

**“The Humorous Side”**  
**(A Collection of Memories from Members)**

**And, Who Are You?**

*Marcia Finisdore, Media, PA*  
*Rocky Stone Humanitarian Award 2007*  
*SHHH/HLAA Board of Trustees 1990-2002*  
*Past President 1998-2000*

**T**wenty years worth of memories of Rocky Stone in less than 400 words is as intimidating as Rocky would sometimes be! But here goes!

In 1982, I was in graduate school getting a Masters Degree in Nursing. The self help movement was in full bloom. I thought a thesis about hearing loss and self help might be a good tool for nurses.



In the course of my research I quickly learned there was very little information about hearing loss available. Luckily, in the research process, I found SHHH/HLAA and wrote to Rocky Stone. Within a week a huge carton appeared at my door full of information related to hearing loss.

A year later Media, PA founded SHHH/HLAA and a Chapter started. I joined, but was too involved in my own life to take the organization or Rocky seriously. However, in 1989 I attended the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary convention, my first! Going down the escalator at the Hyatt in Bethesda, I noticed the gentleman in front of me starring at my name badge. Finally he said, “You’re the lady that wrote the article about self help and hearing loss in Volta Review. Why did you do that?” “Because they asked me to.” “Why didn’t you talk to me first?” “Well, who are you?” It was Rocky Stone himself doubled up in laughter! What a sense of humor! This did not seem to me a fortuitous start for “making memories” or getting involved.

From that day forth I was heavily involved in SHHH/HLAA on all levels and on the Board of Trustees from 1990-2002. I learned the following about Rocky:

- Rocky loved a good argument.
- He loved to raise a glass for any and all occasions.
- The man was very, very smart, but I was a better gin rummy player. (I’ve asked my children to make sure the running score sheet we kept is in my coffin so we can take up the game where we left off!)
- His jokes were the best!
- March 3 is Rocky’s birthday which is also the feast day of St. Marcia, an occasion to raise more than one glass!

The ups and downs, good times and bad, debates and arguments never interfered with Rocky’s love for people and his unconditional acceptance of everyone.

Thanks Rocky.

## Who Is This Guy?

**Gael Hannan, Etobicoke, Ontario Canada**  
*Canadian Hard of Hearing Association Board of Directors*

**W**ith a name like Rocky Stone, you better be memorable or the moniker could hang around your neck like...well, a stone.

I first met Rocky in May of 2000 when he and Ahme were attending the Canadian Hard of Hearing Conference in St. John's, Newfoundland. I had heard of him before, but still wasn't quite clear on the name – was it Stoney Rock, Rocky Stone, or Rock of Ages?

But at our fateful first meeting, we were both sitting in the front of row of a hearing loss workshop, with an empty chair between us. The workshop was an interactive session, something to do with attitude that required all of us in the room to connect with each other by holding onto a piece of string. I can't remember if Rocky became part of this human spider web (I'm thinking *not!*), but I vividly recall when, near the end of the workshop, he leaned over to me and said, "I can't see you very well, but I can tell that you have a lot of passion and energy."

Although I'm sure this was due partly to the fact that I am very *loud*, I immediately adored him, and I know that thousands of others have had similar reactions to the force that was Rocky Stone. A couple of years later, I began presenting *Unheard Voices*, my solo show on hearing loss, in the U.S., and often ran into Rocky at various state conferences. On each occasion, he greeted me as the Canadian humorist, but admonished me to *please slow down!* Once he said to someone standing with us, "I've seen her show so often, I could do it myself!"

And what an honor that would have been for me!



## Where Have You Been?

**Wayne L. Roorda, Voorhees, NJ**  
*SHHH/HLAA Board of Trustees 1986-1989, 2005-2008*

**I** first learned about SHHH/HLAA from a small advertisement in the National Association of the Deaf Broadcaster newsletter. It said membership was \$7.00 and it looked like something of interest to me. This had to be in late 1980, early 1981. I sent in a check with my name and address, etc., and said something along the line "where have you been all this time?" meaning the organization. Joan Kleinrock, Chapter Development Director, answered a lot of the mail at that time since the office was still in the basement of Rocky's home. She returned the paper with a written note; "We are here. Where have you been?" An organization with people who had a sense of humor was one I knew I wanted to be involved with.

After I became involved with SHHH, I realized that there were others out there just like me with a hearing loss and essentially deaf but not part of the Deaf Community, even though I



had graduated from Gallaudet University. Learning how to help others with a hearing loss, so that they could also remain a part of the hearing community has had the biggest impact on me. You give of yourself because you do not want others to feel trapped because of their hearing loss.

There are too many special memories of Rocky to even describe. Some of the real special ones were when Rocky and Ahme had the Board of Trustee dinners at their home. This was really an opportunity to meet and learn from other board members as well as Rocky and his family.

There has always been talk about Rocky's icy stare, which tended to intimidate many. But it simply was his way of focusing on what you were saying.

It was very exciting when Rocky and I had our first voice-to-voice telephone conversation in October 1997. Rocky already had his cochlear implant and I had my first CI implanted in August 1997, with activation in September. I called Rocky in early October and when Ahme answered the phone she said Rocky was out on the patio so I waited for him to come to the phone. We started chatting and I heard a "clack," "clack," "clack," in the background. Immediately I said, "Rocky, what are you doing?" and I think he was a bit taken back when I asked that question. Then he said, "I was folding my cane." We were both so shocked over this that we paused for about 20 seconds before either said anything. Not only was I carrying on a conversation with him but to hear the noise in the background was almost overwhelming.

## **Al Laughs about His Faux Pas**

*Al Buck, Kalamazoo, MI  
Former President MI-SHHH*

**A**t one of our Michigan "Hear Here" Conferences we were happy to have Rocky as a featured speaker. Over the years I had met and greatly enjoyed Rocky's company at various events and was looking forward to seeing him again. I was quite pleased when I was asked to introduce him.

I opened the session with a few announcements and started my introduction of Rocky who was sitting at a table right next to the speaker's platform with his wife Ahme, daughter Melanie, and others. I was sharing some of his background and accomplishments when I paused very briefly, and heard Rocky's soft, quiet voice, NOT what he said, just the voice. Without even a little hesitation, and obviously without the slightest hint of common sense, I leaned over the mic, looked down at him and said, "Rocky, I didn't say you could speak yet." Good Lord! To this day I can't believe I did that.

The infrared system, audio loop, sign interpreters, the captioner – everybody picked up on it. I couldn't find a hole big, small, or otherwise to dive into. Rocky took it like Rocky would, quite graciously, with a smile and a nod of acknowledgement. After the hall quieted down and my flaming red face cooled off, I again thought I heard that soft quiet voice and this is what I thought he said, "Careful Al, I'm up next!"



When Rocky did come up to the mic I didn't know if I should run outside and hide, or stay in the hall and take my medicine. I was on pins and needles waiting to see how he would even the score but – nothing, not a word. Ah, I thought, he's letting the tension build to keep me on my toes. But throughout the two days of the conference, still nothing, just Rocky his usual calm self.

Later I thought long and hard about the whole incident and finally decided that he did that on purpose and was just letting me stew in my own juices. If so, he sure knew how to mess with my head. I blamed the CIA for teaching him so well. But then, I'm not sure Rocky needed teaching in anything! What a fantastic individual!

## **Rocky's Humor Got Us Laughing**

*Carol M. Granaldi, Cream Ridge, NJ  
Co-founder and Past President HLA-NJ*

**R**ocky was an excellent speaker and I always looked forward to his talks at SHHH Conventions. He usually started out with a bit of humor to get us laughing.

I recall one particular joke he told us about a blind man and his Seeing Eye dog. [Rocky was also blind as well as having a hearing loss.] I'll never forget the joke. Each time I retell his story about the blind man and the dog, I still see and hear Rocky telling it.

He once said, "I never met a microphone I didn't like." It would be wonderful if those who never knew him could hear him speak.

