

Dot Sowerby Pioneer Award Recipients

NSDA former President and founding member of the NSDA Board of Directors, Dot Sowerby, has led by example as a leader in volunteer service for many years. Her outstanding contributions include writing the book, *Speechless*, attending and educating numerous healthcare professionals at medical and speech conferences across the United States, and leading the Voice Disorder Support Group of Greensboro, NC. In 2015, the NSDA established the Dot Sowerby Pioneer Awards as a way to recognize all of her tireless efforts and to honor the outstanding work of an individual who is a 'pioneer' through their volunteer service. Listed below are the recipients of this award.

2015 Recipient: Pat Hill

Area Contact Person Coordinator, Pat Hill, has served in this role since 2009. Every year, she communicates with over 200 Area Contact Persons with passion, warmth, and positive energy. Prior to serving in this role, Pat was the Regional Coordinator for Southern California and the Southwest Region from 2007-2009. During this time, she was responsible for starting NSDA Support Groups and revitalizing others. Pat's determination to make a difference in the SD community can be seen through her hard work and tireless dedication that she has provided throughout her years working with the NSDA.

2016 Recipient: Karen Adler Feeley

Karen Adler Feeley has made many contributions to the NSDA as an author, moderator, learning consultant, and leader in the NSDA support network. She has worked on the Planning Committee for several NSDA Leadership Days programs and has coordinated a number of opening and closing activities during these events. Overall, Karen uses her creativity, communication, and planning skills to help promote education about SD. As author of, *Easier Done than Said: Living with a Broken Voice*, Karen has helped to raise awareness about SD by sharing her personal experiences with SD. We salute Karen for her outstanding contributions to the NSDA and the SD community.

2017 Recipient: David Barton

An extraordinary, dedicated, and tireless NSDA leader, David has served as the past President, Bulletin Board Moderator, Executive and Support Committee Member, and International Communications Director during his time with this organization. Since 1995, he has supported the NSDA and travelled from his home in New Zealand to attend as many meetings in the United States as possible. As one of the founding Moderators of the NSDA Bulletin Board in 1997, David has done everything in his power to 'pay forward' all the help and support he received from the NSDA when he was first diagnosed with spasmodic dysphonia. He has made an incredible impact in the lives of those in the NSDA community and its members are most grateful to him for his longtime involvement and leadership.

2018 Recipient: Charlie Womble

Since 1992, Charlie has been involved with the organization, lending his financial and leadership skills wherever needed. He joined the NSDA Board of Directors in 1993 and served as Treasurer from 1997-1999. Charlie has also participated as a panelist during Leadership Day and regularly serves as a moderator during the breakout sessions at the Annual NSDA Symposiums. His dedication continues to be seen today, as he is the serving Chairman for both the Audit and Investment Committees. Today, Charlie continues to be a leader and role model for those in the spasmodic dysphonia community.

2019 Recipient: Mary Bifaro

Since 1999, Mary Bifaro has led The SD Support Group of Charlotte, NC, and thus began 30 plus years of service locally. She leads six meetings a year and writes a newsletter following each meeting. In addition, Mary and the group have conducted holiday NSDA fundraisers and NSDA walk fundraisers. Mary's dedication to the NSDA is also evident on the national level. In 2003, Mary was invited to join the NSDA Board of Directors, and in recognition of her role with the Support Network, a new position was created in 2005 called the Support Services Director. In this role, Mary oversees support activities and serves as a liaison to the NSDA Board. Within this role she writes quarterly issues of *Voices of Support* highlighting the work of the support network; chairs NSDA Leadership Workshops in conjunction with our annual meeting; and helps with a host of other NSDA Support Leadership projects. Mary is a creator of acronyms for various NSDA-related activities, and the one that sums her up perfectly is Nothing Stops Determined Advocates. Mary's dedication, passion, leadership makes her the heart of the NSDA's Support Network.

2020 Recipient: Carol Doles

Carol Doles is a dedicated NSDA leader who serves as the Eastern Region & Canada Representative and who founded the Greater Columbus and the Central Virginia support groups. She is also part of the Support Leadership Committee and is an Administrator of the NSDA Support Leadership Facebook Group. In addition, she has served on several planning committees for our Leadership Workshops. According to Carol, "I felt humbled and honored to receive the award. Dot was one of the first to welcome me and let me know that I was not alone in my journey with SD. Dot provided valuable mentorship and included me in her network of leaders. These leaders have all supported, taught, and encouraged me every step of the way. My goal has been to follow these great examples and let every person with SD know that a community awaits them. Living well with SD is within their reach."

2021 Recipient: To be announced!