

Thompson, Robert

Belleville-Intelligencer

Y Hero Medal Awarded Belleville Boy, Age 11

BY HARRY MULHALL
Staff Reporter

At 11 years old Robert Thompson is a public school student, a strong swimmer and a clarinet player.

And yesterday he officially became a hero.

That and more.

With the award of the YMCA heroic services gold medal he becomes a member of the most exclusive club of courageous Canadians.

Only four such medals have award was initiated in Canada in the 1930s.

Robert, son of Mr. and Mrs. D. W. Thompson, 220 John Street, received the citation calmly — just as calmly as the way he earned it.

It was his level thinking in a dangerous situation the afternoon of Aug. 20 in the Moira River at Latta that won him the award.

That day he went to the rescue of his parents' friend, Mrs. Heidi Stroempl of Tweed, as she was stricken with

lifesaving techniques he had learned during swimming instruction at the Belleville Y.

Instead he pushed the drowning woman underwater and as she broke surface clapped an air tube over her head. Then he easily towed her ashore.

His nimble thinking in the emergency was credited by police with saving Mrs. Stroempl's life.

The medal was granted as soon as the national YMCA executive was informed by local officials, says Belleville Y president Harry Fast.

Mr. Fast went to Robert's house yesterday with Alderman Donald Williams, national Y vice-president, to confirm the citation.

The only thing missing was the gold medal.

Since the award is a rarity no replicas are kept in stock. Each one must be individually struck for presentation.

Robert's award, says Mr. Fast, now is in the making and will likely be publicly presented some time next month.

cramp while swimming.

Robert was too lightweight to practice on an adult the

The Intelligencer
Se Aug. 22 1968

Blowing His Own Horn?

Intell - Sep 20/68

No, 11-year-old Robert Thompson isn't blowing his own horn — though he's justified in doing so. For rescuing a drowning woman the Belleville boy yesterday became only the fourth Canadian since the 1930s to win the YMCA heroic medal. Harry Fast (left) city Y president, and Alderman Don Williams, national vice-president, brought news to Robert then listened as he showed another talent — clarinet-playing.

