

# NARSOL's 2021 award winners and a big Thank You to conference attendees

written by Sandy | October 12, 2021



Every year during our conference, NARSOL recognizes a few people who have made outstanding contributions to our cause throughout the year or for several years.

We have been criticized for this practice, but we feel it is vital to publicly recognize those whose efforts and contributions have been so valuable to NARSOL and to the advocacy we represent, and to recognize them with more than words. The plaques, which are donated to NARSOL, are a physical, visible symbol of their efforts and our appreciation.

The Lifetime Achievement Award is given to a person within the NARSOL family who, as the name of the award suggests, has been constant in loyalty and effort and whose service has gone above and beyond for a prolonged period of time. As one of NARSOL's original founders, Paul Shannon received the first of

these awards, and it is now fully named the Paul E. Shannon Lifetime Achievement Award.

This year's recipient is only the third to be so honored, and NARSOL was proud to present it to Mary Sue Molnar. As she told the audience at the banquet, when she started her journey to where she is now, she knew nothing, and an internet search on the topic produced only two results: SOSEN and NARSOL. She started studying and learning and reaching out to those who could help, and in this quest she connected with Paul Shannon. The rest, as they say, is history. The group she organized, Texas Voices for Reason and Justice, was NARSOL's first affiliated group.

The Braveheart Award is given to a person who is **not** within the NARSOL family but has, by his or her actions, demonstrated courage and fidelity in support of NARSOL's vision and mission by embracing our advocacy either directly or indirectly as evidenced by the good works they are doing or have done. This year's winner, Emily Horowitz, has long been a spokesperson for rationality based on factual information in creating law and policy affecting persons required to register and persons with sexual offense issues. As a recognized scholar and researcher, Emily speaks and publishes the truths that NARSOL embraces.

Don Thurber, NARSOL's 2021 Advocate of the Year recipient, truly exemplifies the meaning behind this award: It is for an individual who is either a member or donor of NARSOL and has demonstrated remarkable fidelity to our vision and mission. Don is NARSOL's advocate representative for the state of South Carolina and has for several years served as our conference MC. Without Don's deep voice and wonderful elocution opening our conferences, making announcements, giving directions, and starting each day, NARSOL's conferences would not be the same.

We are pleased this year to present two new awards.

The title for the first of these, Excellence in Leadership, speaks for itself. There is no one equivalent to this year's recipient who should be so honored. As executive director, Brenda Jones has been our leader for ten years, beginning when NARSOL was still RSOL. Under her leadership NARSOL has grown and flourished into what it is today, the largest national organization dedicated solely to service on behalf of those adversely affected by harsh, ineffective sexual offense laws, policies, and registries.

Also awarded for the first time this year is the Excellence in Service Award. Again, the title speaks for itself. Andy Stein, the award's first recipient, is a "techie," and his skill with his craft is seen, behind the scenes, in NARSOL's various websites and online platforms and, in a more visible setting, as the sound and film engineer at our conferences. He has been faithful in his service and is well deserving of this award.

NARSOL is very proud of all our recipients and so thankful for their service and their achievements.

However, our greatest thanks and appreciation goes to those of you who attended our conference. In this time of health concerns and travel difficulties, those who came to Houston are stars, and mere words cannot fully convey our gratitude. We regret that we were unable to engage personally with everyone who attended. If you wished to speak with any board member and did not have that opportunity, please contact us through email or through the website.

And remember Raleigh; our next conference will be there in June, 2022 – only nine months away.