

A Legacy of Giving and Purpose

Longtime HLAA member ensures her impact lives on

“As a child, I was captivated by a line from the movie *So Dear to My Heart*, longtime and instrumental HLAA Member Pat Clickener recently recalled, referencing the 1948 Disney film. “It’s not what you’ve got, but what you do with what you’ve got.’ I don’t know why that had such an impact on a 7-year-old child, but it became the steering wheel of all that followed. And it was enormously motivating when I started losing my hearing when I was only 17 and starting college.”

As a teenager, Pat was hospitalized for a continued high fever that persisted for days. It was the beginning of a steep downward spiral in her hearing. But the stark reality of it all came crashing down several years later, in 1964, when at the age of 21, she was told by an ENT at Washington University in St. Louis that nothing could ever be done to help her.

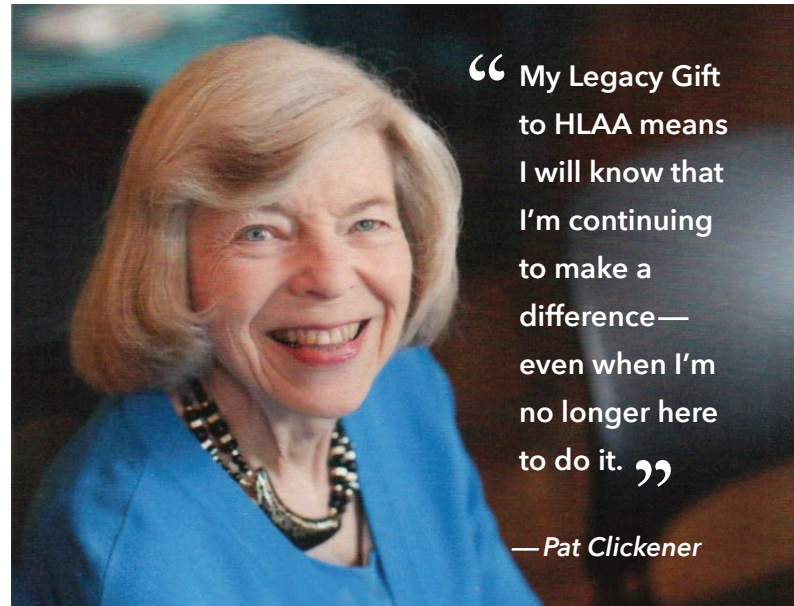
It was an especially painful period in Pat’s life—one she prays others will never have to go through. Her profound hearing loss came at a time when there were few—if any—assistive devices. No captions. Near-zero access to educational aids. And virtually no way to connect with others who also had hearing loss.

“It was like being stranded on an island without even a white flag to get anyone’s attention,” Pat remembers. “There was nowhere to turn for help.”

That painful isolation, Pat says, gave her the opportunity to grow in compassion and gain perspective. And it strengthened her belief that we’re each meant to use our unique talents, skills and abilities to make a difference in the world.

“It’s what propelled me in my work with HLAA—then called SHHH—in the early 1980s, when I chose to leave my executive-level job at a major ad agency in Chicago and go work with what was then a fledgling non-profit,” Pat explained, referencing the two years when she worked in the national office near Washington, DC, with HLAA Founder Rocky Stone to get the association off the ground. “It was a now-or-never situation. The very young and very small organization would either catch hold, or it would disappear. Rocky needed help. And so, I went as a full-time staff volunteer—along with Joan Kleinrock and Carol Lingley.”

Two years later, Pat returned to her friends, family and ad agency job in Chicago. But her work on behalf of the association, and her imprint on the HLAA commu-



nity, have continued and deepened. As a national board member and president, hearing health advocate and educator, contributor to *Hearing Life* magazine, annual donor, and all-around sounding board and resource for HLAA across decades—Pat makes a monumental difference. Now, as a Legacy Donor, she has ensured that her positive influence on the lives of others will continue.

There’s a tremendous amount to mourn when an individual loses the ability to hear. But in keeping with that line from her early childhood moviegoing days, Pat also recognizes what her hearing loss has given her: “Resilience. Resourcefulness. Many terrific people I never would have encountered otherwise. The opportunity to mentor and help others. The chance to discover talents I didn’t know I had. But most of all, my hearing loss led me to HLAA—which in turn, allowed me to fulfill my life’s purpose. I believe I was put on earth to do something meaningful and specific. And the work I did, and what I’ve been called to give as a result of my hearing loss, was it.” **HL**

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Pat in her youth before she lost her hearing.

“ It’s so critical that HLAA be supported forever. It’s up to us to keep it going. And we can only do that through donations. ”

—Pat Clickener



For 28 years—beginning in 1960 — Pat lived with hearing loss that progressed quickly. She received a cochlear implant in 1988.



HLAA extends our deepest thanks to Pat for placing HLAA in her will. This generous gift will enable us to empower people for future generations. To learn how to include a gift to HLAA in your will, contact Director of Development Marilyn DiGiacobbe at 301.657.2051 or mdgiacobbe@hearingloss.org.

