Loved this segment on everyday heroes. Kinda makes you wonder about your own bravery." — @SundayMornExperience

"Fascinating story and reminder that there are regular people who do extraordinary things." — @mcanna

RESCUE STATION HONORS CARNEGIE MEDAL AWARDEE



One of the sites of a newly designed beach rescue station in Cocoa Beach, Fla., is being dedicated to the memory of **Fred Hunt, Jr.** (bottom photo), who died Oct. 22, 2007, while helping to save a woman from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean. Hunt, 51, was from Berwick, Maine, and for his actions he was posthumously awarded the Carnegie Medal in 2008. In January, the City of Cocoa Beach unveiled its first of 35 LIFE™ Rescue Stations in a project that was conceived in 2015 in part by Wyatt Werneth, former Brevard County (Fla.) Ocean Rescue Chief (top photo). The goal: Making Cocoa Beach the safest beach possible. Werneth quote: "Always swim near a lifeguard or a LIFE™ Rescue Station."

PRESENTING


FOUGHT OFF SHARK

Keoni Bowthorpe, center, of Waialua, Hawaii, was awarded the Carnegie Medal by Hawaii's governor, David Ige, right, at a ceremony in the state capitol in Honolulu in November. With him were his wife, Ashley, and their children, from left, Reef, Sky, and Violet. Bowthorpe, a filmmaker, was paddle boarding in the Pacific Ocean off Haleiwa, Hawaii, on Oct. 9, 2015, when he witnessed a surfer being attacked 500 feet away by a tiger shark about 11 feet long. Bowthorpe went to the man, whose leg had been severed, pushed the shark away with his paddle, and then laboriously returned him to shore. After the rescue, Bowthorpe said, "I dropped to my knees, embraced my wife and three little babies, and never felt more gratitude."


BRAVED GUNFIRE

Scott R. Williams, center, of Berlin, Vt., received his Carnegie Medal at a ceremony in the Vermont Statehouse, Montpelier, in late November. A state's attorney for Washington County, Vt., Williams was recognized for his heroic actions of Aug. 7, 2015, by which he attempted to rescue a social worker from assault by an enraged woman armed with a hunting rifle in Barre, Vt. After hearing gunfire, Williams approached the assailant, disarmed her, and put himself between her and the victim, whose wounds were fatal. From left: Barre Police Chief Tim Bombardier, Congressman Peter Welch, Williams, Governor-elect Phil Scott (now governor), and Barre Mayor Thom Lauzon.


RESCUED WOMAN

Isbel Jimenez, left, climbed through the small window of a mobile home bathroom at night to help in the rescue of a woman who had been overcome by smoke. For his efforts during the Breckenridge, Texas, fire on Sept. 16, 2015, Jimenez received the Carnegie Medal, which was presented to him by Breckenridge Fire Chief Calvin Chaney in January.



PRESENTING



SAVED SMALL CHILD

Sioux City (Iowa) Mayor Robert E. Scott, left, presented the Carnegie Medal to city resident **Todd D. Clausen** at a city council meeting in late January. Clausen was cited for helping to rescue a 2-month-old child from the backseat of a burning sport utility vehicle after the vehicle caught fire while traveling on an interstate highway in Summit, S.D., on June 9, 2015. A co-rescuer, **Jameson Bartscher**, was also given the medal, for his actions in behalf of the child and others in the vehicle.



FRIGID POND RESCUE

Matthew R. Bartholomew, a physician from Midlothian, Va., was given his Carnegie Medal by another Carnegie hero, **Glenn S. Bingham** of Williamsburg, Va., at a meeting of the Chesterfield County (Va.) Board of Supervisors in December. Bartholomew acted on Feb. 16, 2015, after seeing that a car had entered a frigid retention pond in Midlothian, its driver still inside. Despite an air temperature of 18 degrees and the water at freezing, Bartholomew entered the pond, swam to the vehicle, and broke out its rear window. When the driver, 65, emerged, he pulled her from the car and took her to the bank. Bingham was given his medal in 2002 for helping to save a boy from drowning in Jamestown, Va.



GOOD NEIGHBORS

Hayward, Wis., neighbors **Adam Joe Martin**, left, and **Bradley C. Runions**, right, teamed up to save a neighbor from his burning house on July 6, 2015, and for their efforts they were each awarded the Carnegie Medal. The medals were presented in late January by Marvin Mullet, center, chief of the Bass Lake (Wis.) Fire Department, at a meeting of the Sawyer County (Wis.) Board of Supervisors. Photo by Frank Zufall is provided as a courtesy by the *Sawyer County Record*.



ABOVE AND BEYOND

Pima County (Ariz.) Sheriff's Deputies **Joe L. Serrano**, left, and **Adrian Gallo**, center, were recognized by the Hero Fund for their efforts in behalf of a motorist who was trapped in her burning pickup truck after a head-on collision in Tucson on May 16, 2015. In what the department said was "above and beyond our expectations," the deputies forced open the truck's driver's door with a winch and then reached inside, freed the woman, and pulled her out, flames then burning at the dashboard. The men's medals were presented in January by the Hero Fund's executive director, Eric Zahren, right.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Ocean rescues by Laguna Beach businessman predated city's lifeguards

By Kai Weisser
Huntington Beach, Calif.

The first paid lifeguards of Laguna Beach, Calif., were hired in the summer of 1929, two years after the sleepy and somewhat isolated little town was incorporated as a city. Before then, Pacific Ocean rescues were made largely by Laguna Hotel and Bath House employees or skilled fishermen, and any records of them are extremely scarce...except for one by **Andrew J. Ryan**, who on Sept. 3, 1926, saved a woman from drowning in rough surf conditions off Arch Beach at Woods Cove, about a mile south of the main beach. Ryan received the Carnegie Medal for his actions.

Born in Ireland, Ryan—"Pat"—was 44 that year and owned and operated a grocery store with his wife along the recently completed Pacific Coast Highway. He also sold real estate to supplement a \$48 monthly veteran's disability pension. Ryan was in his store on the afternoon of the rescue when summoned by several women from the beach 250 feet away. He had often swum in rough water at the scene and was thoroughly familiar with conditions there. The Hero Fund's investigator reported that Ryan had made several rescues at the cove during the past six years.

From the Hero Fund's archives: Mrs. Willamette H. Phinney, a 37-year-old housewife, had gone to the cove and went in bathing. She held to a life-rope that extended from the beach into the water as she jumped the breakers. Seeing a large breaker approaching, she let go of the rope to dive through it but was then tossed and rolled about by a succession of breakers and carried into rougher and deeper water along the rocks in the cove. She became frightened and called for help and, exhausted by her efforts to swim in the rough water, was carried farther out. People on shore had tried to throw a life buoy to her, but the waves carried it back toward shore.

Ryan "had served in the World War and had been shot down in an aeroplane," according to the Hero Fund's report, leaving him with intestinal ailments. Too, he was somewhat crippled with arthritis, walking with considerable difficulty and not having the full use of

his left leg in swimming. However, he was known to be a good swimmer, as remembered by a young Laguna local: "Pat would come to visit Woods Cove often by himself, sit on a towel, bake himself to a nice oatmeal-cookie brown, and then periodically swim out to the farthest of the rocks in the cove. His swim out and back seemed a long way at the time. Accordingly,



Carnegie Medal awardee Andrew J. Ryan at his ocean-side business establishment in Laguna Beach, Calif.

the rock became known as 'Pat's Rock,' and I suppose it still is. I just wish I had known Pat was in the real estate business and I had \$25 to buy a beachfront lot from him."

Alerted to Mrs. Phinney's plight, Ryan walked as quickly as he could to the water's edge, where two women helped him remove his clothing to his underwear. As Ryan was about to enter the water, someone threw the buoy over his arm, but he cast it off, thinking it would interfere with his swimming in the rough water. Hearing Mrs. Phinney call for help, he plunged in after a large breaker passed and swam 150 feet directly out and then 100 feet over to her. He spoke reassuringly to her and told her to assume a floating position. Ryan then held the back of her bathing suit with his left hand and with his right arm and leg swam toward shore. Close to the beach they were met by a swimmer or two with the buoy and then made it to shore. Mrs. Phinney was "rather weak" after her ordeal, and Ryan, who had been in the water for 10 to 15 minutes, was very tired. He spent the remainder of the afternoon in bed.

Answering the Hero Fund investigator's questions as to risk, Ryan stated that the swells "had looked mountainous to him" and that he recognized the possibility of being thrown against the rocks and killed, but he was of the opinion that a previous rescue he had performed there had been attended with more danger. Ryan stated that at one time a boy had been thrown on the rocks by a wave and was fatally injured.

Ryan was awarded the Carnegie Medal in 1929, along with a grant of \$1,000. According to his family, he gave the medal to his sister, Nora O'Regan, but the current location of the medal is unknown. In 1994, a man from National City, Calif., contacted the Hero Fund's offices to inform that he had acquired it at an estate sale. Ryan died on Nov. 24, 1955, in Ireland.



Kai Weisser, a retired Huntington Beach marine safety officer, is writing a book on the history of Laguna Beach lifeguards. A former lifeguard, junior lifeguard instructor, and rescue boat operator, he is the author of Huntington Beach Lifeguards, released in 2008 by Arcadia Publishing.



Author Kai Weisser noticed that this photo of Arch Beach and Woods Cove may be from nearly the exact time period as the Ryan rescue. "The tall pole in the sand with rope line going out to the water is visible, as is a small rescue buoy under a covering, as described in the Hero Fund's report," he notes. Also visible is a small boat as was required by law at all public beaches.

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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 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 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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*Peace wins her way not by force;
her appeal is to the reason and the
conscience of man.*

— University of St. Andrews address, Oct. 17, 1905

CONTINUUM

GRAVE MARKERS Bronze grave markers (below), cast in the likeness of the Carnegie Medal, are available at no cost to the families of deceased awardees. They are designed for mounting on stone or bronze memorials. Contact Susan Rizza (susan@carnegiehero.org) or write her at the address given below.

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. The contact is Jo Braun (jo@carnegiehero.org).

OBITUARIES Written accounts of the awardee's life, such as contained in an obituary, are sought for addition to the awardee's page on the Commission's website. Contact Chris Foreman (chris@carnegiehero.org).

ANNUAL REPORTS Copies of the Hero Fund's most recent annual reports (2015–2016) are available by contacting Gloria Barber (gloria@carnegiehero.org).

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