

By Gail Garfinkel Weiss

# Meet Donors Who Make a Difference

**Like most nonprofit organizations, HLAA depends on contributions to sustain its many endeavors. Three long-term donors and supporters—Dick Meyer, Laurie Meyer, and Maurice Wilson—met with HLAA Board of Trustees members Diana Bender and Kevin Franck at the Convention last June in Washington, DC, where they discussed their involvement with HLAA and their visions for the future.**

## Dick and Laurie Meyer

A former director of marketing development for a division of Abbott Laboratories—and a nephew of HLAA Founder Rocky Stone—Dick Meyer has been an HLAA member since 1981, is a past national board member and national president, and is currently on the board of the HLAA Santa Fe Chapter. In his talk with Diana, Dick, who has worn

hearing aids in both ears since 1984, said that he especially appreciates HLAA's advocacy efforts on behalf of people with hearing loss. In turn, he and Laurie, his wife of 47 years, are strong HLAA advocates. "We tell everyone we meet about HLAA," he says, "and direct those with hearing loss to the HLAA website. HLAA helps so many people, as evidenced by the testimonials of participants at the Convention."

Laurie, who in Dick's words, "has hearing that is so acute I can't get away with anything," is the Santa Fe Chapter's communications titan. In addition to conveying information about chapter events to the press, she helps chapter meeting speakers strengthen their presentations. Going forward, Dick and Laurie hope HLAA will collaborate with similar organizations to increase the use and awareness of hearing-related technology, expand captioning access, and reduce the cost of hearing aids. "Of course," Dick notes, "to do this we must be fiscally sound."

## Maurice Wilson

Maurice Wilson, a longtime member and former co-president of the HLAA Houston Chapter, has had a hearing loss since early childhood. She told Kevin that she went from using a "huge monstrosity of a hearing aid with a battery pack on my thigh and a wire leading to the amplifier on my chest and another wire to my ear," to several smaller hearing aids, to a cochlear implant (CI) in 1995, and a second CI in 2006. After her first CI she helped organize a Houston-based cochlear implant support group.

As the widow of a World War II veteran, several of whose comrades in arms came home with hearing loss, Maurice notes that tinnitus and hearing loss are among the most common service-related conditions. As a result, she has used her HLAA involvement to further the cause of veterans with hearing loss. "Our veterans have given so much for us, they deserve our help when they need it," she says. It is her



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Dick and Laurie Meyer



Maurice Wilson

hope that HLAA will ultimately attract younger veterans, perhaps through mentorship by older veterans who can tell them about the services HLAA offers.

Maurice is a retired teacher who spent almost four decades instructing children with special needs. “I loved all of those children and was very successful in teaching them practical living skills and acceptable behavior,” she said.

Maurice’s HLAA involvement extends to the Walk4Hearing. She also emphasizes the importance of holding convention workshops to support chapter leaders. “Chapters are the heart of the organization and this enables them to be as strong as possible,” she told Kevin. “I want HLAA to always be there to help people when they need help.” **HLM**

*Gail Garfinkel Weiss is a board member of the HLAA New York City Chapter, co-editor of the chapter newsletter and editor of its website, hearinglossnyc.org. Since 2009 Gail has been doing home studies (reports on people who want to be foster or adoptive parents) for the Nassau Department of Social Services. From 1997 until 2008 she was a writer for Medical Economics magazine, and during that time she wrote several articles on how to communicate with patients who do not hear well. Gail is the recipient of three successive Neal Awards (2005-2007) from the American Business Media for editorial excellence.*

## HLAA2017 CONVENTION

### Fun Facts About Salt Lake City!

#### Geography

Salt Lake City lies in a mountain valley with the Wasatch Mountains to the east and north. The Oquirrh (pronounced “oaker”) Mountains border the western edge of the valley.

#### History Lives There

There are many landmarks that portray the city’s history to visitors. Among these are the historic Temple Square, This Is The Place Heritage Park, Mormon Pioneer Memorial Monument, Pioneer Park and more.

#### It’s a Nature Lover’s Delight

Salt Lake City is located close to many state parks that offer some of Utah’s best hiking, biking and golfing opportunities. There are also river and other outdoor expeditions and guided fishing and wildlife experiences. Utah is nature’s playground, so go play!

#### No Transportation? No Problem!

Salt Lake City offers a variety of public transit options, which is very convenient and cost-efficient for visitors. The Utah Transit Authority (UTA) manages light rail, commuter trains and buses. These are the easiest forms of transportation in the city that don’t require having to worry about renting a car, calling a cab or finding parking.

#### Alcohol Reform

Remember Salt Lake City’s strict liquor laws? Well, as of 2009, getting a drink in Salt Lake City is just like the rest of the country! There are endless bars and restaurants to choose from where you can sip prohibition-style cocktails, pick from a menu of more than 100 types of beers and taste concoctions from the city’s finest mixologists.

#### Shopping, Shopping, Shopping!

What’s a vacation without a little shopping spree? There are many opportunities in downtown City Creek Center, the relatively new shopping and dining center, which provides visitors with both an indoor and outdoor shopping experience.

**See pages 28–32 for details on HLAA2017 as well as the registration form.**