

The American Tinnitus Association Announces Six New Members to its Board of Directors

Expanded board member diversity benefits the tinnitus community

The American Tinnitus Association (ATA) has elected six members to serve three-year terms on its board of directors, according to LaGuinn P. Sherlock, AuD, ATA Board Chair. The ATA is the nation's only nonprofit organization exclusively committed to improving the lives of the approximately 50 million people in the United States with tinnitus – also known as “ringing in the ears.”

“Our board members truly represent the tinnitus community and wanted to join the ATA board, because they have a connection to tinnitus. Some of them have tinnitus, some of them are researchers, and some of them are healthcare providers. That mix ensures that we remain well aware of what’s going on within the tinnitus community and better understand how we can best serve and support everyone affected by it,” said Dr. Sherlock. “Besides the tinnitus connection, our new board members bring different areas of expertise that enable us to be more dynamic and in-tune with the growing numbers of people bothered by tinnitus. The passion to help and to find answers to complex questions are what make the ATA an exceptional organization and national leader on tinnitus issues, and we look forward to the input and perspective these new board members will bring to our efforts.”

Of the 50 million Americans who have tinnitus, approximately 16 million find that it interferes with their ability to focus, sleep, and work, prompting them to seek medical help, according to data analyzed from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC.) The leading cause of tinnitus is exposure to loud sound, which damages the auditory system; the second leading cause is head or neck trauma. Tinnitus and hearing loss also are the leading service-connected disability for U.S. veterans.

Newly Elected ATA Board Members:

David Hadley, MBA, is a partner account manager at Dropbox. Hadley developed tinnitus at age 20, due to extended exposure to loud music at concerts and playing in rock bands as a singer and musician. Over time, his tinnitus grew louder, and he developed hyperacusis, a condition in which normal sound causes pain and/or hearing sensitivity. “I await with great anticipation the day that a tinnitus cure is available ... I learned my lessons the hard way, because no one took the time to guide me about how I could protect myself from my present-day situation. I wanted to join the ATA's board so that I could reach music lovers and musicians with the messages that I was never taught,” he shared. Hadley earned his Master of Business Administration at IESE Business School in Barcelona, Spain, and majored in Finance and Political Science at Boston University.

David K. Hopkins, DO, is a family medicine physician at Mercy Clinic Physicians, Edmond, OK. “My journey with tinnitus began with hearing loss from military service, which gives me the perspective of a veteran with hearing loss and tinnitus,” Dr. Hopkins said. “When my tinnitus became unbearable, I sought treatment for it, trying every tinnitus treatment I could find ... I finally found an experienced Tinnitus Retraining Therapy (TRT) provider who gave me hope and taught me how to successfully manage my tinnitus.” Dr. Hopkins earned his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine from Oklahoma State University’s Center for Health Sciences and his Bachelor of Science from Northeastern State University.

Jill Meltzer, AuD, is an audiologist with North Shore Audio-Vestibular Lab in Highland Park, IL. Dr. Meltzer first became aware of the ATA in the 1970s and has been involved with tinnitus education and the ATA since. “I’ve been involved in tinnitus research and providing services to individuals with tinnitus for more than 30 years and implemented the Tinnitus and Sound Sensitivity Treatment Program at North Shore Audio-Vestibular Lab more than 20 years ago.” Dr. Meltzer earned her Doctor of Audiology from Pennsylvania College of Optometry, School of Audiology (now Salus University), a Master of Arts in Teaching from Tulane University, and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Denver.

John M. Minnebo, MBA, is an advisor to business start-ups and adjunct professor at the Fox School of Business, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA. “I am honored to join the Board of the ATA, an organization broadly recognized for the help and education it provides to tinnitus sufferers while funding and enabling research in the pursuit of medical insights and, ultimately, cures for tinnitus.” Minnebo earned his Master of Business Administration in International Management from the Thunderbird Graduate School of International Management his Bachelor of Science in Information Systems, and a Bachelor of Business Administration from the European University in Belgium.

Melissa Mooney Wikoff, AuD, is the owner of Peachtree Hearing in Atlanta, GA. Dr. Wikoff shared, “As an audiologist, my mission is to promote awareness about tinnitus. In my practice, I focus on providing hope, comfort, and relief to those suffering from tinnitus.” Dr. Wikoff earned her Doctorate of Audiology from Washington University School of Medicine and her Bachelor of Arts in Hearing & Speech Sciences from the University of Maryland.

Ronald Zagel is the owner of Jonathan Stevens Mattress Company in Grand Rapids MI. Zagel’s goal is to offer a different perspective to the ATA board as a small business owner living with tinnitus. “Having developed tinnitus from my time in the Army reserves on rifle ranges, working with loud machinery, and, perhaps, too many loud rock concerts, I am a big believer in helping people learn to live and cope with tinnitus, as well as in educating people on protecting their hearing and supporting research that I hope someday will find a cure.” Zagel attended the University of Denver and Aquinas College in Grand Rapids.

About the American Tinnitus Association

The American Tinnitus Association (ATA), headquartered in the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area, has been a publicly-supported 501(c)3 organization since 1971, with its Scientific Advisory Committee representing the top tinnitus researchers from around the world. The mission and core purpose of the American Tinnitus Association are to promote relief, help prevent, and find cures for tinnitus, evidenced by its core values of compassion, credibility, and responsibility.

www.ATA.org



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