



Barbara at the Pennsylvania  
Walk4Hearing, fall 2018.

You're all part  
of the HLAA  
network—  
whether you're  
a member,  
constituent,  
corporate  
partner, donor,  
Walk4Hearing  
participant,  
chapter member  
or a visitor to our  
website. Let's  
celebrate our 40  
years of building  
networks.

## Celebrating Our Networks and Shared Vision

BY BARBARA KELLEY

On December 14, my family will continue our tradition and participate in Wreaths Across America at Arlington National Cemetery. The goal is lofty—to cover every Veteran's grave in the cemetery, totaling 253,000. Why do thousands of volunteers do that? To remember the fallen, honor those who serve, and teach our children the value of freedom.

"Thank you for your service" might sound trite and overused at times. But said in the right context at the right time, the five-word message says it all. We know that service often means sustaining injuries such as hearing loss and tinnitus. That's why we're dedicating this issue to our Veterans.

As I write this, I'm remembering my parents and their stories about World War II, when my dad served in the U.S. Army Air Corps. (He wore hearing aids later in life supplied by the Department of Veterans Affairs—the VA.) I think of my brothers, who were drafted during the Vietnam War. (One of them wears hearing aids supplied by the VA, and the other needs them.) And more recently, I think about my husband, who served three deployments in post 9/11 as an Army Reserve JAG officer. And I think of many others.

To bring it a little closer to HLAA, on the wall in my office hangs the American flag that was used to cover the casket of HLAA Member Edward K. Nesbitt when he was buried at Arlington National Cemetery. He left HLAA a large bequest, and his family gave us the flag, which we framed with a commemorative plaque. And as HLAA celebrates its 40th anniversary, I think of our Founder Rocky Stone, who sustained his hearing loss during his Army years, along with many Veterans connected to HLAA in one way or another. Our Veterans, along with our memories, make up this far-reaching network.

**"... the world doesn't change one person at a time. It changes as networks of relationships form among people who discover they share a common cause and vision of what's possible. ... We don't need to convince large numbers of people to change; instead, we need to connect with kindred spirits."**

—Margaret Wheatley, author

## HLAA Walk4Hearing

This year, more than 10,000 of you walked across America in 20 cities in our Walk4Hearing. Since 2006, more than 100,000 people have walked. Talk about a formidable network!

This HLAA event raises awareness, funds, and on the day of the Walk, gives people with hearing loss and their families a way to connect. Here's where we see the most children participating in an HLAA event. Can you imagine what it's like for a child to meet another child with a hearing loss for the first time and enjoy a day of fun?!

## HLAA Chapters

One of the first things Founder Rocky Stone and volunteer Joan Kleinrock did in the early days of our organization was to set up the chapter network across the country. For the first time, people with all degrees of hearing loss came together to learn about technology and to support one another. Many friendships were formed—even marriages—in this great HLAA Chapter network that continues today. Find a chapter near you at [hearingloss.org](http://hearingloss.org).

## The Person-Centered Hearing Network

This past August, I attended the inaugural meeting of the Person-Centered Hearing Network (PCHN), hosted and facilitated by the Ida Institute in Denmark. HLAA is part of this network, along with professional audiology associations, universities and other patient organizations from around the world. The U.S. was well represented with HLAA, the VA, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Rush University, the University of Utah and the University of South Florida. We realized the power of our shared ambition to enhance the quality of hearing care by promoting a culture that empowers people to participate actively in their own care, strengthening the voice of patients in hearing care generally. With this network, we want to:

- Create a global platform that allows members to exchange knowledge and experiences, identify common interests, and foster new collaboration to advance person-centered care
- Build connections among different types of organizations, across and within geographies
- Increase general awareness and understanding of person-centered care, including within our respective organizations



Laying Wreaths Across America on Uncle Bill's grave, Arlington National Cemetery.

- Influence practice and provide tools and resources that enable professionals to deliver person-centered care
- Infuse audiology education and training with person-centered care
- Strengthen our capacity to measure the effects of person-centered care
- Agree on an annual plan outlining the concrete actions and ways in which we'll work together to implement person-centered care in various settings around the world

You're all part of the HLAA network—whether you're a member, constituent, corporate partner, donor, Walk4Hearing participant, chapter member or a visitor to our website. Let's celebrate our 40 years of building networks. I wish all of you a happy holiday season and a happy new year. **HL**

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