

## 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 multiple years on the planning committees for the NSDA 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 know that a community awaits them. Living well with SD is within their reach."

**2021 Recipient | Marcia Sterling**

Marcia Sterling joined the NSDA Board of Directors in 2004 and served as Treasurer from 2007 until 2020. She has led the Silicon Valley SD Support Group for 15 years. She has done various fundraising activities to benefit the NSDA including organizing the three Northern California groups for the 2020 Walk for Talk. Marcia has represented the NSDA in Dystonia Advocacy Day and she has participated in SD research. In 2015, she received the Midge Kovacs Annual Award with two other groups from northern California. Marcia helped with the books, *Easier Done than Said: Living with a Broken Voice* and *Speechless No More*. Marcia shared, "I'm so honored to have received the Dot Sowerby Pioneer Award. It means a lot and I'm proud to walk in the footsteps of such a role model!"

**2022 Recipient | Larry Kolasa**

In 1989, Larry Kolasa and a small group of advocates and healthcare professionals founded the NSDA. Thirty-three years later, Larry still serves on the NSDA Board. For years, Larry was employed as an independent life insurance and securities sales professional. The Million Dollar Roundtable Foundation with which he is associated has helped fund a number of NSDA projects. Larry has always had a passion for running. He has run 38 marathons in his lifetime. In 1998, he ran a fundraiser for the NSDA called "Running for Research." It is fitting and touching that Larry Kolasa is receiving the Dot Sowerby Pioneer Award in 2022 from Dot Sowerby. Both Board members have been serving continuously since the start of the NSDA in 1989 and will continue with Dysphonia International. They are true pioneers who embody steadfast commitment, strong dedication, and selfless service. Thank you, Larry Kolasa, for starting the NSDA by having your kitchen table as an office.