

# PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION

**ESTABLISHED APRIL 15, 1904, BY ANDREW CARNEGIE**, the Carnegie Hero Fund was created to recognize outstanding acts of selfless heroism performed in the United States and Canada. The Commission awards the CARNEGIE MEDAL to those who risk death or serious physical injury to an extraordinary degree while saving or attempting to save the lives of others.

The single event that stimulated Mr. Carnegie to organize the Fund was the Harwick mine disaster near Pittsburgh in January 1904, which claimed 181 lives. The victims included an engineer and a miner who went into the stricken mine in a valiant attempt to rescue others. The tragedy and the sacrifices so moved Mr. Carnegie that he promptly took action on his then-novel idea of honoring and helping “heroes of civilization.”



“I do not expect to stimulate or create heroism by this Fund,” Mr. Carnegie wrote, “knowing well that heroic action is impulsive. But I do believe that, if the hero is injured in his bold attempt to serve or save his fellows, he and those dependent upon him should not suffer pecuniarily.”

The Commission’s Deed of Trust established a \$5 million fund to recognize persons “in peaceful vocations” who act to “preserve or rescue their fellows.” Mr. Carnegie specified that each hero to be recognized, or the next of kin, was to receive a medal, reciting the heroic deed it commemorated and carrying the Biblical quotation: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). The Commission was empowered to make monetary grants, as well. Given to the heroes or the next of kin in cases of death, the grants include continuing support, scholarship assistance, and death benefits. More than **\$40 million** has been given to **more than 10,000** awardees or their survivors over the life of the Fund.

Rescue acts brought to the Commission’s attention are carefully evaluated, and those that appear to have award potential are then investigated and reported to the Commission for decision. To bring an act of heroism to the attention of the Commission, visit the Commission online.

The Commission is a private operating foundation, classed as a charitable organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code. Visit the Commission’s website for further information, including an in-depth history of the organization and summaries of recently awarded cases: [carnegiehero.org](http://carnegiehero.org)



*Andrew Carnegie*



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