AER Orientation and Mobility Awards Ceremony 2022

AER International Conference
July 23, 2022
St. Louis, MO
The AER Orientation and Mobility Division Awards Program is dedicated to recognizing individuals who epitomize an exemplary commitment to excellence.

Our profession is filled with individuals who have demonstrated commitment, dedication, and integrity that is extraordinary; and we are pleased to honor three individuals who have made profound accomplishments during their career. Each is inspirational, and the contributions that they have made to help persons with visual impairments to travel more independently will undoubtedly motivate the next generation to break performance boundaries.

Thank you for joining us on this very special occasion and please share in and enjoy the celebration.

Award Committee:

Nick Leon, Chair
Justin Kaiser
Ana Williams
Tommie Roesch
Tricia Sproles
Margaret Winn
Mary Kline
Welcome and Introductions..........................................................Nick Leon

**Orientation and Mobility Division Award Recipients - 2022**

The Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award

**Susan Langendonk**

Introduction of Award Recipient.............................................Majorie Wood

The Lawrence E. Blaha Memorial Award

**Laura Bozeman**

Introduction of Award Recipient............................................Nora Griffin-Shirley

The Janet Barlow Environmental Access Service Award

**Janet Barlow, posthumously**

Introduction of Award Recipient............................................Lukas Franck
This year's recipient is **Susan Lagendonk**

I am nominating Susan Langendonk for the Sandy Kronick Award. Her service to the blindness profession and Orientation and Mobility has been **exemplary**. She has been a COMS for years in Michigan and **played an integral part** of the team that developed the Michigan Severity Rating Scale that would help COMS determine the need and type of O&M services for school-aged children with visual impairments. This scale has been used for years by COMS around the world.

Susan has **given a great deal of time and talent** to Michigan AER, AERBVI and OMSA. In Michigan, Susan has been on the board and various committees. With AER, she served as secretary on the executive board of directors. She was also chair of the O&M division and stayed on to help with the board **way beyond** her past chair duties. With the Orientation and Mobility Specialists Association, Susan **continues to serve** as treasurer and hosted Mobility Mondays while **simultaneously juggling** other professional duties. Susan always involves herself in projects no matter their challenges or level of desirability.

Respectfully,

Marjorie Wood
About the Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award

History:
The Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award was established in 1994 to recognize professionals who demonstrate distinguished service in O&M through a long-term commitment to direct service. The Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award is given only when a worthy individual has been nominated.

About Sandy Kronick
The award was named after Sandy Kronick because of his lifelong commitment and dedication to teaching O&M to visually impaired people. He taught O&M in Oregon until his sudden death in May 1993. The first Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award was given to him posthumously and accepted by his wife, Bethanne Kronick, at the 1994 AER International Conference in Dallas. Sandy Kronick was chosen as the first recipient of this award because of his lifelong dedication to teaching Orientation and Mobility while continuing to be actively involved with numerous professional activities and committees.

Mr. Kronick was a very active member of AER, especially during his last ten years. He was instrumental in forming the Oregon AER Chapter and served as its president. He served on several international committees and had just completed his term as AER’s Northwest Regional Rehabilitation Representative at the time of his death.
This year’s recipient Laura Bozeman

We are nominating Dr. Laura Bozeman for the Blaha Award. Having been in the field since 1974, Laura has **many achievements that have made a significant impact on the field** through her publications, teaching, and service. She has been at the forefront of the orientation and mobility (O&M) field, both at the national and international levels. Laura has contributed significantly to our body of knowledge by authoring a book, twelve book chapters, fifteen journal articles/position papers/abstracts, and one non-refereed article. Many authors have cited Laura’s publications, which attest to the high quality of her work.

Additionally, her presentations in the area personnel preparation, low vision, CVI, aging and vision loss, training students who are visually impaired to become orientation and mobility specialists, and self-defense, are some excellent examples of dissemination of her research and professional interests. Since 2007, Laura has **recruited many people to the O&M field** by seeking and obtaining $12,440,000 in personnel preparation grants. This external funding has enabled a steady stream of individuals to be recruited into the field and graduate in the U.S. and abroad. In most cases, these graduates sought employment teaching people who were blind and visually impaired, thus helping to meet an international and a national need. Her preparation of professionals in the field of education and rehabilitation of individuals with visual impairments demonstrate her excellent teaching and leadership skills.

Laura’s **service record is exemplary by her demonstrated involvement** on university committees, board memberships, and professional organization leadership roles and committee involvement. For example, she has served on many university’s search committees, faculty council, annual faculty review committees, and been chair of University of Massachusetts Boston’s School Personnel Committee, School for Global Inclusion and Social Development. Most importantly, from 2006 to present day, Laura has served as the University of Massachusetts Boston’s Graduate Program Director: Vision Studies. Laura also held leadership positions in professional organizations such as AERBVI and the International Mobility Conference (e.g., Chair: O&M: Rehabilitation and Practice: International Mobility Conference (IMC17), secretary of Executive Board of Directors of AERBVI, Chair of AERBVI’s Personnel Preparation Division, secretary Proceedings of the IMC17 Conference). She also has been a member of the Higher Education Accreditation Council of AERBVI which is responsible for providing the guidelines and standards that universities must meet for accreditation. Laura is currently serving on the Executive Board of Directors as secretary for the Academy of Certification for Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP), as well as serving as the co-chair for the Subject Matter Expert Committee O&M in ACVREP. Laura has been actively involved in shaping this field since the 1980’s and has consistently served on a committee or several at once since 1986. If there is a need, she is always willing to step up.
Collaboration is an important part of what Laura does to promote and support both individuals and the field. Over the years, it is obvious from all her presentations and publications that she welcomes collaboration with other professionals. She has worked with professionals and doctoral students, both in and out of the field of vision rehabilitation and education. Laura appreciates different perspectives and by including people who are not in the field, she is not only learning from them but is exposing them to challenges and issues that are specific to people who are blind which they can carry on to their field. Laura is an excellent ambassador for our profession. She listens, shares, and always has the best interest of individuals who are blind or visually impaired and the members of this field in mind.

Through her numerous consultative roles and leadership responsibilities in academe and our professional organizations, Laura has provided mentorship to many different constituents (e.g., university students, people who are visually impaired, colleagues, other countries, etc.). The impact of this mentoring is hard to document. In summary, Laura is a consummate professional who has been a role model for many of us. She has been a strong force who has had a positive influence on many professionals and people who are visually impaired. Thus, she is very deserving of the Blaha Award.

Sincerely,

Nora Griffin-Shirley, Ph.D., Professor
Anita Page, M.Ed, COMS
About the Lawrence E. Blaha Memorial Award & Sir Francis Campell Cane

History:

The Lawrence E. Blaha Award was initiated in 1968 to honor people who have shown exemplary behavior in the field of O&M, made outstanding contributions to the profession and shown dedication to serving people with visual impairments. It is the highest honor that the O&M Division can bestow. Each recipient of this award is the Guardian of Sir Francis Campbell's Cane until it is passed along to the next award recipient. The handle of the cane was used by Sir Francis Campbell, and can be seen in a photograph of him that is displayed in The C. Warren Bledsoe Orientation and Mobility Archives. The Lawrence E. Blaha Memorial Award is given every two years.

About Lawrence E. Blaha

This award was named in honor of Lawrence Blaha who was a pioneer in the field of O&M. He is remembered for his wit, athletic abilities, philosophy, technical skill and his high standards. He was an educator whose ideas are remembered and continued through this award. In 1948, he began his career working with people with visual impairments at the Central Blind Rehabilitation Center for Visually Impaired and Blinded Veterans, VA Hospital, Hines Illinois. He was one of a group of six individuals chosen for training to become the original O&M specialists at Hines. In 1961, he joined the faculty of Western Michigan University; from 1964 until his sudden death, he was Director of the O&M program at California State College, Los Angeles. The first Lawrence E. Blaha Award was given to him posthumously in 1968.

About Sir Francis Campbell

Sir Francis Campbell, whose cane handle was passed along to award recipients, was an American expatriate who was knighted by King Edward VII. In order to preserve this historical item, it is now housed in the APH Museum. Campbell was born in Tennessee and accidentally blinded before he was six. He was educated at the Tennessee State Institute for the Blind and at the University of Tennessee. Campbell taught music at the Perkins School for the Blind. At Perkins, he was involved in early efforts to teach orientation and mobility.
Janet Barlow’s contributions to the field of visual impairment are almost incalculable. Janet spent many years in the practice of orientation and mobility (O&M), on the street, teaching vision disabled people to travel independently, most notably at the Center for the Visually Impaired in Atlanta. Her practical experience prepared her well for her next career, researching techniques to make the built environment more accessible to vision disabled travelers. Janet was President of Accessible Design for the Blind (ADB), a small research organization started by Beezy Bentzen. Under Janet’s leadership, ADB became well-recognized for human factors research related to environmental access. Major topics that Janet investigated included accessible pedestrian signals, roundabouts, and tactile walking surface indicators such as detectable warnings and guidance surfaces. In 2017, together with Diane Fazzi, she wrote Orientation and Mobility Techniques: A Guide for the Practitioner, a manual for the teaching of O&M, now used as a textbook in university programs preparing O&M specialists. Janet was also first author of two chapters in Foundations of Orientation and Mobility, the authoritative textbook on the theory, research, and practice of O&M. She authored many papers and was a sought-after speaker at conferences and workshops.

Few individuals have had as profound of an impact on a profession as Janet, and hardly any have had such impact on two. In addition to O&M, Janet’s impacts on the transportation engineering profession have arguably been at least as profound, albeit less celebrated and recognized. For well over two decades, Janet has attended countless meetings and conferences – often listening for hours to the conversations and discussions of committees and panels, only to speak up at the right moment to draw attention to the needs and civil rights of persons with disabilities. Those comments were often celebrated, sometimes dismissed, but always had an impact! Janet participated in countless national and international meetings of the Transportation Research Board and its various committees, the Institute for Transportation Engineers, the National Committee for Uniform Traffic Control Devices, and many state and local events. Her impacts live on in the written words of journal papers, research reports, and guidebooks, as well as in the memories many in the two professions have of Janet, her passionate debates, and her field demonstrations to countless professionals of accessibility challenges under blindfold.

Janet was a tenacious and deeply knowledgeable advocate for people who were blind and visually impaired. She was a mentor, a role model, and a leader, and we will miss her dearly. She cared deeply about so much and so many of us, consumers and professionals alike in transportation and in the blindness field.

We all leave holes in the lives of others when we pass, Janet leaves a crater in two professions, and in the lives of professionals throughout the United States and in fact the entire world. At the same time her monuments are making streets and sidewalks accessible across the United States and Canada. Janet’s competence, knowledge and work ethic were legendary. Her joy and passion for her chosen work and for her family and friends were a fire that warmed so many of us. Her contributions will live on, and we will miss, remember and celebrate her as we travel through the environment that she helped to shape.

- Billie Louise (Beezy) Bentzen
About the Janet Barlow Environmental Access Service Award

History:

The Janet Barlow Environmental Access Service Award was established in 2021 to recognize professionals who demonstrate distinguished service in orientation and mobility through a long-term commitment to environmental access. The award was named for Janet Barlow because of her lifelong commitment and dedication to the field, her steadfast, practical, and strategic methods to address research needs, advocacy for greater accessibility to the built environment, and education of orientation and mobility specialists and transportation professionals such as traffic engineers and urban planners on issues relevant to both professional areas.

Janet worked as an orientation and mobility specialist, manager, and advocate in Georgia at the Atlanta Area Services for the Blind, now known as the Center for the Visually Impaired. Her practical experience prepared her well for her next career, researching techniques to make the built environment more accessible to pedestrians with vision loss. At the time of her passing in August 2021, Janet was President of Accessible Design for the Blind (ADB), a small research organization started by Dr. Beezy Bentzen. Under Janet’s leadership, ADB became well-recognized for human factors research related to environmental access. Major topics that Janet investigated include accessible pedestrian signals, roundabouts, and tactile walking surface indicators such as detectable warnings and guidance surfaces. In 2017, together with Diane Fazzi, COMS, Ph.D., she wrote Orientation and Mobility Techniques: A Guide for the Practitioner, a manual for the teaching of O&M, now used as a textbook in university programs preparing O&M specialists. Janet was also the original author of two chapters in Foundations of Orientation and Mobility, 3rd ed., the authoritative textbook on the theory, research, and practice of O&M, “Environmental Accessibility for Students with Vision Loss”, and “Teaching Travel at Complex Intersections.” She authored many papers and was a sought-after speaker at conferences and workshops.

The first Janet Barlow Environmental Access Service Award was awarded to her posthumously and presented to her family at the 2022 AER International Conference in St Louis, Missouri. Janet Barlow was posthumously chosen as the first recipient of this award because of her lifelong dedication to the field of orientation and mobility and active involvement with numerous professional activities and committees while maintaining a special focus on building mutual understanding between orientation and mobility specialists, traffic engineers, and urban planners.

The establishment of this award is fitting tribute to Janet Barlow and to all the countless other orientation and mobility specialists who forego higher paying careers in order to continue doing what they know and love best, including creating mutual understanding and respect between orientation and mobility specialists, urban planners, and traffic engineers. The award will be given only when a worthy recipient is determined.
In honor of the inaugural Janet Barlow Environment Access Award and her profound effect on our field, please share fond memories, stories, or photos to aeromdivision@gmail.com. These will be shared with the Barlow Family.
**Past Recipients of The Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award are:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Sandy Kronick, posthumously</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>Kathleen Newman</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>Richard Russo</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>Lukas Franck</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>William P. McCloskey</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>Vince Fazzi</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Laura Park-Leach</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>Patrick Zeinstra</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Gene Bourquin</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Lea Ann Myers, Tom Rotunno</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>Marjorie Wood</td>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>Christopher Tabb</td>
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<td>2020</td>
<td>Rod Haneline</td>
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Past Recipients of The Lawrence E. Blaha Memorial Award are:

1968  Lawrence E. Blaha, posthumously
1969  Dr. Richard E. Hoover, MD
1972  W.G. Debetaz
1973  Stanley Suterko
1975  Russell C. Williams
1977  Donald Blasch
1979  John D. Malamazian
1981  John R. Eichorn, Ed.D.
1983  Leicester W. Farmer
1984  C. Warren Bledsoe
1986  Walter G. Olenek
1988  Richard L. Welsh
1990  Hugo Vigoroso
1992  Everett "Butch" Hill
1994  Berdoll "Pete" Wurzburger
1996  William Wiener
1998  Bruce B. Blasch
2000  Gala Saber Brooks
2002  Billie Louise Bentzen
2004  Dona Sauerburger
2006  Steve LaGrow
2008  Janet Barlow
2010  Eileen Siffermann
2012  Richard Long
2014  George Zimmerman
2016  Sandra J. Rosen
2018  Rod Kossick
2020  Nora Griffin-Shirley