

## HLAA KY Home Chapter Board Members

### Kathleen Robertson



Kathleen Robertson is our current Chairperson. Katie (as she is called) initially answered an advertisement for helping with the Chapter's website development, but upon finding out what it all entailed, realized it was technically beyond her capabilities and speedily passed it over to her very capable husband Dave. Since then, she has given him support and encouragement, as well as input as he grows the HLAA-KY Home website. Katie, having gradually acquired a moderately severe hearing loss in both ears, has a perspective from the "inside" - her perspective and outlook helps round out the viewpoint that Dave puts forth as he tweaks the website from month to month. In her early days as a working mother, Katie found she was having more and more difficulty hearing others at her jobs. The last job, which was from home as a customer representative, made her realize that her hearing was more than just a nuisance - it was a detriment. It caused numerous mistakes to be made due to hearing incorrectly...resulting in a diminishing of the self-confidence that she once had. Now, since attending the meetings and belonging to HLAA-KY Home Chapter, much of her self-confidence has returned, as she learns of better "aids" for hearing loss compensation. Friends are constantly being made and new purposes are being found to help others, as well as herself. Katie is so thankful to be a part of such a

helpful caring group of people, and looks forward to the future of even greater growth in her self-confidence, the website, others, as well as the HLAA-KY Home Chapter itself, as she carries out her role as Chairperson.

## Marilyn Fenwick



Marilyn Fenwick was HLAA's former representative on the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH). She is a founding member of HLAA KY Home Chapter and a member of HLAA Kentuckiana. With four out of five of her family members experiencing hearing loss and as a bilateral wearer of hearing aids, she truly understands the challenges of hearing loss. Over the years, she has dealt with hearing loss in the family, school, and work environment. As a Steering Committee member she would like to welcome and encourage everyone to join us each month for the support, fellowship and information available to HOH people.

## Carlene Ballard



Carlene Ballard is a founding member of HLAA KY Home Chapter and a member of HLAA Kentuckiana. Carlene has moderate to severe hearing

loss and has been wearing bilateral hearing aids for 19 years. She has an active lifestyle and understands the importance on receiving information on how to deal with hearing loss in our world today. She enjoys the support and friendship of the many people she has met through HLAA along with the information she has gained.

## David Robertson



Dave is a retired chemist of the Royal Society of Chemistry and chartered information technology professional of the British Computer Society. Originating from Scotland and now settled with his wife in Bardstown KY, he is the webmaster for this chapter's website. He joined HLAA KY Home Chapter after responding to an advertisement placed within the United Way website asking for a volunteer to help with the HLAA KY Home chapter's website management and development. Although Dave himself does not suffer from severe hearing loss, his wife Katie and many of her siblings have had severe hearing difficulties for many years. Dave therefore entered into his webmaster role already aware of the feeling of exclusion and frustration a person with hearing loss often experiences, and also could identify with the need to educate people who have good hearing to communicate suitably with others who have hearing difficulties. He therefore set out to use his technical expertise to help create an internet-based system for the chapter that would reach out and educate as many people as possible within the very rural state of Kentucky about the 'invisible condition' of hearing loss. During June 2017, Dave was presented with the HLAA National Chapter Website Award for excellence in creation of a website for people with hearing loss. Today, [www.hearinglosskyhome.org](http://www.hearinglosskyhome.org) has grown to be a major resource site for

people with hearing loss throughout Kentucky, and continues to grow each month as new and varied materials are added. During September 2017, the HLAA chapters of Kentuckiana, KY Home and Lexington along with HLAA representatives for Bowling Green voted to have an all-encompassing Kentucky Chapters website. Since then Dave has been developing this new website ([www.hearinglosskentucky.org](http://www.hearinglosskentucky.org)) which will be launched on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 and will replace the existing websites for the individual Kentucky chapters.

## Nell Smith



Nell Smith married her husband Bob and had three children: Jill, Lori Ann and Bob. They moved to Bardstown in April 1983 and Bob worked for Bird & Son and then at Woodridge as an inventory manager. In 1989, they bought the candy store "Sweets 'n Things" in downtown Bardstown, which at retirement time they sold. Bob and Nell had been married 61 years when Nell lost her husband in December. It was around the time that they sold the store that Nell began to notice she wasn't hearing as well as she should, and so purchased her first set of hearing aids in 2002. Her family has a history of hearing loss, so she wasn't surprised that she needed them. Nell had some difficulty adjusting to hearing differently initially, but she persevered. In 2010, she got her second pair of hearing aids and has been very pleased with them, which she attributes to the immense help she obtained by attending HLAA KY meetings. While going to the meetings, Nell learned so much more about hearing loss and what she needed, and what to ask her audiologist. That information helped her to be better equipped in deciding what she needed for her level of hearing loss.

## Lou Downs



Lou Downs has been a member of the HLAA KY Home Chapter for several years and has been married to her husband Tom for 12 years. She currently serves as the chapter's Hospitality Coordinator and enjoys the ongoing support and friendship she always receives when attending the chapter's monthly meetings. Lou has benefited very much from the expert information acquired from the many visiting professional speakers who have delivered presentations at these meetings, and has often used that acquired knowledge to help others with their hearing loss difficulties.

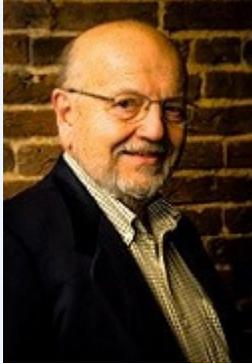
## Rita Delaney Riley



Rita Delaney Riley is our current treasurer and has spent most of her working life in public business but was forced to retire from an executive director position due to her hearing loss. She ultimately acquired hearing aids for herself (which took some time for her to become used to) and decided to become a member of the HLAA KY Home Chapter in Bardstown. In her own words, Rita says 'the regular chapter meetings have helped tremendously. I don't have to fight this battle alone! I have

met a lot of friends who understand and know what I am going through. Bardstown is very fortunate to have this organization!"

## Doug Hubbard



Doug Hubbard was educated in the Bardstown School System and holds B.S and J.D. degrees from the University of Kentucky. Doug noticed he was starting to have trouble hearing around 20 years ago. The problem got gradually worse for him and about 12 years ago he realized that he was often having to turn his head so that his left ear was closer to the speaker. After getting past the cosmetic concerns, he consulted with a family member about hearing aids and was referred to Avada, attended their Louisville office, and had a MRI carried out of his head. Ultimately he was fitted with behind the ear aids for both ears. Today he wears Lyric in-the-canal hearing aids. Doug has been associated with the HLAA KY Home Chapter for several years, and recently held the position of chairperson. He very much enjoys the interaction he experiences with all that attend the regular meetings and the valuable knowledge he gains from the professional speakers who take part in the presentations.

## John Hutchins



John is our secretary and has been a member of the HLAA KY Home Chapter since 2012. He and his wife Joann both attend the HLAA chapter meetings regularly and have said that over the years they have benefited immensely from all the wonderful resources made available to them through the chapter's monthly meetings. They feel they have become better advocates for themselves and others in order to help overcome the many communication difficulties that arise through hearing loss. John and Joann also enjoy the social interaction they experience at the meetings, especially the feeling of knowing that you are not alone in having to cope with hearing loss difficulties.

## Joann Hutchins



Joann shadows her husband John (above) in his secretary role and plays an important part in spreading the message to others who have hearing loss that they are not alone when having to deal with the complexities of communication that occur with this 'invisible condition'. Joann constantly supports her husband as together they work to encourage other chapter

members to self-advocate in order to improve conditions for themselves when communicating with family and friends.