

### **Webinar Panelist Biosketches**

#### **Katherine Bouton**

Katherine Bouton is an advocate and educator for the deaf and hard of hearing and an award-winning writer. Her books include “Shouting Won’t Help” (a memoir of losing her hearing) and “Smart Hearing” (a guide to living well with hearing loss). She has bilateral progressive idiopathic sensorineural hearing loss, with onset at age 30. She is President of the New York City Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America, and a member of the Advisory Council for the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD).

#### **Suzanne Johnston**

Suzanne Johnston has been a speech/language pathologist since the mid-1980s, and, since 2009, a deacon for deaf ministry in Rochester, NY. Her specialty areas and volunteer interests have always focused on services for people with hearing loss, though she only recently (since 2015) developed her own unilateral deafness due to an acoustic neuroma/schwannoma. Her personal experiences in dealing with her hearing loss 24/7 have given her a clearer window into the world of the people she serves, and have significantly impacted her personal, vocational, and spiritual life.

#### **Russell Misheloff**

Mr. Misheloff is past president of the Hearing Loss Association of America – DC area chapter (HLAA-DC), and currently serves on the chapter’s Executive Board. The chapter provides support to members, and information on communication strategies and hearing assistive technology as well as outreach and advocacy services for those living with hearing loss. For that purpose, Mr. Misheloff tries to keep current on new technology; the social, professional, health, and psychological implications of hearing loss; and personal strategies that enable the hard of hearing to live full and rewarding lives.

Mr. Misheloff’s hearing loss dates from the 90’s and is of unknown origin (although doctors have speculated that it may be related to his treatment for severe childhood ear infections with x-ray and radium). Like many others, he ignored/denied his hearing loss for years until it became severe enough that it threatened his ability to continue functioning professionally and socially. At that point, he was evaluated and received hearing aids. Subsequently, and with further deterioration in his hearing, especially in his right ear, he received a cochlear implant.

He has bachelor’s and master’s degrees in economics respectively from the University of Michigan and the American University, and a master’s in international relations from the University of Pennsylvania. For many years he was employed by the U.S. Agency for International Development and by private firms planning and implementing international development work.

### **Kerry Sullivan**

Kerry is a 65yr old female, married with 2 grown daughters. She is semi-retired after working 30+ years as a financial officer; she currently volunteers for several non-profits including HLAA Boston Chapter.

Kerry's progressive bilateral sensorineural hearing loss began as a young child; 2 of her 3 siblings have similar hearing loss pattern. No causal genetic link or drug sensitivity has yet been identified. Kerry started wearing hearing aids in her mid 20's to deal with work challenges (conference calls, ballroom presentations, etc.); she did not disclose due to perceived career risk. Her hearing loss is definitely trending to severe and is career limiting and life impacting currently. She relies on captioning tools, lip reading and good communication practices to get by.

### **Wynne Whyman**

Wynne has progressive, asymmetrical hearing loss since a preschooler, began wearing hearing aids in 2005, and added a cochlear implant 6 months ago for her worst ear. In 2015, Wynne began a deep dive into understanding many aspects of hearing loss, hearing aid limitations, and hearing accessibility advocacy. Today she realizes the importance of assistive listening systems, consumer empowerment, real ear measurements, and the value of highly skilled and caring audiologists.

As a volunteer, she maintains the national database of US and Canada hearing loops and an online library of 1800+ research publications, articles, and websites on hearing loops and hearing aid-compatible assistive technologies. Wynne holds two master's degrees and is a software developer and a learning architect, developing executive leadership courses. She worked with both parents who had age-related hearing loss and wore hearing aids: her mother with dementia and her father who had difficulty finding his ear canal.

### **Eric Matson**

Before retiring in 2009, Mr. Matson was the Principal Engineer for Carrier Corporation's Global Operations Group, where his hearing "went south" from prolonged jet noise as a million-miler + (12-16 hrs/wk). Since then, he has made an extensive study of hearing loss causes and coping strategies. He currently sits on the Board of Directors of both the Rochester Chapter and NYS Association of the Hearing Loss Association of America, have become Rochester's Primary Outreach Presenter, and is a member of the Technical Team.

He has a "Severe" 80-90 dBA loss in both ears and has had 3 different major-brands of hearing aids, and been happy with all, but has found the greatest benefit from accessories... namely T-coils, remote/external/wireless mics, and remote controls. These have proved invaluable in many public venues, restaurants/Noisy-spaces, and ALS-equipped Churches (where remote controls avoid dirty looks for accessing a smartphone app).