



Impulse

A periodic newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

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PITTSBURGH'S THOMAS WENTLING ELECTED HERO FUND CHAIR

At its annual meeting on June 18, the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission elected Thomas L. Wentling, Jr., to serve as the Commission's chair, effective immediately. Wentling replaces Eric Zahren as chair; Zahren will remain President of the Hero Fund.

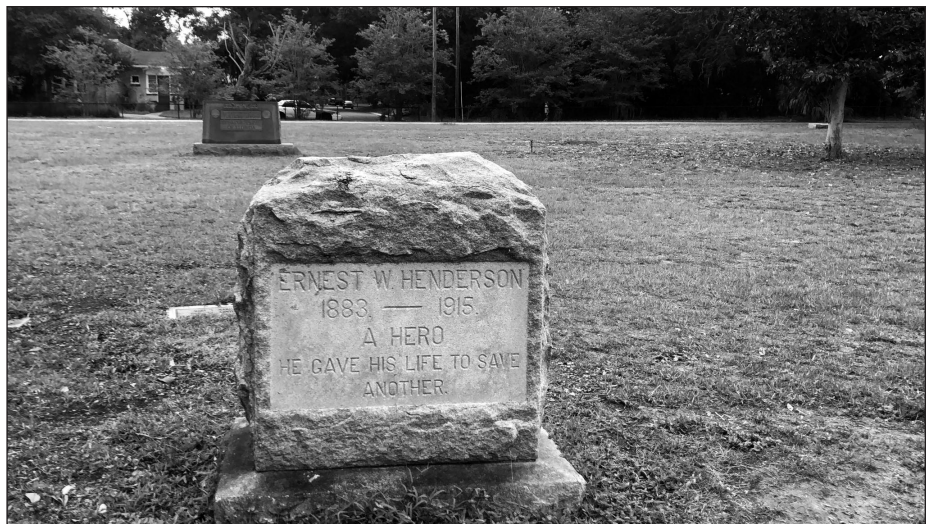


Tom Wentling

Wentling has served on the Hero Fund Commission since he was elected a member in 1991, most recently serving as Vice Chair and sitting on the Hero Fund's executive, finance, and governance committees. In the past he has served as the Chair of the Hero Fund's audit and finance committees, as well as the European Hero Funds sub-committee. Early in his tenure at the Hero Fund, Mr. Wentling chaired the Fund's investment committee, revamping the Hero Fund's investment approach, which produced needed financial stability for the Commission.

"I have enjoyed my time at the Commission for the past 33 years, and look forward to serving the Hero Fund in this new role," Wentling said.

Wentling is a senior vice president with the WTL Group at Morgan Stanley. He and his wife, Caroline, live in the Point Breeze neighborhood of Pittsburgh. Their daughter, Callie, lives in Portugal and their son, Tommy, in Amsterdam. ☼



This two-sided grave marker for Ernest W. Henderson and his wife, Claire A. Henderson, at Royal Palm South Cemetery in St. Petersburg, Florida, attracted Florida resident Tyler Travers to search for more details about the Carnegie hero's life and death.

Headstone sparks curiosity to discover more about 1915 posthumous hero

A Carnegie hero's headstone recently caught the eye of a Florida resident, who set out to learn more about **Ernest W. Henderson**, his 1915 drowning, and his family.

At Royal Palm South Cemetery in St. Petersburg, Florida, one side of a grave marker bears the name of Henderson, who died on January 30, 1915, and the opposite has that of his wife, Claire, who died just shy of nine months later. Henderson's heroism previously was described in an *Impulse* [article](#) (Issue 62, Summer 2020) that highlighted another rescuer, Lucy G. Branham, a teacher who later forged a reputation as a suffragist.

Tyler Travers, of Pinellas County, found the previous *Impulse* story after seeing the headstone, which identified the 31-year-old Henderson as a hero who "gave his life to save another." The brief epitaph in what Travers labeled as a "forgotten cemetery in an urban area" sparked Travers to "seek to learn anything I can get my hands on to better understand."

In wanting to discover more about Henderson, Travers's curiosity helps us reveal some additional details about the community campaign to assist the brave painter's widow. ▶ [p. 4](#)

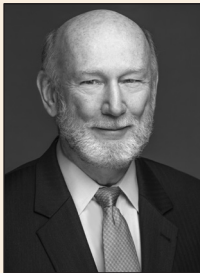


BOARD NOTES

HERO STOCK FOUND CLOSE TO HOME

By Mark Laskow, Chair Emeritus Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

I didn't really need to drive to the Butler Farm Show ground to have a personal look. The pictures have been all over the news. A speaker's platform draped in red, white, and blue bunting. Rows of folding chairs, disturbed only a little.



Mark Laskow

Even without the TV images, I could have painted the scene in my dreams. As a 17-year old I did campaign advance work for a very nice man who ran for governor in 1966. Prior to an event my adult partner and I would visit the site of an upcoming county fair, party picnic, or other gathering. We would check that the necessary arrangements were in place. Where to park or land a helicopter, how to get to the podium, the locations of bathrooms for the benefit of the candidate. Security wasn't much of a concern. The race was not as fraught as a presidential campaign and, well, it was different times. I would ask our hosts if we could expect our guy to be buttonholed by a local crank or a disappointed job-seeker. If so, our plan was for a social interaction and distraction to defuse the situation. No counter-sniper teams.

It was a wonderful summer and fall in 1966 from the Hookstown Fair to the Washington County Fair to the McClure Bean Soup Festival and points in between. I think I made it to Butler that summer, but through the mist of 56 years I can't remember if it was the Butler Farm Show or the Big Butler Fair. It doesn't matter because I didn't go back to Butler to recover lost memories. I went back to Butler, to that now-empty field, to see where heroes come from. This is a quest for me.

The Hero Fund has awarded 10,440 Carnegie Medals for heroism over its 120 years. In the most recent 18 Carnegie Medals awarded, six of them – 33% – went to individuals who died in the rescue. Year after year, decade after decade, these heroes step up when we need them. But from where?

Throughout my 30 years on the Commission, I have read thousands of case reports and ▶

Look Back: West Pittston fireman honored with 1909 Carnegie Hero Award

By Ed Lewis/Times Leader

Editor's note: This story first appeared in the June 2 edition of the (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania,) Times Leader. It is reprinted with permission.

A large stable barn that once stood at Luzerne Avenue and Linden Street in West Pittston burned to the ground March 24, 1907, killing three horses and 12 mules.

Only two mules and a horse managed to be saved.

The fire was discovered by two neighbors, Charles Tench and William Welch, who both were awakened by the glow of flames at 3:15 a.m.

Tench and Welch simultaneously ran to the nearest fire box at Wyoming and Luzerne avenues alerting firemen in West Pittston.

One of those firemen, John C. Scureman, would save the life of 11-year-old Karl A. Kellar.

"After pulling fire box 71, Tench and Welch then proceeded to rouse the members of the John Langford family, who were asleep in their farm house and were not aware of the fire in their stables," the Wilkes-Barre Record reported March 25, 1907.

Members of the Langford family ran and began a brave attempt to save livestock.

"West Pittston Hose Co. quickly responded and did good work, although the flames had gained much headway before they arrived," the Record reported.

Firemen from the Eagle Hose Co. in Pittston also responded but their services were not needed as the flames were about subdued.

The fire was suspected to have originated by a trespasser who took refuge inside the stables for the night.

Flames damaged electric and telephone cables of the Citizens' Electric Illuminating Co. that fell, striking Joseph Langford in the neck and the young lad Kellar.

West Pittston fireman Scureman heard the screams of Kellar as he was being electrocuted as he stood in a pool of water that formed from runoff.

Scureman grabbed Kellar's ankle to remove him from the live electric cable and injuring himself with an electrical shock.

"John Scureman, a fireman, assisted the boy and he also received a severe shock and was confined to his bed yesterday, suffering from the effects," the Record reported.

Kellar became unconscious and his body went limp but was revived by a doctor at the scene.

"Kellar's condition was encouraging and, save for a burn on his hand where he took hold of the wire, he will be well in a few days," reported the Record.

More than two years after saving the young lad's life, Scureman was awarded the Carnegie Hero Award, a bronze medal for his heroism in May 1909, although he would not receive the medal until July 1909.

"John C. Scureman, of 215 Exeter Ave., West Pittston, received a fine bronze medal awarded for rescuing a West Pittston young man who came in contact with a live electrical wire at a fire and who was in danger of losing his life," the Record reported July 27, 1909.

In addition to the medal, Scureman also received \$2,150.

After receiving the award, the medal was on display in the window of the Grand Union Tea Co. store, where Scureman was employed as a salesman.

Scureman died from pneumonia in his home on Feb. 17, 1918. ☼

FRIENDS REMEMBERED

GARRY BREM



Garry Brem

Carnegie Hero **Garry Brem**, 91, died on Monday, May 6, 2024.

Brem was born to George and Sarah (Heilmann) Brem on July 13, 1932, in Gilroy, California.

A U.S. Army veteran, Brem operated Brem's Trucking and Brem's Gravel and Sand in Gilroy from the mid-1960s until retirement. His hobbies were aviation, snow skiing, and hunting with his father. After retirement, Brem and his wife, Carol, would travel the air show circuit due to their passion for military aviation.

Brem was awarded the Carnegie Medal after he saved two 9-year-old boys from drowning in Gilroy on Jan. 25, 1969. While the two boys waded into a creek which had overflowed a nearby roadway, the current swept them into deeper water. Although the boys were initially able to hold onto a bush that extended above the water, one of the boys was carried downstream. Brem ran along the bank in pursuit of him. Overtaking him, he removed his shoes and entered the cold, muddy water. Wading and swimming from the bank, Brem intercepted the boy in 12 feet of water; he towed him to the bank. Just as he ran up the bank to the other boy, the bush pulled out and the boy was carried downstream. Brem again ran along the bank and removed his jacket after it impeded his ability to swim. He again waded and swam to the boy who submerged intermittently. Brem reached the boy and began to tow him, but his legs became cramped. Another man met them when they reached wadable water and took the boy to the bank. Brem was nearly exhausted after he waded from the water.

Brem is survived by his wife, Carol, along with a niece and two nephews. He is preceded in death by his only sibling George "Steve" Brem.

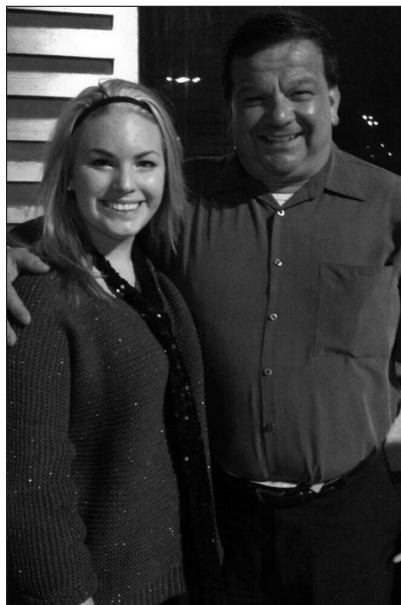
JESSE C. GARCIA IV

Carnegie Hero **Jesse C. Garcia IV**, 62, died Wednesday, May 8, 2024, at his home in La Vernia, Texas.

Garcia was born to Jesse III and Lucia Flores Garcia on Nov. 17, 1961, in Elmendorf, Texas.

Garcia was a graduate of St. Mary's University and Wayland Baptist University. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps and the reserves. He became a sheriff deputy in Bexar County and served as a police officer in San Antonio for 32 years. He retired as a sergeant.

Garcia was awarded the Carnegie Medal after he saved a woman from burning in Adkins, Texas, on Nov. 3, 2012. The woman was trapped in the driver's seat of her car after an accident and flames broke out at the front of the vehicle and entered the passenger compartment. The woman screamed for help. Garcia, 50, was an off-duty police officer on his way home when he came upon the scene. He approached the driver's side of the burning vehicle, leaned inside, and attempted to release the woman's seat belt but it was jammed. Holding the belt to flames issuing from the console area, Garcia pulled at the belt until it broke as it caught fire. The spreading flames ignited his uniform ▶ p. 15



Carnegie Hero Jesse C. Garcia IV and the woman he saved from a burning vehicle, Morgan C. Bryant. Bryant left words of remembrance on Garcia's online obituary. "Forever our hero," she wrote.

▶ from p.2

BOARD NOTES

developed two theories. One, the willingness to undertake a rescue that might kill you is an innate character trait that many, but maybe not all of us, have. For most of us it shows up as a wonderful, but less dramatic tendency to go out of our way to help others. Then, one day, one in a million of us faces the challenge of a lifetime and responds heroically.

My other theory is that this tendency is not innate, but something we build as a good habit. In daily life we make minor sacrifices to help those around us and in the process, we strengthen the habit and become better at it.

For all of my thinking about this, I still don't know if the potential for heroism is innate or learned. My best guess is that it is some mixture of both. Either way, we should all be grateful for whatever it is that gives us these Carnegie Heroes.

But back to that field in Butler, Pennsylvania. On July 13, 2024, thousands gathered for a political rally that combined a typical campaign event and a social gathering. Things soon happened that would test the people there. First, the crowd began to notice what seemed to be an armed man on a rooftop. In some circumstances you could imagine this touching off a stampede for the exits and safety, but not here. In fact, many of these folks began to point and shout loudly to law enforcement, calling out the risk. It had to occur to these spectators that the gunman, frustrated at being discovered, would open fire on the people ruining his plan. But the people continued to raise the alarm.

Then the gunman fired eight shots. It had to be a scary scene. One man was dead with a gunshot to the head. Two others were bleeding, grievously wounded. And the speaker, the man they came to see, was shot in the ear with blood visible on his head, face, and hand. Still, the crowd did not break and run. They crouched, looked around for the source of the gunfire, and tried to protect their family members. What they did not do was run away en masse.

The nature of these events and the tight rules around the Carnegie Medal make it unlikely that any formal medal awards will come out of that day. Either way, the people on the field that day showed a huge willingness to take risks for their fellow citizens. I hope for their sake that not one of them ever again faces challenges and risks dire enough to earn a Carnegie Hero Medal. But if they do, I am confident that among them we would find the heroes we need. That is where Carnegie Heroes come from. ☒



► from p.1

HEADSTONE

The calamity began when a 26-year-old teacher, Dema T. Nelson, and a 17-year-old student, Izola Aslin, were struggling in the waters of Coffee Pot Bayou near their St. Petersburg school and shouted for help. Another student, Ruth E. McNeely, swam out to Nelson and Izola. After some difficulty, McNeely helped Izola to a man, who guided her to shallow water. Henderson dived off a deck and swam to Nelson, but they then separated and a third man responded and Henderson grabbed onto him. When they broke apart, Henderson then went below the surface and ultimately drowned. Branham, along with the third man, helped rescue Nelson.

In the aftermath, faculty at the school, Southland Seminary, held a benefit to help raise money for Claire Henderson and her three children, according to a Feb. 7, 1915, article in The Florida Metropolis newspaper in Jacksonville. Nelson, listed as being in charge of the seminary's "school of expression," was among those who participated, described as "the star" who gave "several readings that were pleasing."

The benefit was part of a movement to collect at least \$5,000 for Henderson's survivors. Another story, posted on Henderson's page at findagrave.com, outlined a push by Charles R. Hall, a "real estate man," to help Claire Henderson send her children to school.

"Ernest Henderson gave his life in a heroic way," the story in an unidentified newspaper quoted Hall. "The people of this city should think of what it means to his family to be without a head. The least we can do is to make a money compensation to Mrs. Henderson in order that she may educate her children. I am doing everything in my power to raise this fund and will co-operate with all interested."

But before the year was over, Henderson's children were orphans. His young widow, 30, died of blood poisoning on Oct. 22, 1915, after an illness lasting several days, according to a copy of the death certificate that Travers located and shared.

The Hero Fund's board approved Henderson's posthumous award - and medals to Branham and McNeely - at their meeting seven days later. The Hero Fund provided \$40 - equivalent to about \$1,200 today - in monthly support to the trustee of the three children until they reached "working age," according to Hero Fund records. ❀

— Chris Foreman, Assistant Investigations Manager

15:13

Grave marker keeps legacy alive

Granddaughter Debra Elston Hurd and her daughter, Sara Neufeld, recently affixed a Carnegie Hero grave marker on her grandfather's headstone in Riverside Cemetery in Newton, Illinois.

"I was finally able to locate his grave and get it mounted this April," Hurd said in an email to the Commission. "Getting this done has been a goal of mine for a long time. It means a lot to me and his other descendants. I wanted to make sure that his heroism is always remembered."

E. Hale Elston died attempting to save Eugene C. Burk from drowning in Mason, Illinois, on Aug. 28, 1924. While wading in Little Wabash River, Eugene, 15, was carried by the current into a pool, 12 feet deep, at which point he sank. Elston, 27, teacher, followed by another man, both of whom were on the bank and were clothed, swam 45 feet to the point where Eugene had disappeared. Elston dived for Eugene, and Eugene came to the surface with one arm around Elston's neck. Eugene got on Elston's back, and Elston did not reappear. Eugene remained at the surface a moment and then sank. Both drowned. The other man got into distress and also drowned.

Hurd said Elston's sons were still young at the time of their father's death, her dad being only 3.

With the Medal, Elston's wife, Mabel, received \$80, and then starting in 1926, an additional \$80 a month (nearly \$1,500 in today's dollars) until she remarried four years later.

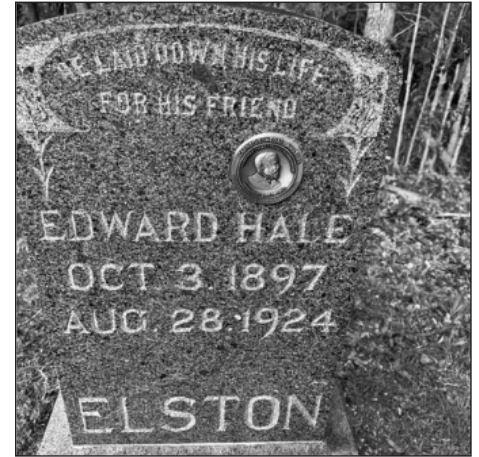
"The stipend that my grandmother received basically kept them from starving during the '20s and the Great Depression," Hurd wrote.

Neufeld said the grave marker is especially important to her because it "keeps the legacy of his heroism alive."

"He showed amazing bravery on behalf of others when he placed their lives above his own. He left a legacy of love and sacrifice that we are inspired by," she said.

Hurd said she hopes the grave marker will "shine a light" on her grandfather's heroism. ❀

— Jewels Phraner, Director of Outreach and Communications



The family of E. Hale Elston affixed a grave marker to his headstone earlier this year. Elston died attempting to save a 15-year-old boy from drowning in 1924.

15:13 calls to mind those in the Hero Fund's 120-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." About 20 percent of all Carnegie Heroes were recognized posthumously. They are not forgotten.

PRESENTING

Vice Mayor Mark Zeitler, left, presented Carnegie Hero **Jakob Thompson** with the Carnegie Medal during a Lantana, Florida, town council meeting on July 8.

Thompson received the Carnegie Medal after he saved a woman from drowning on Nov. 30, 2023, near Ocean Ridge, Florida. The 35-year-old woman entered the Boynton Inlet, which was flanked by seawalls that made an exit from the water extremely difficult. A strong outgoing tide carried her rapidly toward the Atlantic Ocean. A local fire lieutenant described the location as "one of the most dangerous inlets in South Florida."

As the woman struggled to swim in water 17-feet-deep, 17-year-old Jakob Thompson was nearby and saw a group of people trying to help the woman unsuccessfully. He entered the water and swam to the woman. Thompson managed to intercept her, secure her, and then tow her with one arm back to the seawall. Although the woman was exhausted, she did not struggle. Thompson held the woman to the wall until two men responded to pull her to safety atop the wall. He exited on his own as first responders arrived and took the woman to the wall. Thompson had minor cuts on his hands and feet from the barnacles covering the seawall.

"On behalf of the town council and everyone here tonight, I commend you for your extraordinary act of heroism," Zeitler said to Thompson.

"It's an honor to receive this award," Thompson said. "When the incident happened, I wasn't thinking long term. I wasn't thinking about what I would gain from it. I just wanted to save a life."

Vice Mayor Kem Mason spoke up to commend Thompson and his act of bravery.

"I was a lifeguard for 8 years ... to do something like that takes a lot of courage. That would be a hard task even for a lifeguard to accomplish in that water, that's taken many lives," Mason said. "For you to do that, that's incredible. I hope you go on to be a lifesaver."

"I've been more than blessed with receiving the scholarships that I have through Sarah Perry and Aden Perry (Good Samaritan Scholarship Fund), and the Carnegie award," Thompson said.

Thompson's act of heroism had caught the attention of Sarah Perry, the



mother of Carnegie Hero **Aden Perry**, who died in 2022 trying to save a man from drowning. Aden received the Carnegie Medal posthumously. His mother established and has managed the Aden Perry Good Samaritan Scholarship Fund, which aims to raise money and grant scholarships to students who perform heroic acts.

Thompson was the first such recipient of the scholarship, and expressed a similar humility after he received both the scholarship and the Carnegie Medal.

"Putting my life out there to help somebody came with a reward, but I was never looking for one," said Thompson. ❀



Volunteer presenter Tom Trento presents the Carnegie Medal to the family of **Adem Qorri**, from left, wife Blerta, and sons, Adan, 11, and Diar, 6. Qorri's family and friends gathered May 17 to see the presentation of Qorri's Carnegie Medal for Heroism at a ceremony in New Port Richey, Florida. **Tom Trento**, a 1983 Carnegie Medal recipient, presented the medal.

Qorri was posthumously awarded the Carnegie Medal in December for helping save the life of a boy from drowning on March 26, 2023.

The 6-year-old boy and his 10-year-old brother were caught in a fast-moving current while swimming in the Gulf of Mexico. With the boys was Adem Qorri, 39, who was on a boat anchored near the southern tip of Anclote Island with the boys' father. Qorri noticed first that the boys had drifted into water 10 feet deep, and immediately reacted. He jumped off the boat, ran approximately 90 feet across shallow water and sand, and then swam 225 feet to the 6-year-old. The boys' father followed Qorri until he reached the brother at a point about 150 feet from shore. After swimming the brother to safer water and calming him, the father saw Qorri facedown in the water with the boy hanging onto his back. The boy and his brother were not injured. Qorri was immediately put into an ambulance and taken to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead. He had drowned.

The boys' father, Dale Furness, spoke at the ceremony. Qorri was Furness's best friend. Blerta Qorri expressed gratitude for the support from family and friends during this difficult time.

Trento received the Carnegie Medal after saving the driver of a burning vehicle in Cherry Hills Village, Colorado, in 1982. ❀



PRESENTING

U.S. Rep. Dan Newhouse presented Quincy, Washington, police officer **Stephen Harder** with the Carnegie Medal for Heroism at a June 20 ceremony held at Quincy City Hall. Pictured are Newhouse presenting the award to Harder with police Chief Ryan Green and city Administrator Pat Haley applauding in the background.

Harder was awarded the Carnegie Medal in March 2024 for saving a woman from burning inside her Quincy, Washington, house in a Jan. 10, 2023, fire.

A fire broke out in the home of a 67-year-old woman who suffered from long-term illnesses and utilized home oxygen. The woman was unresponsive on the kitchen floor of her one-story house after a fire ignited in the living room, where there were oxygen cylinders. Her daughter retreated outside, called 911, and told the dispatcher that her mother remained inside. Before firefighters responded, on-duty police officer Stephen Harder, 38, and an accompanying detective, arrived on the scene and saw smoke issuing from the house. Harder, who was a former firefighter, opened the front door and saw flames in the living room. He and the detective went to the rear door of the house and opened it to smoke filling a hallway from the ceiling to a point about 18 inches off the floor. Harder and the detective crawled along the narrow hallway and turned into the kitchen. He found the woman unresponsive on the ground with the flames about 10 feet away. He grabbed her and pulled her to him. Crawling backward with her, he entered the hallway. The detective by then had returned to the rear porch for fresh air after she was overcome by the smoke. Harder pulled the woman to the doorway, where he was helped by the detective to carry the woman from the house. Outside, the woman was revived, and she was taken to a hospital. Harder and the detective both inhaled smoke but were medically cleared at a hospital.

"We're here today to recognize the bravery of my new friend, Sgt. Stephen Harder of the Quincy Police Department for his bravery in the



face of danger," Newhouse said.

"I believe Sgt. Harder is the true embodiment of a dedicated first responder, and we are very fortunate to have him help protect our communities...we're safer, knowing that we have people like Sgt. Harder who are willing to risk their safety in order to help those of us in danger."

Harder felt honored to receive the award.

"It's one of those things where on that day you weren't really thinking, you were just acting – just responding and doing your job," Harder said. "It's humbling, it's awesome, it's really cool. Lots of cops, firefighters and first responders do this sort of thing all the time and they don't get recognized for it, so it's humbling to be one of the guys who gets recognized for it." ☒



Truro (Nova Scotia) Police Inspector **Bruce Lake**, left, was presented the Carnegie Medal by, from left, police Chief Dave MacNeil and police board Vice Chair Bill Thomas at the June 12 police board meeting. Lake was being honored for his Aug. 19, 2023, water rescue of Holli J. Robertson in Alma, New Brunswick.

The 20-year-old woman stepped a few feet into a swimming hole in the Broad River, lost her footing and was pulled into an area of fast-moving, turbulent water at the convergence of two small waterfalls. She held onto a large boulder in between the two waterfalls and attempted to get to safety but could not. Lake, an off-duty police officer from another province, was hiking in the area with friends and saw Robertson having difficulty in the river. Robertson attempted to swim downstream out of the current but fully submerged about 10 feet from where Lake stood on another boulder. Lake jumped feet-first into water at least 8 feet deep with zero visibility. Completely submerged, he waved his arms in front of him and brushed Robertson's arm. Lake grasped Robertson and pulled her to him as the water pulled them down farther and away from where he had jumped into the water. Lake kicked his feet and used his other arm to swim to the surface with Robertson. Lake then pushed Robertson toward the boulder, where another woman grabbed her hand. Lake felt himself being pulled back into the strong current, but Robertson grasped his hand and the two were pulled to the boulder. Robertson and Lake were assisted from the water. Robertson swallowed water and sustained lacerations to her body; she recovered. Lake was nearly exhausted after the rescue and sustained a laceration to his elbow; he recovered.

On its [Facebook page](#), the town of Truro posted photos of the ceremony.

"A hero in and out of uniform," the post said. ☒

PRESENTING



Long Beach City Manager Daniel Creighton, right, presented police officer **Judy Arroyo** with the Carnegie Medal for Heroism at a June 4 private ceremony held at the City of Long Beach police department. Also pictured behind Arroyo is City Council member Michael Reinhart.

Arroyo was awarded the Carnegie Medal in December for saving the life of a man from burning inside of his home in Long Beach, New York, on Feb. 19, 2023.

A fire broke out on the rear deck of the 65-year-old man's two-story home while he was asleep in his bedroom. He was awakened and searched the house for his son and a tenant that lived with them. A passerby flagged down on-duty police officer Judy Arroyo, 51. Flames had completely consumed the rear portion of the home as Arroyo approached. She entered through the unlocked front door to see flames burning on the kitchen ceiling. She located the man, gripped his arm, and forcefully ushered him outside. After hearing that others may be inside the home, Arroyo returned to the house, where flames had overtaken the kitchen. Through black smoke, Arroyo climbed a few stairs toward the second floor when she felt a burst of heat. She suffered burns to her face and both hands. She escaped back through the front door as the fire continued to spread. The son and tenant were later located outside the home. The man suffered no burns and declined to go to a hospital. Arroyo was treated at a hospital and later at a burn center. She mostly recovered from her burns in about three weeks.

The city of Long Beach posted on [Facebook](#) to show their appreciation and pride for Arroyo's heroic actions.

"Sgt. Arroyo is a profile in courage and we are grateful for her bravery, selflessness, and service to Long Beach," it stated. "Thank you, Sgt. Arroyo, and congratulations on this prestigious honor." ❄️

Unified Fire Chief Dominic Burchett, center-right, presented the Carnegie Medal to firefighter **Thomas Elbrecht**, center-left, at a private ceremony held on June 25 at the Unified Fire Authority station in Salt Lake City.

Elbrecht, 31, of South Salt Lake, Utah, was awarded the Carnegie Medal after battling extreme cold and risk of avalanche while rendering first aid for several hours to a man who had broken his femur in an avalanche in Millcreek, Utah, on Dec. 14, 2022.

While backcountry skiing in a remote area of the Wasatch Mountain Range, Travis Haussener, 35, was caught in a 200-foot wide, 2-foot deep avalanche that surged downhill and enveloped him. The snow slammed him against a tree where he was pinned with severe injuries. Only his head and an arm remained unburied. He shouted for help. Within earshot while backcountry skiing himself, Elbrecht heard Haussener's calls. He followed Haussener's tracks in the snow to the bottom of the avalanche-debris pile, where he then hiked up the steep slope and unburied Haussener, whose severe injuries inhibited him from moving to safety. Elbrecht used his cell phone to inform authorities about Haussener's injuries after he moved him to a flat nearby. He used a ski pole as a makeshift splint to stabilize Haussener's leg and built a small shelter to shield him from the frigid conditions. He removed some of Haussener's wet clothes and provided him with dry clothes including an extra jacket Haussener had in his backpack and Elbrecht's own jacket and gloves. With the threat of another avalanche looming, Elbrecht remained with Haussener as rescue crews came up with a plan. A rescue helicopter responded but was unable to affect a rescue because of the steep slope and closely packed, tall trees. Eventually, two rescue personnel on the ground found them. Elbrecht helped lower Haussener to a spot where he was moved by toboggan and then snowmobile to a waiting ambulance. Haussener spent a few days in the hospital and endured a lengthy rehabilitation to his leg. Elbrecht was cold and hungry after spending



several hours with Haussener, even beyond sunset, but was not injured.

Haussener told [KSLTV](#) that Elbrecht huddled with the man for eight hours while they waited for rescuers.

"I was the coldest I've ever been in my life," Haussener told reporters from his hospital bed. "(Elbrecht is) a hero, man. He kept me smiling. He kept making jokes. He kept talking to me. He kept me warm, he hugged me when I was getting too cold." ❄️



PRESENTING

Chief Fred Grimste of the Barnegat Light (New Jersey) Volunteer Fire Company presented the Carnegie Medal to **Robert J. Selfridge III** at a ceremony held June 27 at his fire hall.

Selfridge, 58, of Harvey Cedars, New Jersey, received the Carnegie Medal for an Aug. 7, 2022, water rescue in which he rescued a woman and her 4-year-old daughter from drowning in the Barnegat Inlet off Island Beach State Park. The two were trapped in the cabin of a capsized boat, keeping their heads above water in an air pocket.

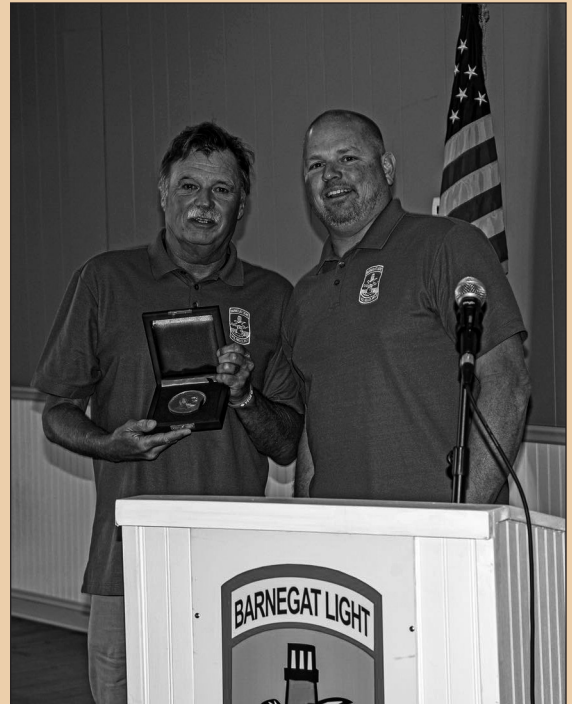
As the boat sank, the air pocket shrank and water rose to the mother's chin. Selfridge, an off-duty EMT and volunteer lifeguard, arrived at the scene on a WaveRunner to find rescuers using towboat lines to attempt to right the 23-foot-long boat. After determining those efforts were not working and racing against the setting sun, Selfridge told other rescuers "We gotta go under."

"This could be a one-way trip," one eyewitness told Selfridge.

He was the fourth trained and experienced rescuer to attempt to swim under the gunwale of the boat and enter the cabin, but cold water, and limited visibility thwarted the efforts of the other three.

Borrowing a diving mask and taking several deep breaths, Selfridge submerged, swimming under the gunwale and into the cabin. Maneuvering around broken railings and debris, Selfridge took the girl from her mother, told her to take a deep breath, and, carrying her, swam out of the cabin, out from under the boat, and surfaced, the mother following. Selfridge sustained a broken finger but no life-threatening injuries.

"We are thankful to have him as a dedicated member of our fire company, and our community," [Barnegat Light Volunteer Fire Company](#) posted to Facebook. "Congratulations Bobby and thank you for all you do for us and the community!"



Connecticut State Police Colonel Daniel Loughman, right, presented the Carnegie Medal to police Sergeant **Ashley Harkins** on May 29 at the Connecticut State Police annual awards ceremony held at the state police academy.

Harkins received the Carnegie Medal in March after she saved a distressed woman from falling from the Baldwin Bridge in Old Lyme, Connecticut, on Nov. 27, 2023.

A suicidal woman in her early 60s had climbed a 10-foot safety fence on the Baldwin Bridge and sat on a 9-inch-wide concrete ledge that was 80 feet above the Connecticut River. Harkins, 37, had finished her shift and was off-duty but responded to the 911 call along with another sergeant. The other sergeant attempted to talk to the shivering woman while Harkins scaled the fence behind her with no safety equipment or ropes. She descended the other side to the narrow ledge, scooted a few feet toward the woman, and then maneuvered to have one arm and one leg on either side of her. She gripped the fence and secured the woman to the fence with her body to keep her from falling. Harkins helped place the woman's foot on her thigh for leverage while she grasped the fence with one hand. Harkins pushed the woman up by her foot so she could climb the fence to waiting officers. The woman was cold from exposure to wind and temperatures in the low 50s but was otherwise uninjured. She was taken to a hospital for emergency mental health evaluation. Harkins was not injured during the incident.

Loughman is Harkins' commanding officer. In an Instagram [video](#) about why she joined the state police, Harkins cited the variety of calls she responds to as a state trooper.

"Every day you don't know what you're going to do," she said. "There's a lot of variety day to day, but you're still able to build relationships with the public and other members of law enforcement."

PRESENTING



At some point the night **Fairuz Schlecht** rescued three children from a burning apartment in Newport Beach, California, someone put a beautiful blanket over her to keep warm.

"It's still on my bed," Schlecht said. "That night was actually really beautiful, because it had a beautiful ending. The beauty and the love just kept going, it didn't just end that night."

Schlecht was speaking at the June 11 Newport Beach, California, council meeting, where she was presented the Carnegie Medal by Mayor Will O'Neill.

Schlecht was awarded the Carnegie Medal for the rescue of three children from a burning apartment in Newport Beach. On Dec. 20, 2022, she, then 51, was exiting the burning apartment building when she learned the kids in a neighboring apartment were on the second floor shouting for help. She returned upstairs and, despite high-pitched alarms, swirling smoke, and heat, entered their apartment. She ran down a smoke-filled hallway and kicked in a bedroom door to gather the children, exiting the building with them.

"As you're coming up here, if you look in the back of the room, these firefighters are here for you," O'Neill told Schlecht during the

presentation.

Newport Beach Chief Jeff Boyles also spoke at the event.

"We've had the privilege of getting to know Fairuz after this incident," he said. "She's an amazing person, and I think we can all agree that our communities are a lot closer, safer, and resilient when people like Fairuz put the needs of others in front of themselves."

Fairuz was emotional during the presentation, stopping several times to compose herself.

She described the outpouring of support she has received, including a friend offering her a place for her and her children to stay.

"She gave me the exhale that I needed. That has been what my life has been like since the fire. I could continue. Just one thing after another. There's been so much intense support and beauty and love," Schlecht said.

Pictured are Fairuz Schlecht, center, with Boyles, left, and O'Neill, flanking her, as they hold up the Carnegie Medal and Newport Beach proclamation. The rest of the Newport Beach Council members and the firefighters who showed up to support Schlecht stand behind them. ☼



Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon, left, presented the Carnegie Medal for Heroism to **Ryan Pasborg** at a ceremony held at the Governor's residence in Cheyenne on April 27, 2024.

Pasborg was awarded the Medal in December for saving the life of a mother and her son who were trapped inside their burning home in Green River, Wyoming.

On Feb. 2, 2022, the 4-year-old boy and his mother, 34, had fallen unconscious inside the kitchen of their burning home. Pasborg, then 33, was driving to work when he smelled smoke and noticed flames in the home's front windows. Pasborg entered the home and climbed the steps to the kitchen, where intense smoke forced him to his hands and knees. He crawled farther into the house and came upon the boy. Hugging the boy with one arm and still crawling, he retreated until he could stand and eventually carried the boy through

the garage to safety. Crawling again through the kitchen despite intense flames, heat, and smoke, Pasborg searched until he found her. He grasped her under the arms and dragged her from the home to safety.

"I never thought it would happen," Pasborg told [Cowboy State Daily](#) after the presentation. "I never believed it would go as far as this."

"Here, we can count on heroes like Ryan," Gov. Gordon said. "We get a toughness and a grit from our shared experiences, from our weather and from a oneness in looking out for each other."

The mother and boy that Pasborg saved were both in attendance, along with the rest of their family, to watch him receive the medal.

"It's amazing, we wouldn't be here without him," Stephanie Wadsworth said ☼



LATEST AWARDEES OF THE CARNEGIE MEDAL

Since the last edition of Impulse, the following 18 individuals have been awarded the Carnegie Medal for Heroism, bringing the total number of recipients to 10,440 since the Hero Fund's inception in 1904. The latest awards were made in June. The next announcement will be made in September.

An 8-year-old boy fell unconscious to the ground, his body smoking, after being electrocuted on Aug. 30, 2022, by a live wire that had been downed above a residential street in Warren, Michigan. The power line was hanging hazardously low about 5 feet



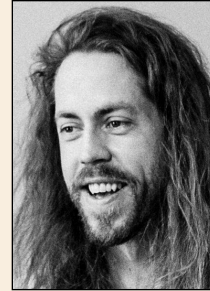
Daniel Rose



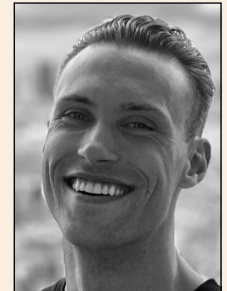
David Chapman



Antwaun M. Jackson



Christopher Novecosky



Joseph Novecosky

above the street when the boy, his friend, and older brother came upon the scene. Despite yellow caution tape around the area, the boys approached the wire, and the 8-year-old grabbed onto it with both hands. Police officers Daniel Rose, 43, of Sterling Heights, Michigan, and David Chapman, 35, from Detroit, were nearby when they heard the call come across their radios; they both went to the scene, where the boy lay under the live line. Rose went to his hands and knees and crawled beneath the power line. He grasped the boy's left ankle as Chapman crouched under the power line and grabbed the boy's other ankle. The two officers pulled the boy about 10 feet away from the power line. Rose felt an electrical charge in his arm and Chapman felt his hand burning. They released the boy but returned to render additional first aid. When the boy regained consciousness, Rose, Chapman, and another officer carried the boy to a police car and took him to a nearby hospital. The boy sustained serious injuries, including burns on both hands. Rose was examined at the hospital and had numbness in his right arm from the electrical shock for a few hours. He recovered. Chapman was examined at the hospital but did not require treatment.

In the afternoon of July 9, 2022, in North Topsail Beach, North Carolina, two women, 24 and 33, were teaching two young family members, 7 and 6, how to use a bodyboard in shallow water in the New River Inlet near where it connected with the Atlantic Ocean. The group of four reached a location where they could no longer touch the bottom, and suddenly struggled in a strong current. The women called out for help and alerted relatives on the beach. Among those on the shore was production worker Antwaun M. Jackson, 40, from Jacksonville, North Carolina, who was a cousin to all four pulled out by the

current. Jackson left the beach and waded into the water to the area where the women were seen struggling. Another female cousin who also responded helped the two girls onto a bodyboard as Jackson swam beyond the two women to push them from behind toward shore. Other men from separate groups entered the water after seeing a cluster of distressed swimmers, including Jackson. They helped aid the women, girls, and the cousin back to safety in wadable water. Jackson remained stranded in the rough current, beyond the reach of some men and responding police officers. A rescue disc attached to a rope was thrown into the water in Jackson's direction to no effect. Ultimately, Jackson submerged, did not resurface, and could not be found by rescue crews. Jackson's body was never recovered.

Seven-year-old Ava and 6-year-old Evelyn Novecosky were playing outside on the

afternoon of Nov. 4, when they fell through thin ice covering Humboldt Lake outside their home near Humboldt, Saskatchewan. About 300 feet from shore, they struggled in the 35-degree water that was about 15 feet deep. Their brother on shore alerted adult family members, including the girls' uncle Christopher Novecosky, 38, and cousin Joseph Novecosky, 28, both Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, tradesmen. Christopher and Joseph ran out of the house onto the ice along with the girls' mother, who said she could hear the ice cracking under their feet. The three adults approached the girls as the ice gave way and both men plunged into the icy water. Both men attempted to push an unconscious Ava onto the ice but were unsuccessful. The mother then fell through the ice. Christopher grasped Evelyn and tried to lift her out of the water onto the ice but was unsuccessful. Joseph also tried and failed to lift Ava out. Within two minutes, both men were ▶



A screenshot from a police officer's body cam that shows officers Daniel Rose and David Chapman crouching under a live electrical wire to retrieve an unconscious 8-year-old boy who had been electrocuted when he grasped the downed wire with both hands after August 2022 storms in Warren, Michigan. The live wire is highlighted by a gold arrow and the photo has been cropped to protect the boy's privacy. Photo courtesy of Warren Police Department.



John Parks



Sara Schaller



Kevin James Schell

exhausted from their efforts and the freezing water. Christopher let go of Evelyn and he submerged. Joseph handed Ava to her mother and he, too, submerged. The girls' father then pushed a kayak filled with life jackets across the ice and into the water. The mother grasped the kayak while holding Ava. Evelyn swam to the kayak and took a life jacket, when she floated away until arriving firefighters used ropes and ice-rescue suits to pull her out along with her mother. Firefighters retrieved Ava who was pronounced dead at the scene. Evelyn and her mother suffered from hypothermia but recovered. A dive team found the bodies of Christopher and Joseph the next day. They had drowned.

Bennett Roth, 69, was walking after nightfall along a six-lane street in Washington, District of Columbia, on Jan. 11, 2024, when a vehicle stopped beside him and multiple people in

ski masks and dark clothing exited. One man pointed a handgun at Roth as he backed up and was shoved to the ground. Roth shouted for help as he was held at gunpoint and the assailants ordered him to stay still. Across the street with friends was Washington housing development manager **John Parks, 26**, who saw the start of the assault and two of the assailants hovering over Roth. Unarmed, Parks shouted at the assailants and darted around traffic to make his way to the scene. Despite seeing that two of the attackers had handguns pointed at Roth, Parks continued to shout and approach Roth. They pointed their guns at him, but Parks continued to advance anyway. The assailants then backed away and returned to the vehicle to flee. The vehicle sped away from the scene and Parks' group flagged down an approaching police officer after they called 911. Police are still investigating the incident. Roth had scratches and scrapes from the attack but recovered. Parks was not injured.

A 14-year-old girl and her 18-year-old cousin were swimming in Lake Michigan off Porter,

Indiana, when they were caught in a rip current and waves 4 feet high on June 20, 2023. The current swept them out about 300 feet from shore into cold water about 10 feet deep.

Sara Schaller, a 42-year-old veterinary nurse from Hammond, Indiana, was walking on the beach with her 4-year-old daughter when she was alerted to the situation. Schaller asked a woman to watch her daughter and waded out into the surf as waves crashed down on her. The water deepened and Schaller swam to the girl, who by then was fading in and out of consciousness. She grabbed the girl under both arms and swam about 150 feet toward the beach until she touched bottom on a sandbar. Schaller slowly dragged the girl to shallow water as waves crashed over them and eventually pulled her to the beach. Another beachgoer swam out to the cousin, who was unresponsive and had been washed closer to the shore by the waves. The cousin was brought back to shore with the help of others and was later pronounced dead at a hospital. Paramedics treated the girl and she recovered at the hospital. Schaller was exhausted but uninjured.

Three men in their 20s were on a recreational pier in Bracebridge, Ontario, that extended over the Muskoka River on August 24, 2020, when one of them accidentally entered the water. The man was a poor swimmer as he struggled to stay afloat in 30 feet of water,

with dangerous, unpredictable currents caused by a waterfall and a man-made dam upriver from the pier. Several onlookers witnessed the man struggling, including corrections officer **Kevin James Schell, 51**, of Bracebridge, who was on a nearby bench with his adult daughter. One of the bystanders entered the water and swam to the man, and attempted to calm him, but he continued to panic. She attempted to calm him once more before she disengaged and exited the water in search of a flotation device. During that time, Schell and his daughter searched ▶

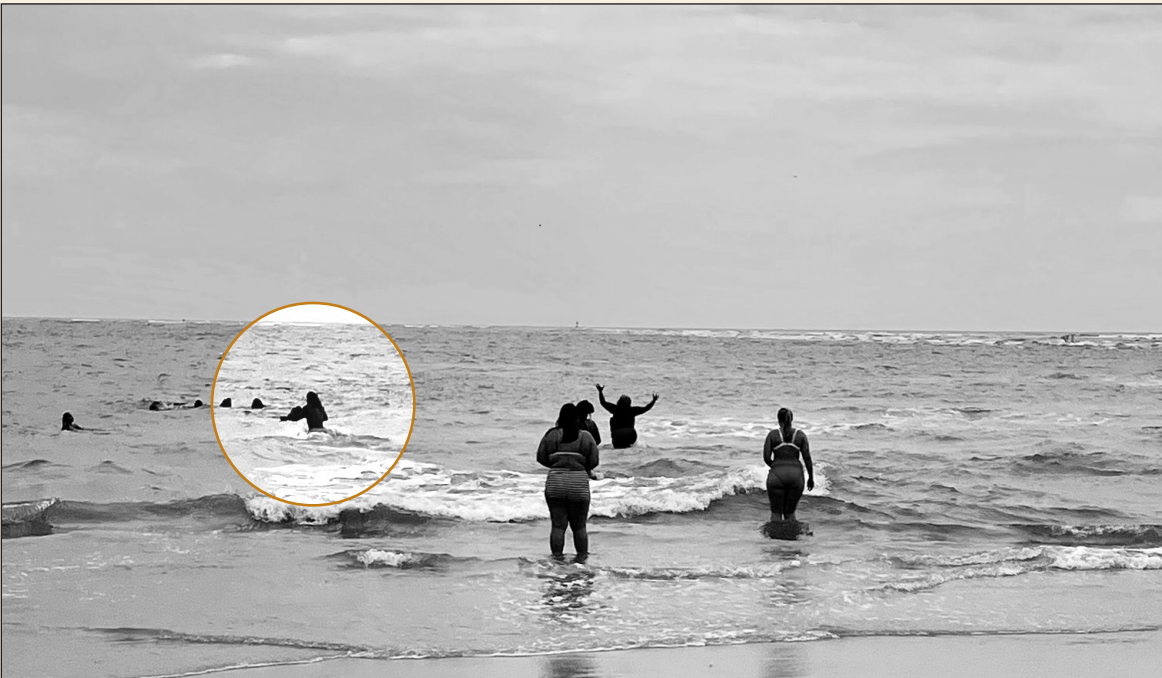


Photo by Jeff Ehman

Antwaun M. Jackson wades toward a group of his cousins who were pulled into deeper water by a strong current during a July 9, 2022, beach day at Topsail Beach, North Carolina. While another person rescued the young girls, Jackson swam beyond the women to push them toward shore from behind. Soon all three struggled in the water and while another cousin was able to reach the two women and bring them to shore, Jackson was stranded in the rough current. Ultimately, Jackson submerged, did not resurface, and could not be found by rescue crews.

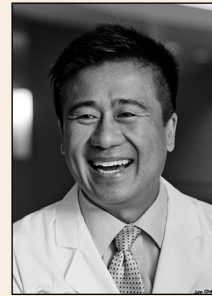


LATEST AWARDEES

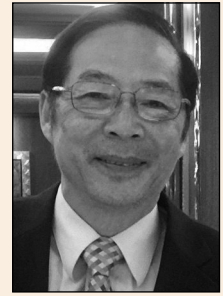
for the life preserver from a nearby life preserver rack, but it could not be found. Schell told his daughter to call 911 before he ran 60 feet to the end of the pier and entered the water. He swam about 10 feet to the man and was reportedly within an arm's length of him. Two more bystanders who also witnessed the incident entered the water immediately after Schell and swam to the man. At some point, Schell submerged. The two bystanders guided the man to a nearby buoy before they placed a life jacket on him and swam him back to the pier and first-responders. The man had inhaled water, but he recovered. Divers searched for more than six hours before they located Schell's body some 30 feet south of where he was last seen. He had drowned.

At least 45 people were in the social hall of a Laguna Woods, California, church following a May 15, 2022, luncheon, when a 68-year-old man armed with two semi-automatic pistols fired one of the guns multiple times, injuring five elderly congregants. As people fled or took

cover, sports and family medicine doctor **John Cheng**, 52, from Laguna Niguel, California, was seated at a table about 25 feet away from the assailant. After hearing the first shot, Cheng stood up and charged the assailant rather than fleeing toward available exits or shelter. Cheng pushed the assailant around his upper torso and both men fell to the floor beneath a table. A struggle ensued between the two men, and the assailant shot Cheng three times in the chest. The assailant stood up and struggled to either reload or unjam his weapon. Pastor **Billy Chang**, 67, from Taipei City, Taiwan, stepped down from a stage about 20 feet away and advanced toward the assailant. Chang was within a few feet of the assailant when he picked up a chair and struck the assailant's back. The strike caused the assailant to fall to the floor, facedown, and Chang held the assailant down by his head, neck, and hand. Chang shouted for others to help when three men and Chang's wife responded. The wife took the gun to a different room and returned to the scene. The three men, Chang, and his wife used an extension cord to tie the



John Cheng



Billy Chang

assailant's hands behind his back and they restrained him until police arrived. It was then that the assailant's second gun was found in an ankle holster. He was taken into custody. The four men and one woman who were also shot survived their injuries. Chang was not injured during the incident. Cheng died from his gunshot wounds.

Halil Cakmaktas, 70, was fishing from a narrow, concrete pier near a channel connecting Keith Lake to the Port Arthur Ship Canal in Port Arthur, Texas, on July 21, 2021, when he fell into the fast-moving water. Crane operator ▶

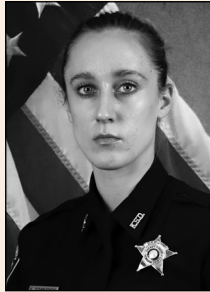


Photo by Frank Cheng

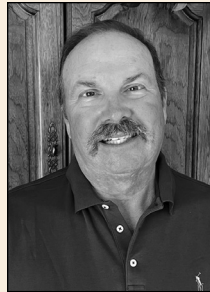
*Churchgoers including Carnegie Hero **Billy Chang** (top right) secure an assailant who opened fire at a May 15, 2022, church gathering in Laguna Woods, California. Chang struck the assailant with a chair, bringing him to the ground where he and others subdued him. Carnegie Hero **John Cheng** also responded and was shot and killed while tackling the gunman.*



Christopher Bischoff



Kelsey Schwuchow



Daniel L. Weiss

Rolando Rene Caballero, 63, from Port Arthur, was baiting crabs on the shore near the pier with his wife when she heard Cakmaktas call out for help. Caballero instructed his wife to retrieve a bundle of rope from their car. She retrieved the rope and Caballero moved onto the pier where he attempted to throw one end of it to Cakmaktas. After several unsuccessful attempts, Caballero returned to his wife on shore and tied the rope around his waist. He waded about 10 feet into the water before swimming about 40 feet toward Cakmaktas. Caballero was within an arm's length of Cakmaktas when Cakmaktas submerged and could not be located. Caballero shouted to his

wife to pull him back to shore. She pulled the rope, but soon realized it had come untethered from Caballero. Caballero's wife could still see him and called out instructions to him to lay on his back and attempt to float. The strength of the current pulled Caballero underwater. Firefighters located Caballero's body about 30 minutes after he submerged. He had drowned. Cakmaktas' body was recovered by police about an hour after he submerged. He, too, had drowned.

Two preteen sisters were playing in Lake Michigan off of Kenosha, Wisconsin, on Aug. 27, 2023, when they both began to struggle at a point beyond wadable water. They fought to remain above the surface in the choppy current when their stepmother entered the water to help them, but she quickly also struggled in the water. Earlier that day, weather officials warned of life-threatening waves and

dangerous currents in the lake. Two off-duty sheriff's deputies from Kenosha, **Christopher Bischoff**, 34, and **Kelsey Schwuchow**, 30, were on the beach when they were alerted to the situation. Both waded into the surf and swam out to the girls. Bischoff reached one girl and tucked her against his body, while Schwuchow concurrently went to her sister and grabbed onto her. Bischoff attempted to swim toward shore but had difficulty swimming with the panicked girl. He tried to submerge while holding the girl with her head above the water, intermittently resurfacing for air himself, and pushed her forward while walking underwater. He quickly tired after he struggled toward shallow water. He swallowed water, resurfaced, and separated from the girl. Schwuchow tried to swim with the panicked sister toward shore, but she too swallowed water and separated from the girl who remained near her sister and stepmother. As the waves moved both girls closer to shore, Bischoff regained a hold of the girl he initially helped, towed her into wadable water, and she returned to the beach. Schwuchow grasped the sister's arm and pulled her to Bischoff's partner to guide her back to the beach. Schwuchow then swam to the stepmother, who was floating on her back, and dragged her into shallow water to be helped by her partner and Bischoff. Both girls and the stepmother were taken to a hospital for treatment. Bischoff and Schwuchow were nearly exhausted and went to the hospital as a precaution, where they were discharged that evening.

A 29-year-old woman was unconscious in the driver's seat of her two-door coupe after a May 17, 2022, accident in which the car left a Greensboro, North Carolina, rural road and continued down an embankment for about 25 feet, where it struck two trees and caught



Photo by Daniel L. Weiss

The remains of a car that left the roadway, crashed into some trees, and caught fire in Greensboro, North Carolina, on May 17, 2022. Carnegie Hero **Daniel L. Weiss** responded to the car, entering on the passenger side and removing its 29-year-old unconscious driver.



Rolando Rene Caballero



LATEST AWARDEES

fire. Facility technician **Daniel L. Weiss**, 59, from Stokesdale, North Carolina, was working on a utility pole nearby when he heard the roaring motor of a vehicle and saw car parts flying through the air. Weiss responded, ran down the embankment, and approached the driver's door. He saw the woman in the driver's seat unconscious and slumped over the steering wheel. He reached through the window opening and shook her in an attempt to wake her, but she did not respond. Weiss felt for a pulse when he noticed flames burning at the hood of the car that spread inside through the dashboard and air vents. He called to his co-worker for a fire extinguisher, and once it was retrieved, Weiss emptied the extinguisher. Despite the effort, the flames continued to burn at the hood. Weiss pulled on the handle of the driver's door, but it would not open. He ran to the passenger side door and fully entered the vehicle by kneeling on the seat, where he then turned the woman, so she faced away from him. Weiss reached his arms around her from behind and clasped his hands together. He lifted her over the center console onto the passenger seat as the flames grew and spread to within a foot of them. Weiss backed through the passenger door opening and fell with the woman to the ground. Two men responded to the scene and helped Weiss carry the woman 20 feet away after seeing fire envelop the front seats. The flames continued to grow and engulf the vehicle's entire cab. The woman was not burned but was taken to the hospital for injuries sustained in the accident. Weiss suffered minor smoke inhalation and recovered.

Five women, all part of the same cycling team, were riding on a remote, forest trail near Fall City, Washington, on Feb. 17, 2024, when a cougar lunged at 60-year-old Keri Bergere, jumped onto her back, pushing her off her bicycle into a ditch. The juvenile male cougar that weighed about 75 pounds, proceeded to bite into Bergere's jaw and insert its claws into her neck and shoulders. A second cougar was spotted, but it ran off before the attack started. Riding approximately 200 feet behind Bergere was retired gardener **Annie Bilotta**, 64, and real estate broker **Aune Tietz**, 59, both from Seattle, who witnessed the cougar attack. Bilotta and Tietz screamed and immediately biked to Bergere. This alerted two other riders who were in front of Bergere, Seattle attorney **Erica Wolf**, 51, and salesperson **Tisch Schmidt-Williams**, 58, from North Bend, Washington. They both had not seen the attack. Bilotta approached the cougar and immediately jumped on the animal. Tietz arrived around the same time and was able to



Annie Bilotta



Aune Tietz



Erica Wolf



Tisch Schmidt-Williams

pull the cougar's hind legs off Bergere. Bilotta and Tietz yelled to their teammates up ahead to call 911 and grab rocks and sticks to help. Schmidt-Williams ran over with a rock and a few sticks, and she began to fight the animal. With her bike, Wolf went to the scene while attempting to call 911, but the call dropped in the remote area. Wolf discarded her phone and bicycle, retrieved a stick, and also began to fight the cougar. Bilotta pulled one of the animal's paws off of Bergere and stuck her hand into its mouth, hoping to pry open its jaw to release her friend. The four women battled the cougar for 15 minutes. As the cougar started to readjust its bite, Bilotta shouted for Bergere to move away as Tietz pulled the animal's head back. As Bergere rolled away, Wolf almost simultaneously picked up her bicycle and the four women worked together to pin the cougar to the ground with it. The women then stood on the bicycle for another 30 minutes. At some point, two other cyclists arrived and helped hold

the cougar down. They stood on top of the bicycle until a fish and wildlife officer arrived and shot and killed the cougar. Bergere was taken to a hospital for multiple jaw fractures, facial nerve damage, and lacerations on her face, ears, neck, shoulders, arms, and back. Each of the four women sustained minor cuts or bruises but were otherwise uninjured and recovered. 🌀



A photograph of Keri Bergere who was attacked by a cougar while biking on a remote forrest trail near Fall City, Washington, on Feb. 17. Bergere suffered extensive injuries including multiple jaw fractures, facial nerve damage, and lacerations ot her face, ears, neck, shoulders, arms, and back. The other members of her cycling team -- Annie Bilotta, Aune Tietz, Erica Wolf, and Tisch Schmidt-Williams, fought the cougar, allowing Bergere to escape from its grasp.

 FRIENDS REMEMBERED

► from p.3

near the shoulder area. He freed the woman of the belt and Garcia lifted her from the car as flames eventually engulfed the vehicle. The woman required hospitalization for treatment of serious burns, and Garcia was treated at the emergency room for first- and second-degree burns to his right arm and face.

Along with the Carnegie Medal, Garcia was recognized with the American Police Hall of Fame Silver Star of Bravery, San Antonio police Meritorious Award medal and Medal of Valor, Medal of Merit 2012, and the Bexar County Medal of Valor.

Garcia was described as a sweet humble man with an insatiable desire to not only learn, but to master any subject that piqued his interest. His devotion to family and community was led with compassion, empathy, and respect.

Garcia is survived by his wife, Terry Garcia; sons, Preston, Quinton, and Trenton Garcia; mother, Lucille Flores Garcia; his sister, Cathy; and several nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his brother, Oscar Garcia.

 MATTHEW R. SCRIBNER



Matthew R. Scribner

Carnegie Hero **Matthew R. Scribner**, 37, died suddenly on July 23, 2024, as the result of a motor vehicle accident.

Scribner was born on July 27, 1986, in Newark, New York, to Matthew D. Scribner and Deborah Draves.

Scribner was awarded the Carnegie Medal for rescuing a man from drowning in Palmyra, New York, on April 23, 2011. The man and his brother were kayaking on Ganargua Creek near the base of a low-head dam when the water near the Erie Canal spilled over the dam and threw the man from his kayak. The kayak rolled and the turbulent water caused his brother to fall

in as well. Both men were caught in the turbulent water and pushed downstream. They shouted for help. Scribner was with three friends on the bank of the creek when they witnessed the accident. Scribner removed his shirt and shoes and jumped into the water. The water was so cold that it briefly stunned Scribner. He swam to the man and towed him to the north bank. The man's brother floated with the current toward the bank, and when he was within reach, Scribner pulled the man from the creek with the help of others. Both men were hospitalized and recovered from hypothermia. Scribner sought treatment as well and recovered.

Scribner was said to have been known for his good heart.

He is survived by his parents; his brothers, David Scriber, Vance Vanderwall, Dylan Formanec; and his sisters Danielle Breemes, Abbey Draves, and Shelby Draves.

 PHILLIP S. MCDONALD



Phillip S. McDonald

Carnegie Hero **Phillip S. McDonald**, 77, died on July 25, 2024, in Indianapolis.

McDonald was born on June 5, 1947, in Indianapolis to Donald and Hazel McDonald.

McDonald received the Carnegie Medal after he saved a 7-year-old boy from drowning in Indianapolis on Jan. 19, 1968. The 7-year-old and another boy, 5, ventured onto an ice shelf along the bank of a creek when they fell into water 20 feet deep.

They managed to stay afloat and held to the edge of the ice.

A third boy flagged McDonald, who was a college student at the time. From a bridge over the creek, McDonald jumped into the water 25 feet below and submerged. When he surfaced, he found that the 7-year-old boy had lost ►

 OVERHEARD

It was the most heroic thing I've ever seen. Sometimes, people call us heroes. And in this instance, in no way were we the hero. Mikala deserves all the credit. – Fire lieutenant who responded to the scene of a burning apartment after the rescue of three of her children by **Mikala Vish**, Carnegie Hero #10325

All I can say is this guy was supposed to live. I'm a man of faith, and I've learned to listen to your gut and the promptings you get. The Lord wanted him alive. Things could have gone different a million different directions, but things worked out on his behalf. That's my conclusion. Whether it was me or someone else, he was supposed to live. – **Brandon Bair**, Carnegie Hero #10307

Everyone can be a hero every single day. You never really know what's going to happen to you. – Eyewitness to actions of **Jose M. Pichardo**, Carnegie Hero #10354

I'm not surprised, but very proud to see a citizen help out another citizen. It's nice to see people still willing to help each other out. – Police officer who responded to scene where **Jordan B. Kurtzer**, Carnegie Hero #10377, removed an unconscious driver from a submerging pickup truck

There was no way I was gonna leave that boy in that truck, no way, not an option. If it calls for my life, so be it. I wasn't gonna leave him. – **Joseph D. Donnell**, Carnegie Hero #10380

Anybody who knows anything about Tony, it's surprising that he passed away, but when you hear the story about how he passed away, I don't think it's really surprising to anyone. – friend of **Anthony Diehl**, Carnegie Hero #10383

Their act of heroism is truly a reflection of their character. They loved their family so much. – widow of **Christopher Novecosky**, Carnegie Hero #10426, who with **Joseph Novecosky**, Carnegie Hero #10427, drowned attempting to save their two nieces

I had front row seats to a miracle – **Stephen D. Rhodes**, Carnegie Hero #10385

As cops, we're not trained to run into fire. Technically we weren't supposed to be there. But we had to try. There was someone in there. – **Stephen Harder**, Carnegie Hero #10414



ROLL OF HONOR UPDATED ONLINE

The Hero Fund recently updated its online Roll of Honor Vol. II that chronicles the brave acts of Carnegie heroes awarded from 2018 to 2022.

The Roll of Heroes and Heroines, Vol. II, was commissioned from world-renowned calligrapher John Stevens of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The first pages were unveiled in 2018 at the Hero Fund's Power of One gala, which celebrated the 10,000th and 10,001st Carnegie heroes. Stevens is hand-lettering the pages sending the work annually to Pittsburgh, where the pages are then scanned and displayed on the Hero Fund's website. The roll, now totaling 39 pages, can be viewed, and searched, at carnegiehero.org/heroes/roll-of-honor.

The pages will eventually be incorporated into a bound book, but for now are stored in a portfolio at the Hero Fund's offices.

In his initial talk with Commission President Eric Zahren, Stevens said he sensed "a good social purpose" to the project.

"It's the kind of project that is becoming rarer. I could see it was a worthy project. I liked how interested [the staff was] in the project—artists appreciate an audience," said Stevens.

Zahren said Stevens was uniquely qualified to complete the project. "From the very beginning it seemed that John took a sincere interest in the Carnegie Hero Fund, especially the courage and sacrifice of our awardees," Zahren said. "Our only request was that he reflect these core ideals in his work."

In addition to the text, Stevens applied gold leaf, vibrant colors, and a floral design, all qualities of illuminated manuscripts and traditional calligraphy. The floral work that flank the title of the Deed of Trust is the same flora—oak, ivy, thistle, and laurel— that is found on the back of the Carnegie Medal, respectively signifying strength, friendship, persistence, and glory – the attributes of a hero.

Zahren described the Roll of Heroes and Heroines as a "visible link to the work we do and the reasons we do it."

"It remains our guiding light as we go about our daily work. To have it displayed, along with the names of heroes we have recognized and continue to honor, should inspire all of ▶

FRIENDS REMEMBERED

▶ from p.15

consciousness and the other boy was no longer in sight. Lifting the boy onto the ice shelf, McDonald climbed out and carried him to the bank. After he looked in vain for the other boy, McDonald administered artificial respiration to the 7-year-old and succeeded in reviving him.

McDonald served in the Indiana National Guard from 1967 to 1972, where he was recognized for his heroic actions. His bravery, beyond the Carnegie Medal, earned him accolades from the American Red Cross and the National Guard.

McDonald was known for his dependability and strong work ethic. After he earned his education at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, he spent 14 years as a mail carrier with the United States Postal Service before venturing into entrepreneurship as the owner and operator of McDonald Trucking for 30 years.

He was an avid softball player, golf enthusiast, and enjoyed traveling with friends. He was described as having a sharp wit, generous spirit, and outgoing nature that made him a beloved figure among his friends and family.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara McDonald; daughters, Molly Pearson and Emily Dick; grandchildren, Corey Dick, Sean Pearson, and Evan Pearson; brother, Michael McDonald; and sister, Patricia Beidelschies.

JAMISON S. KOCZAN



Jamison S. Koczan

Carnegie Hero **Jamison S. Koczan**, 48, died recently.

Koczan received the Carnegie Medal after he rescued a woman from assault in Winter Park, Florida, on June 16, 2014. The woman's husband had struck her and forced her into a pickup truck where he threatened her with a handgun. The woman screamed for help as the assailant attempted to drive from the parking lot of an office complex. Koczan was at work in one of the nearby buildings when he and a coworker witnessed the attack. They approached the truck and Koczan went to the passenger's side where he reached into the vehicle. He grasped the woman and pulled her from the assailant's grasp.

The assailant left the vehicle and pointed the gun at Koczan and his coworker. He threatened them and Koczan ran with the woman away from the vehicle as he circled back to his office building. The assailant pursued them. At one point during the chase, Koczan fell. The coworker continued to flee, taking the woman into the building and locking themselves in a private office. Koczan regained his footing and fled into the building. Using the butt of his gun, the assailant broke into the office space and threatened the coworker in the private office, demanding that she release his wife. The coworker refused and the assailant left. He later turned himself into police. ☒

▶ from sidebar at left

ROLL OF HONOR

us," he added.

Stevens is in the process of illustrating the pages that contain the 2023 Carnegie Medal recipients.

The Roll of Heroes and Heroines, Vol. 1, contains summaries of the Carnegie Medal recipients from 1905 to 2017. It is also available for perusing on the Hero Fund's website or at the Fund's Pittsburgh offices.

Together, these rolls of honor fulfill the last line of the Commission's Deed of Trust, which requires that "A finely executed roll of the heroes and heroines shall be kept displayed in the office at Pittsburgh." ☒

FROM THE ARCHIVES



2015 shark attack strengthens the call of the sea for victim and rescuer

Colin W. Cook, 25, was surfing in waters off of Haleiwa, Hawaii, on Oct. 9, 2015. As described in an article by [MidWeek](#), Cook had moved to O’ahu four years prior and lived on the North Shore, surfing daily just outside of Haleiwa and exploring all aspects of the sport including surfboard-building. Growing up in Rhode Island, Cook was consumed with sports, specifically skateboarding, snowboarding, and motocross.

On that October day, Cook “went across the street and checked the waves,” he later told a reporter. “It looked pretty fun so I went back, grabbed my board, and paddled out before work.”

After two hours in the water, straddling his shortboard, he waited for the next wave, bobbing in the water, about 600 feet from shore, with both of his legs dangling in the water with a 6-foot leash attached to his left ankle.

In an instant, Cook was violently pulled into the water by an 11-foot Tiger shark that bit his left leg. According to local [news](#) in Hawaii, the shark attack on Cook was the fifth recorded incident in Hawaii that year.

“I open my eyes and see this huge tiger shark latched onto my leg, dragging me. I immediately go into this fight or flight response, pushing the shark off with my left hand and punching it with my right.”

Cook punched the shark about the face and pushed against its nose and mouth to free himself. Its teeth caused deep lacerations to his hand and he even lost a few fingertips. The shark then bit through Cook’s leg, severing it about an inch above the knee.

Free from the shark’s jaws, Cook surfaced and climbed atop his board. But the leash attached to his leg was inside the shark’s mouth and as the shark swam, it towed the board with it. ▶



Haleiwa, Hawaii



FROM THE ARCHIVES



Taken by a bystander on shore, Carnegie Hero **Keoni Bowthorpe** paddles toward the beach while attempting to keep surfer Colin Cook on his back. Cook's left leg had just been severed about an inch above the knee by a large tiger shark. Bowthorpe paddled by hand about 1,300 feet while Cook was in and out of consciousness.

Cook screamed, "Shark!" and alerted two nearby surfers who retreated toward shore.

Filmmaker **Keoni Bowthorpe**, 33, lived in Haleiwa and was on an 8-foot-long, standup paddle board in the water. From 500 feet away, he witnessed the attack, concluded immediately that it was a shark, and began to paddle toward Cook.

Although the two men did not go to the scene together that day, they were neighbors and casually acquainted with one another.

"So, I turned around and saw the shark hit him," Bowthorpe said. "I saw it drag him down. Then he was calling for help, and I went straight back over."

A 10-foot cloud of Cook's blood surrounded him in the water. Cook's leash eventually severed and Cook remained on his board, no longer being towed by the shark. As Bowthorpe approached, Cook shouted to him to throw the leash from Bowthorpe's board. Without stopping, Bowthorpe threw the leash, intending to tow Cook to shore. Cook failed to catch the leash, and called to Bowthorpe, who turned around and returned to the scene, along with the shark. Seeing the shark – the largest he had ever encountered - he plunged his 6-foot paddle into the water and used it to push the shark away.

Seeing that Cook's injured hand made it impossible for him to hold the leash, Bowthorpe stood on the paddle board for a few seconds to determine his next move. The shark returned, and Bowthorpe, again, used his paddle to push the shark away.

In a panic, Cook left his board, swam to Bowthorpe's, and attempted to get on, knocking Bowthorpe into the bloodied water. Bowthorpe lost his paddle – his only defense against the shark – and quickly pulled Cook off his board, returned to his board, laying face-down and then pulled Cook on top of him. He retrieved his paddle.

"My stand-up board is pretty small," said Bowthorpe. "Once I was



Carnegie Hero **Keoni Bowthorpe** films a tiger shark for the award-winning documentary, "Saving Jaws," about the importance of saving sharks from extinction.

able to get Colin on my back I gave the shark one more whack, let go of my paddle, and started to prone-paddle him in."

The weight of the two men on the board caused it and part of Bowthorpe's body to submerge. He paddled with his hands toward shore as Cook went in and out of consciousness while he managed to maintain a grasp of Bowthorpe.

An underwater reef and the strength of the currents prevented Bowthorpe from taking a direct course to shore. Paddling about 1,300 feet, Bowthorpe stated that at one point he felt the shark's skin under his hand.

Cook's roommate had observed the accident from a house just off the beach at the scene. He entered the water to help Bowthorpe and Cook when they were about 10 feet from shore. Bowthorpe and the roommate moved quickly to help Cook on the board where they

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Colin Cook surfing in the April 2020 International Surfing Association Adaptive Championship in La Jolla, Cook won the world title in the Para Stand 3 Division. He was the fourth above-the-knee amputee to return to stand-up surfing.

dragged it farther up the beach. Another man tied a surfboard leash around Cook's left thigh to serve as a tourniquet. They used the board as a stretcher where Bowthorpe and others carried Cook to a nearby highway to await paramedics. At this time, Cook was still going in and out of consciousness.

Medics arrived in about 15 minutes and took Cook to the hospital, where he was held for eight days to close the wound on his left leg, which had been severed above the knee. He required treatment for severe hand injuries, which included fingertip amputations.

Bowthorpe felt thankful after the rescue.

"I dropped to my knees, embraced my wife and three little babies, and never felt more gratitude," he said.

Cook later talked about life following the attack, "It's (a) day by day process definitely. The first few days, you know the four or five days were really hard and just day by day slowly and healing up, and trying to stay strong."

While there was a long road ahead, Cook made vast improvements and returned to the water just three months after the attack.

"Every surfer knows that when you enter the ocean, that's the shark's home," Cook told [Hawaii public radio](#). "They're out there, you just have to take that out of your mind."

The support from the Hawaii community and other victims of shark-attacks, encouraged Cook and his family.

"The outpouring from the (Hawaii) community is like nothing I've been part of," Cook's father said. "The culture here, we're so appreciative."

According to an article in [Honolulu Magazine](#), Cook continued to

live his life to the fullest. Five years after the attack, Cook was back on the shore and settled into a new job as a prosthetics technician with Prosthetics & Orthotic Associates, a company that helped him with his custom carbon-fiber leg for surfing. He went on to win three Paralympic surf championship titles in the above-the-knee amputation category. He's found love and moved past the incident.

For his actions and bravery in saving Cook, Bowthorpe was nominated for the Carnegie Medal by someone anonymous to him.

"I have no lifesaving experience - my experience is keeping myself alive when it gets big up here," Bowthorpe said. "Instinct kind of takes over and your body does things without your permission, and that's kind of what happened."

Hawaii's governor David Ige presented the medal to Bowthorpe in the state capital of Honolulu in November 2016. Bowthorpe was joined by his wife, Ashley, and their three children.

In the months and years that followed, the two men managed to keep in touch with one another.

"The experience we shared of fighting off a shark together—that bonds us in a way that is difficult to explain," Bowthorpe said.

"Friends, absolutely. Brothers is probably appropriate in a way. We keep in touch and our families keep in touch."

At the time of the attack, Bowthorpe was in the process of making a film with a working title called *Saving Jaws*, which details the practice of shark-finning which kills around 100 million sharks a year and threatens an entire genus. He went on to finish the film, which was recognized by the Cannes International Independent Film Festival for cinematography. ☒

--Griffin Erdely, *Communications Assistant*



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Impulse is a periodic newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, a private operating foundation established in 1904 by Andrew Carnegie. • The Hero Fund awards the Carnegie Medal to those throughout the United States and Canada who risk death or serious injury to an extraordinary degree while saving or attempting to save the lives of others. • The Commission also provides financial assistance, such as scholarship aid and continuing grants to the heroes and the dependents of those awardees who are disabled or die as the result of their heroic acts.

Further information is available online or by contacting the Commission.

Any ideas? *Impulse* welcomes your submissions for publication, and your ideas for consideration. Be in touch!

Address change? Please keep us posted.

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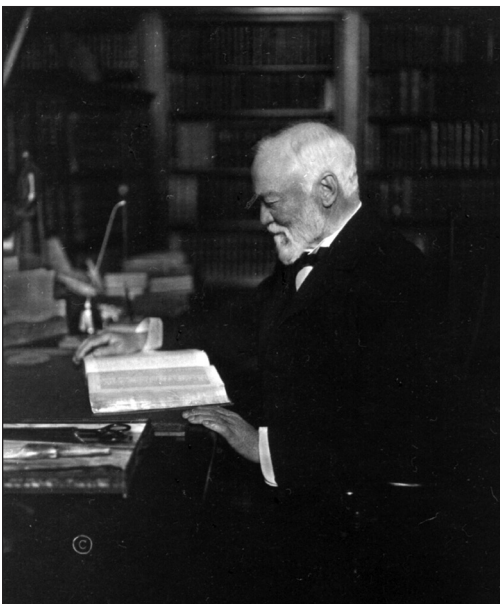
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✦ THE QUOTABLE A.C. ✦



Dealing with petty affairs tend to make small men; dealing with larger affairs broadens and strengthens character.

— Andrew Carnegie, *Gospel of Wealth* 1889

➤ CONTINUUM ➤

GRAVE MARKERS Bronze grave markers (below), cast in the likeness of the Carnegie Medal, are available at no cost to the families of awardees who have passed. They are designed for mounting on stone or bronze memorials.

MEDAL REFINISHING The Hero Fund will refinish Carnegie Medals at no cost to the owner. The medals are to be sent to the Hero Fund's office by insured, registered mail. Allow a month for the process.

OBITUARIES Written accounts of the awardee's life, such as contained in an obituary, are sought for addition to the awardee's page on the Commission's website.

ANNUAL REPORTS Copies of the Hero Fund's most recent annual reports (2021-2022) are available online or by contacting the Hero Fund.

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