



## **My Story...** *by Marilyn Fenwick*

**Marilyn Fenwick is a founding member of HLAA-KY Home, a current chapter board member, and a former HLAA representative on the KY Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.**

My hearing loss started when I was in my late thirties. My journey is somewhat unique. I sometimes refer to it as “family affair hearing loss.” Four out of five members of my immediate family are hearing impaired. I often tell people (humorously) a normal conversation in our household sometimes may sound like a shouting match to others.

My husband’s hearing loss is service connected (firing off grenades). My daughter’s hearing loss was detected while still serving but about to be honorably discharged from the military. My youngest son’s hearing problems started when he was about 12 years old.

You would think I would be quite knowledgeable about hearing loss. I have dealt with hearing loss in the home, workplace and school system. I sometimes felt helpless when working with the school system. I did not know at that time about the **KY Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**. Later, I had the privilege of serving one term as the HLAA representative at KCDHH. Many resources are available there and can be found on their web site at [KCDHH.org](http://KCDHH.org) or [www.kcdhh.ky.gov](http://www.kcdhh.ky.gov) .

The KY Dept. of **V**ocational **R**ehabilitation is another good resource I found very helpful with my youngest son and myself. VR directed me to Children with Special Needs for my son. Hearing aids were provided for him throughout his school years.

After I completed school and was working, I came down with a severe case of strep throat. I was prescribed several bouts of medication which are now considered a plausible cause of hearing loss. I cannot say for sure that this is what started my hearing problems because I additionally

worked in a very noisy environment. I did notice later that I was not hearing well. I was missing words and parts of conversations at home, church and at work.

I finally decided it was time to see an otolaryngologist (ENT). After a complete hearing evaluation, I was fitted with two analog in the canal hearing aids. With analog hearing aids and extreme workplace noise (hearing protection was not provided at that time), I now realize what I was doing to my residual hearing.

Needless to say, I was struggling daily in the workplace. I transferred numerous times trying to find an area where I did not have to communicate so much with others. I was finding it more and more difficult wherever I transferred.

After 23 years of service, my company announced they were relocating to Ohio. I then applied for disability.

Fast forward. I now have a severe to profound hearing loss in both ears. I'm pretty sure I would qualify for a cochlear implant. I'm just not quite ready to take that leap.

After my early retirement, I found myself on the internet searching "hearing loss". I would read anything of interest about hearing loss. One day I happened to run across an article about the Kentuckiana Chapter of Hearing Loss Association of America (formerly SHHH). Ed Schickel's e-mail address was listed; he was the chapter president at that time. I e-mailed Ed several times inquiring about the chapter. Ed introduced me to Carlene Ballard via e-mail. They both invited me to attend a chapter meeting with them. I, then, started carpooling to Louisville for the monthly HLAA-Kentuckiana meetings with Ed and Carlene.

After attending the Kentuckiana Chapter meetings for several years, Bardstown's Hearing Loss Association of America Kentucky Home Chapter was formed in 2009. I am presently a board member of this chapter.

I would encourage anyone with any degree of hearing loss to attend our monthly meetings and social events. It takes all of us working together as a team to preserve our accomplishments and explore new ones. I myself have not only found support, education, advocacy, but also treasured lifetime friendships with people who face the same challenges that impact our lives daily.

**Marilyn Fenwick**