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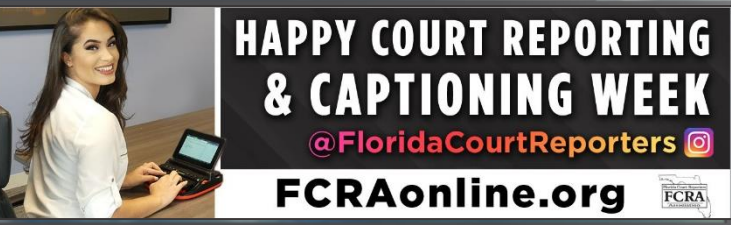
Florida

REPORTER



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE FLORIDA COURT REPORTERS ASSOCIATION

JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH/APRIL 2020



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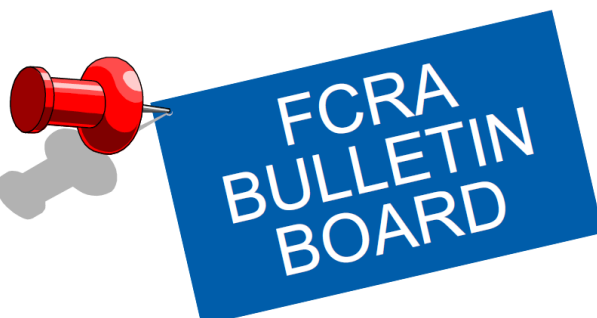
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By Amy Yarbrough, FPR
FCRA President



Our Leaps & Bounds

Court Reporting & Captioning Week

As we celebrated Court Reporting & Captioning Week 2020, we were reminded of our “becoming a stenographer” journeys. My favorite part of court reporting school was watching the transformation of my peers. As high-speed students transitioned to internships, they arrived to class polished in blazers, beaming about their day. Exposure to courtrooms and high-rise views inspired that final push beyond 225, and we were thrilled for their bright futures and endless possibilities.

Becoming a stenographer brought me to the classroom setting, teaching me to advocate for the deaf and hard-of-hearing consumers who rely on accurate captions. Becoming a stenographer landed me a front-row seat to courtroom proceedings and cases ranging from railroads to natural disasters to celebrities.

In researching steno keyboards to include on our annual Court Reporting & Captioning Week poster, I discovered all sorts of fun facts in addition to the international keyboards. In some countries, trials for witchcraft still take place. In some countries, depositions are not permitted. We should be grateful for our sophisticated justice system as we celebrate our career serving the judiciary.

The Florida Court Reporters Association has played a pivotal role in my professional development. FCRA has become a second family, welcoming from the moment I arrived at my very first convention. We encourage and

elevate one another in our passion for this profession. FCRA has provided continuing education that allows me to be more efficient and a whole army of mentors to call on when searching for policy or procedure. Every year we come together for conventions that excite, and this summer's trip to Key Largo will be one for the record books.

In 2020 we celebrated Court Reporting & Captioning Week in an extra special way. Billboards in Tampa, Orlando, and Miami highlighted our special week and celebrated a career that takes you places you could have never dreamed. I encourage you to share with us stories of the coolest places your machines have taken you.

My most noteworthy CART assignment was being onsite when President Obama came to UNF; second most memorable, projecting captions for an event at a TV station and later being introduced to my favorite NPR radio host.



Becoming a stenographer develops character, resilience, drive, determination. I look forward to continue celebrating with all of you the magic of steno and a career that serves a crucial role in so many facets of our modern society.



By Richard S. Sciré, RPR, FPR
FCRA President-Elect, Editor

Our Foresight of 2020

2020 represents something before it even proves itself. We refer to 20/20 for clear vision. Then we refer to it by the proverb "Hindsight is 20/20." But why do we only use it in a sentence after the fact? Now that the year 2020 is here, what if we looked upon it first rather than in retrospect? Speaker and author Steve Maraboli said, "A lack of clarity could put the brakes on any journey to success." If we believe that, which I do, then we should wonder how we measure success. As most, if not all, of us on the FCRA board, we strive to make a difference for all reporters and captioners and especially the members. We never lose sight that we are entrusted with an enormous responsibility. Maybe that's where our "clarity" comes from. We don't always agree but we always fight for what we believe is the greater good, even when we know in our foresight that our hindsight will still be 20/20. How do we keep going after all that? It's called "teamwork."

In this issue we delve into the current surroundings of what we see in front of us. We continue to struggle with a court reporter shortage and low school enrollment, but we also celebrate our foundational successes to change that. This year FCRA put up billboards promoting stenography during Court Reporting & Captioning Week. Court reporters everywhere were blindsided by newsman Brian Williams' stupid comments about how outdated stenographers are, or so that idiot thinks. I do not make it a habit of telling people off. In fact, I always try to be kind. In Mr. Williams' sake, I've made an exception.

Classroom and Career Day Demonstrations Around the State!

Did you know class demonstrations can get you \$100 off on your annual FCRA membership? Rules and restrictions apply. Contact headquarters to find out how to get YOUR discount by promoting stenography.

Why? Because I'm not just fighting for my career but for the profession as a whole. We are as viable as ever, and thanks to him, even the silent ones in our profession have found their voice.

In this issue we have articles written by my friends, Stanley Sakai and Ana Fatima Costa, who wrote articles defending stenography. You will also get to see some of the huge impact FCRA has made in advocating, recruiting, and promoting stenography. At the last minute before publication, I contributed one more article about our shout out on *The Rachel Maddow Show*. We have jumped leaps and bounds this year! Just when we think we've done it all, we've only just begun.

Our future into success though cannot come without learning from the past. Thus, I am happy to introduce the next installment of "The Diamond Vault," leading to FCRA's 60th Anniversary. Why is it important to learn from the past? So we can fuel our future of course! If we learn from yesterday and plan for tomorrow, we can always have time to enjoy today.

Happy reading!

The Florida Reporter Deadline Dates

(WINTER) DEC/JAN/FEB/MAR

Article Submission – November 5

Online Publication – December 12

(SPRING) APR/MAY/JUNE/JULY

Article Submission – March 5

Online Publication – April 12

(FALL) AUG/SEPT/OCT/NOVEMBER

Article Submission – July 5

Online Publication – August 12

By Amy Yarbrough, FPR
FCRA President



Our Times Ahead

Convention 2020

Mark your calendar! FCRA will be holding its annual convention at the beautiful Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo July 16 through 19, 2020. Situated just 45 minutes south of Miami, this exquisite property is the perfect location for convention re-imagined, a truly unconventional convention. Plan for yoga at sunrise, kayaking through mangroves, and sand between your toes at sunset. Leaving the mainland and entering the Florida Keys, you will feel relaxed, refreshed, and recharged. Stay tuned for more exciting details in the coming months for what promises to be an unforgettable experience.

FPR Online Modules Coming Soon

The Ethics Committee is putting the finishing touches on the online modules for the FPR, and the anticipated launch date is early 2020. We are thrilled to soon offer the FPR from the convenience of home as well as at our next convention.

NCRA in Orlando 2020

Congratulations to Florida superstars Christine Phipps and Cathy Phillips! Christine will be installed as NCRA president and Cathy will become chair of NCRF at the NCRA 2020 convention in Orlando next August. We look forward to celebrating and thank you both for your service. "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and

become more, you are a leader" - John Quincy Adams.

Finding Balance

Many aspects of our profession are unique; unexpected expedites, lengthy assignments, deadlines, difficult witnesses, new locations each day, overwhelming amounts of pages. It can be a roller coaster trying to keep up, and there's just never enough time in a day.

The Feminine Mystique, published in 1963, introduced "the problem that has no name," describing the longing women felt for fulfillment outside of the home. As women entered the workforce, a new term arose, the so-called "second shift," housework and childcare most often performed by women. As reporters, we have the added layer of a third shift, the pages we edit after long days of writing. The average person is spending over two hours per day on social media; that's a part-time job!

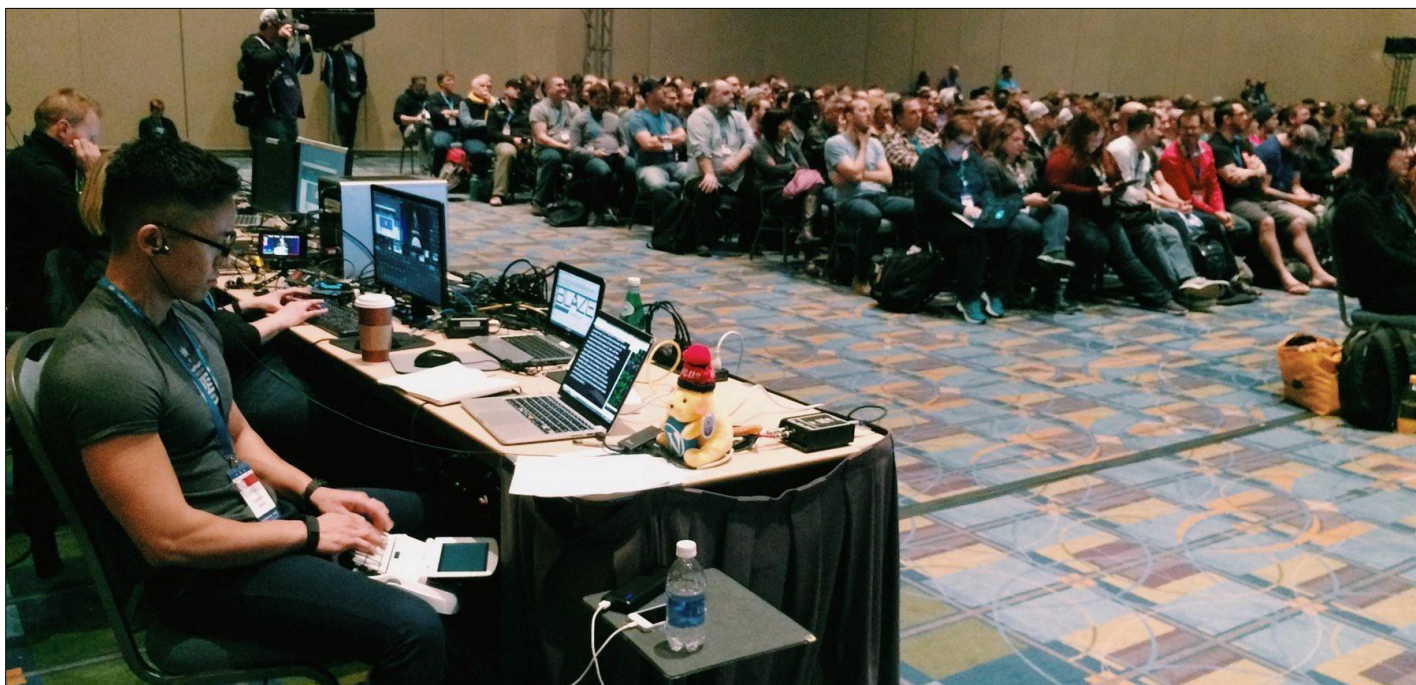
Nearly every hour of our day is accounted for, and do we really ever feel "caught up"? As we move forward into 2020, may you find time for personal enjoyment. Unplug, go for a walk, catch the sunrise/sunset, create something beautiful, organize your space – whatever makes you happiest.

Your FCRA board and committees are hard at work as we look forward to what lies ahead. We look forward to seeing you and continuing to serve.

By Stanley Sakai



In an Age of High-Definition Digital Audio, Why Do We Still Use Human Stenographers?



Ah, the dreaded questions stenographers and court reporters have had to endure hearing over and over again: “Why are we still hiring stenographers when we could just be recording the proceedings and typing them up later?” and “Isn’t your job going to be obsolete soon?”

For full disclosure, I am now a software engineer. But I’ve worked as a professional freelance stenographer for six years prior to my transition. Although my main source of income no longer comes from providing live-captioning services, stenography is and always will be a passion of mine. It is such an intelligently and ergonomically designed input system that, whether it be code or prose that I’m writing, it makes my experience on the computer feel fluent

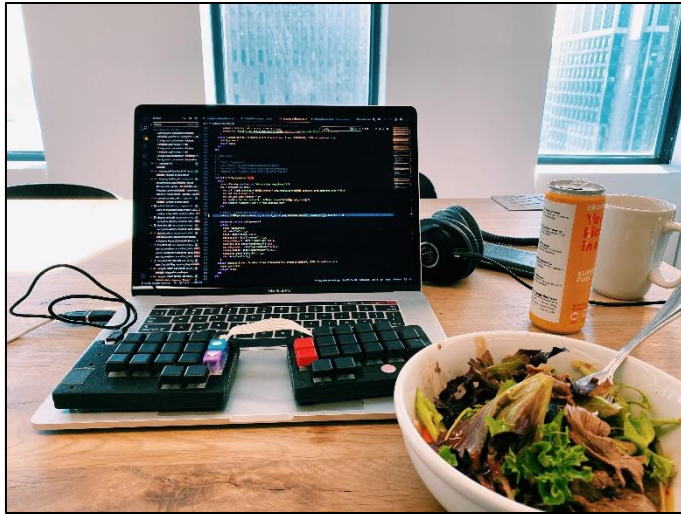
and effortless—unhindered as compared to having to tap my thoughts out character by character on a normal keyboard. As an engineer, I write code, write PRs, review others’ PRs, and deploy to production all from my steno machine. Thanks to steno, I can send Slack communications at the speed of thought. I have shortcuts in the hundreds ranging from Docker and rake tasks to git commands programmed in so I can perform pulls, pushes, stashes, pops, checkouts, and countless other functions with one swift motion of the hand (**TKRA*EUBG = docker-compose run — rm app rake repo:db:init**).

I’m seldom without a steno machine if I have my computer on me. And, yes, I have more

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In an Age of High-Definition Digital Audio, Why Do We Still Use Human Stenographers?



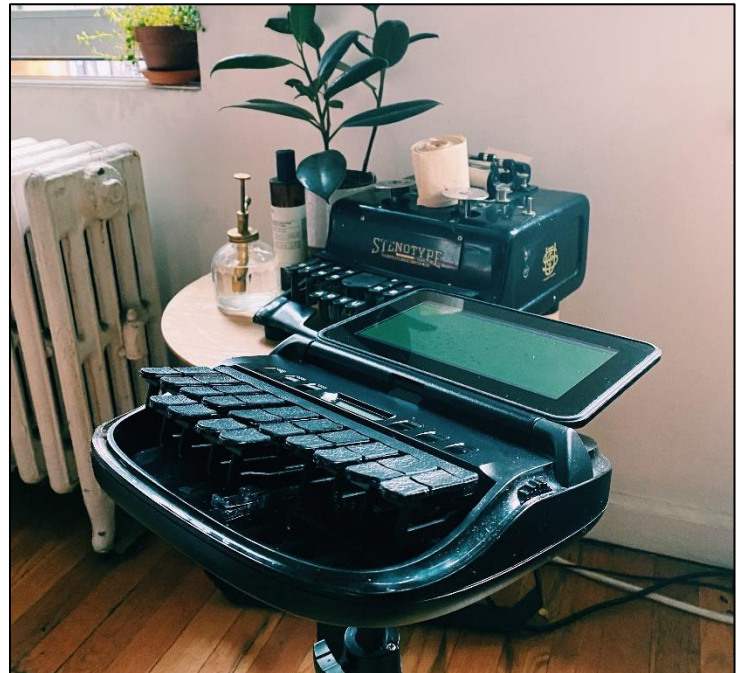
than one of these keyboards. My [portable one](#), as shown above, is a 3D-printed mod and it uses light-touch mechanical-keyboard switches—perfect for when I’m on the go or working from

“With a single chord, KPWRAERBGT (IMPRAERKT), I can import React faster than you can hit “I” on your keyboard.”

one of our satellite offices.

If you aren’t familiar with what [stenography](#) (or “steno” for short) is, it’s the system of chorded input performed on a special keyboard communicating with shorthand-to-text software that court reporters and captioners use to quickly write down what is said in a courtroom, on TV, in lectures, or at [Coachella](#). Basically, this amounts to a single person being able to catch and write down what a roomful of people are saying, verbatim, in real time. Olympic-level note-taking.

People normally speak English at around a rate of 160–220 words per minute. A skilled stenographer is able to hold a writing speed in excess of 200 words per minute for hours. To become nationally certified, one must pass a series of speed tests on a shorthand machine—the final of which requires one to transcribe a two-voice Q&A dictation at an unrelenting rate of [225 words per minute at >95% accuracy](#) for five full minutes... in one take. The world record for steno speed is 360 words per minute for one minute, set by Mark Kislingbury. If you’ve never seen one of these steno machines before, meet Andromeda:



You can thank Andromeda for this story you’re reading now. And, no, what you’re looking at is not a [“cash register.”](#)

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In an Age of High-Definition Digital Audio, Why Do We Still Use Human Stenographers?

As for how steno actually works, that's for its own article entirely. What I'm here to discuss in this piece is why this craft is still integral and relevant to the legal and hearing-accessibility realms. It is currently under siege by numerous unscrupulous wielders of magic microphones who profess, "Digital recording is the future!" and fallaciously claim that simply replacing the stenographer with a microphone will cut costs *and* produce comparable, if not better transcriptions than one taken stenographically by hand. After all, stenographers are humans, too: we make mistakes, we need breaks, we get hungry, and we tire like everyone else. Technology, including a microphone, does not. So much easier and cheaper; right?



"Hey, yo! Just throw one of these babies in, check!"

Well, this seemingly obvious and viable alternative is problematic for several reasons. I mean, if you're fortunate enough to have a smartphone, you have an audio recorder right in your pocket. Go to Best Buy, and you can find recorders with great audio quality for a fairly

cheap price. Memory is also now extremely cheap. But go talk to any lawyer who's conducted a deposition, and they'll quickly tell you that stenographers' fees aren't cheap and can raise the cost of litigation by several figures depending on the length of the transcript and how many copies are sold. Court reporters typically charge a flat appearance fee and then by the page, so if you have a 300-page transcript and all parties are ordering copies, you might be in for sticker shock. So if we have this much-thriftier alternative, doesn't it just make economic sense to let a recorder do the "work" and commission a bargain-basement transcription service to type it up for you later?

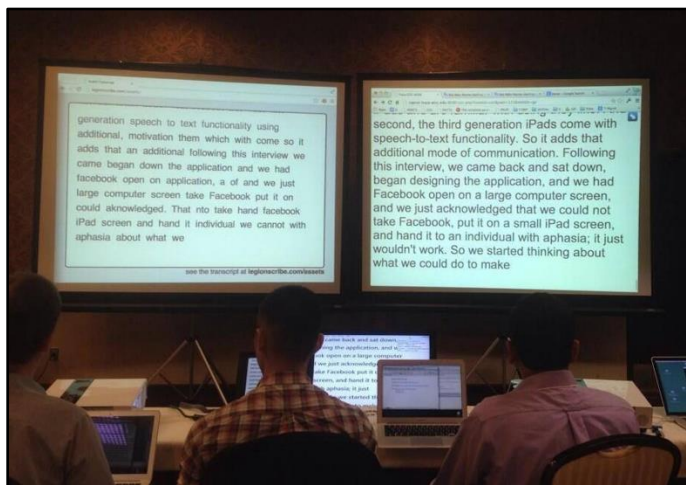
The problem with this proposition is two-fold:

First, people vastly underestimate how common background noise, mumbling, and people talking over one another are in normal discourse and how problematic these are for audio recordings and speech-recognition software.

Second, people who have not trained for years to transcribe verbatim are actually really bad at transcribing verbatim.

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In an Age of High-Definition Digital Audio, Why Do We Still Use Human Stenographers?



Team of six normal typists on the left, one professional stenographer on the right.

Assuming you have normal hearing, human ears and their connection to the brain are exquisitely tuned for speech detection and can pick one voice out from the environment, whether it be from a group of speakers or from downright acoustic slurry. If you've ever held a conversation in a loud bar or a restaurant, you've experienced this uniquely human capacity in action.

In the moment, you may not notice that you're talking over one another and not enunciating clearly (because you have the inherent bias of knowing what you said). But to a third party, it may be that nothing that you or anyone uttered during that heated exchange was comprehensible. A live stenographer present will immediately notice if he or she isn't getting it and will tell the parties to repeat if a response was too quiet or quick to register. If everyone is talking at once, the stenographer will be there to immediately stop the proceeding and request that the parties slow down and go one at a time

so that everything said is properly noted and verified that it reads correctly on-screen.

Microphones do not know when they are "not getting it," and thus, cannot regulate people's sloppy speech habits. Simply handing off a recording to someone who can hear and type English doesn't necessarily guarantee they will be able to understand everything. They aren't able to see who is speaking, so it will be much harder for them to correctly attribute each utterance to its speaker. Moreover, unless they are highly trained, their verbatim-transcription skills may not be up to snuff.

Stenographers also perform painstaking research beforehand and will ensure they are in the know of any tricky terms and acronyms that might come up in advance. Additionally, they will meet each of the speakers, make sure they have the correct spellings of all the names, and will identify them in person during the deliberation. Once the proceeding begins, a live stenographer has three distinct advantages over an audio recording that are crucial to an accurate record:

- Being able to see who is speaking and match the identity of the speaker with their words.
- Having preloaded vocabulary and names entered into their transcription software's lexicon.
- Above all, knowing the context in which these often industry-specific or esoteric terms are being used *at the moment they are uttered*.

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In an Age of High-Definition Digital Audio, Why Do We Still Use Human Stenographers?

A live person also has recourse to read a speaker's lips or their body language or to quickly glance at documents or a PowerPoint for additional cues during rapid-fire moments of uncertainty.

Also, based on years of feedback from conference attendees who have complimented the quality of my and others' live-captioning work, it has become clear to me that stenographers, in general, can pick out words from mumbled strings of syllables far better than the average person can. This is because our ears are trained to catch every word from years of practicing the art of listening and simultaneously converting it to shorthand—whereas most people don't realize it when they've missed some parts here and there until they see it go up on the screen, and if not for the live transcript, would just let it go.

A remote transcriber who is not physically

"It is both frustrating and infuriating when the Dunning-Krugerers out there continually push for their seemingly simple but inane solutions to a problem, the complexity of which they know nothing of."

present at the actual proceeding will lack all of this contextual knowledge, which often results in errors, drops, misspellings, or "(inaudible)s" littered in the final transcription. This is all in addition to the fact that the speed of a typist working with audio is comically slow (roughly one hour of transcription time for every 15 minutes of audio) compared to a well-trained, real-time stenographer trailing only a word or two behind at all times. One cough or

paper-shuffle can cover up an entire word or phrase in a recording. I've transcribed from pure audio; even with steno, it's an awful slog.

Junk-ass audio leads to junk-ass transcripts. Live stenographers don't merely transcribe, we act as verbal moderators to ensure every word is captured. Verbal moderation is a key part of the job that people undervalue. It is both frustrating and infuriating when the Dunning-Krugerers out there continually push for their seemingly simple

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1 as of today, we have had no communication from them
2 so far. So that is why I have to (inaudible) call
3 this meeting for the instruction from a corporate
4 entity that we need to utilize (inaudible) to all
5 the members to see if they can come up with the
6 (inaudible) amount or if they are willing to
7 participate in the (inaudible). Paragraph
8 (inaudible) states that in case (inaudible) doesn't
9 want to invest in funds, his chairs can be used and
10 the same can be offered to other investors from
11 within the LLC who are willing to invest the funds
12 on behalf of them. I think Mr. (Inaudible) is not
13 willing to invest, and if he cannot find anybody,
14 then we can go outside (inaudible). So (inaudible),
15 what have you to say about this?
16 MALE SPEAKER 2: Sorry, I don't think I
17 know you too well. What is your name?
18 (Inaudible.)
19 MALE SPEAKER 2: What is your ownership
20 percentage here?
21 MALE SPEAKER 1: 10 percent.

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In an Age of High-Definition Digital Audio, Why Do We Still Use Human Stenographers?

but inane solutions to a problem, the complexity of which they know nothing of.

So this is why relying on a dumb electronic recording device to document legal proceedings, *required by law that they be in writing*, that may dictate a person's future is an ABOMINABLE idea.

People without experience transcribing dialogue verbatim from recording don't understand how difficult, annoying, and downright painful it is to have to constantly rewind over and over trying to parse words from a blob of noise because someone shifted in their seat, grazed their mic with their arm, or talked out of turn. In the worst case scenario, those words are lost forever.

People are messy in their communication because, as humans, we're lazy and want to expend the least amount of effort to get the message across. Unless you're recording in a sound-controlled booth with all parties having the enunciation skills of professional news anchors, a live human being will always have to be there to verbally moderate. Live stenographers ensure not only that every utterance is accurately documented, but also who said it, and when they said it. They are able to certify that the resulting transcript is true and correct according to what they heard and witnessed. Microphones paired with remote transcriptionists simply can't compete with this level of fidelity. And that is why live stenographers still and will continue to exist.

Let us protect your record.

Have you seen FCRA's Poster for Court Reporting & Captioning Week 2020?



By Ana Fatima Costa



We Are STENO This is Why We Are Still Here

MSNBC: Last Friday, January 31, 2020, during a live broadcast of the Senate impeachment trial, your Chief News Anchor, Brian Williams, asked former Senator Claire McCaskill why the "steno woman in the white blazer" was allowed to rove on the Senate floor "in 2020, this electronic age."

Ms. McCaskill: "I don't know why we're still using an old-fashioned stenographer in the Senate, but it looks like to me they've upgraded it to digital at this point."

Mr. Williams: "Yeah. It looks like she's carrying a cash register."

Ms. McCaskill: "Yep."

Then they laughed.

Disgraceful. Disrespectful. Unprofessional. Undignified.

Really, Mr. Williams? You minimized the crucial role of the courageous guardian of the record who works diligently in a challenging, stressful job capturing the spoken word in high-profile events like the impeachment trial of the president of the United States and provides verbatim, accurate official transcripts to "steno woman"? Is that the BEST you can do?

And you equated the technologically advanced, specialized chorded keyboard which is connected to a Computer-Aided Transcription (CAT) system to produce verbatim transcripts from the stenographer's precise finger placement of myriad shorthand word combinations to a "cash register"? Seriously?

In all the years you have been covering Congressional hearings, have you ever taken time to SPEAK with one of the stenographers? Where do you THINK the official transcripts of deposition, court, and Congressional hearings you and your colleagues use on air come from? Ms. McCaskill: As a member of the bar of Missouri, and especially during your 12 years as a Senator, did you ever speak with any of the Official Reporters of the United States Senate, (i.e., stenographers)? Did you ever ask for a transcript of proceedings? Certainly you have READ a transcript of proceedings?

Your "upgraded to digital *at this point*" comment is archaic. Stenographers have been providing instant transcription of the spoken word via cutting edge CAT technology known as "realtime" since the 1980s. Where do you THINK the words written on the bottom of the screen simultaneously as you and Mr. Williams spoke came from?

Answer: Broadcast captioners (i.e., stenographers).

Every word she's speaking is being captioned accurately by an "old-fashioned" stenographer, sent through multiple IP connections to encoders and then delivered in real time to both the TV and online stream of MSNBC's broadcast.

Mr. Williams' and Ms. McCaskill's above exchange is the epitome of disrespect for a profession that dates back to 3500 B.C., when Sumerians began capturing the spoken word to preserve historical events. According to The Gallery of Shorthand: The first verbatim shorthand writing machine

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We Are STENO

This is Why We Are Still Here

in America was the 1879 Stenograph, invented by Miles Bartholomew.

Since 1879, stenographic machines and the professionals who use them have evolved and remain the most technologically advanced method of capturing the spoken word and producing a verbatim record.

Stenographers (commonly known as court reporters) with those funny-looking machines have used stenographic shorthand for over 140 years to write 200-300+ words per minute, faster than most people speak. [6]

Mr. Williams' and Ms. McCaskill's above exchange demonstrates ignorance of the high level of SKILL required to be a stenographer. Unfortunately, they are not alone.

The increased use of voice-activated technology (i.e., ASR and AI) has led the general public and some legal professionals to believe that stenographers are on the verge of extinction. But savvy judges, litigators, and elected officials know that no audio machine, device, or app can replace the highly skilled live stenographic court reporter, for a multitude of reasons. The bottom line is as guardians of the record, stenographers ensure accuracy, confidentiality, impartiality, and accountability.

@MSNBC: Please INFORM your staff about stenographers' crucial role capturing a verbatim record of the spoken word in numerous diverse venues, including the chaotic Senate floor, keeping a sharp eye and ear for those whose turn it is to speak while tuning out background noise, people entering and leaving, coughing, sneezing, rustling papers, etc.

Whether on the Senate floor, a deposition room, at trial, or just normal conversation, most people hear the gist of what is being said. Most people

don't listen to every word. So it doesn't matter if they hear the entire word or sentence, especially if there are interruptions (i.e., someone sneezes in the middle of a comment or question). People get a basic understanding of what was said, or assume they do.

On the other hand, highly skilled stenographers spend thousands of dollars and several years of instruction and education in addition to thousands of hours of hands-on machine training to LISTEN for every SYL-LA-BLE and write it VERBATIM. And they can READ IT BACK exactly as it was spoken.

Attorneys are tasked with zealously advocating for their clients and want accurate transcripts. Justice and appeals hinge on the accuracy of the official record.

Court reporters are legally and ethically bound to produce verbatim transcripts. In many states, they must abide by multiple state and federal rules of procedure and conduct.

Audio recording personnel don't get any of the intensive training that stenographers do, have no ability to read back, and there's no government oversight when there are errors. Thus, they have no accountability.

Besides equipment failures, major issues with high-tech digital recording equipment include multiple errors, numerous gaps, and missing text due to low audio, unclear speech, and background noise.

Digital recordings are later handed off to transcribers who were not present and possibly live outside the U.S. Since they cannot see who was speaking, they face the often

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We Are STENO

This is Why We Are Still Here

insurmountable challenge of not being able to correctly identify the speakers, especially when the recording is of poor quality or background noise obliterates the speakers' words.

Imagine what kind of transcript your colleagues would get if a "digital recorder" were to attempt to capture the record when there are 100+ people in the spacious Senate chambers and they're not all "mic'd up." Likely what you see in the attached transcript page. Of what use are these transcripts peppered with (INAUDIBLE) parentheticals throughout?

@MSNBC: Please READ the brilliant article published five days before this incident by Stanley Sakai, *In an Age of High-Definition Digital Audio, Why Do We Still Use Human Stenographers?* Stanley provides statistics that answer Mr. Williams' question: Why in 2020, the electronic age, does Congress still have roving stenographers?

Stanley, who is a stenographer, realtime captioner, and software engineer, writes:

Microphones do not know when they are "not getting it," and thus, cannot regulate people's sloppy speech habits. Simply handing off a recording to someone who can hear and type English doesn't necessarily guarantee they will be able to understand everything. They aren't able to see who is speaking, so it will be much harder for them to correctly attribute each utterance to its speaker. Moreover, unless they are highly trained, their verbatim-transcription skills may not be up to snuff ... Junk-ass audio leads to junk-ass transcripts. [9]

In 2015, Stanley produced a 3-minute video, *Stan's Quick & Dirty: How Stenography*

Works, which as of this writing has nearly 325,000 views. I encourage you to watch it.

@MSNBC: Please WATCH again a video broadcast on your website published December 28, 2018, "Thank You Court Reporters and Artists!" with this introductory language:

"Joy Reid expressed her appreciation on behalf of Rachel Maddow and the entire TRMS staff to the court reporters who go to great lengths to deliver the vital, timely court transcripts that inform the show..."

Clearly, Ms. Maddow and Ms. Reid understand the value of immediate verbatim transcripts and respect the people who deliver them: "TRMS Salutes 'Unsung Heroes' of 2018: Court Artists and Reporters."

I'm guessing Mr. Williams did not watch this segment.

@MSNBC: Surely you know that *Hardball* talk show host Chris Matthews' father, Herb, was a court reporter. Certainly the junior Mr. Matthews understands the value of immediate verbatim transcripts and respects the people who deliver them.

@MSNBC: Please EDUCATE your commentators so that they stop disrespecting the honorable profession of stenographic court reporting and the professional stenographers and mask/voice writers who deliver verbatim records of the spoken word - EVERY DAY, ALL DAY LONG, ALL OVER THE WORLD.

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We Are STENO

This is Why We Are Still Here

@BrianWilliams: Before this, I appreciated your calm, efficient, compassionate demeanor, which stood out in a sea of histrionic news talk shows. I turned to you for a fair, thoughtful summary or in-depth analysis of events.

dedicate their lives to capturing and guarding the integrity of the record.

Thank you for reading. We look forward to your response. We will be waiting, watching, and listening -- to every word.

We are STENO, and we are here to stay.

WHY DO WE EVEN STILL USE
STENOGRAPHERS?



BECAUSE WE CARE MORE ABOUT
ACCURACY THAN YOU DO.

As a result of your thoughtless comments on 1/31/2020, you have ignited the global court reporting community, resulting in thousands of tweets and retweets; Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn posts/shares; calls, emails and letters to MSNBC and Ms. McCaskill's offices from stenographers, voice writers, captioners, CART providers, and court reporting associations and organizations; and memes, including the gems on this page.

So, thank you.

@MSNBC: Please show us the respect we deserve, apologize for the gaffe, and devote an entire show to spotlighting and interviewing the amazing, hard-working stenographers who

**"So you think stenographers are dull
little old ladies in sensible shoes?
Think again!"**



The Washington Court Reporters are showing they're anything but outdated in their campaign! Photo by Citizen of Earth Photography



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

A Conversation With...

Leah Willersdorf

1. You've been captioning and CART reporting all over the world. What have some of the challenges been that you've faced in some of the places you've worked?

I've worked in many cities and many countries covering all sorts of assignments, but the majority of my captioning work has been here in the UK. One challenge, which I'm pleased to say does not happen a lot to me because the UK captioning agencies I have worked with are very good at this, is to do with little or no prep material being supplied before the event. Like I say, it doesn't happen often but when it has, the easiest way around it is to google the subject matter or google the event you are captioning; you will be surprised what you will find online. In fact, even when I'm given prep, I still will use Google for more info, regardless of whether I'm captioning or doing a US deposition.

A constant challenge in captioning but also in other spheres of reporting throughout the UK, Europe and the Middle East is accents. Throw in some job-specific terminology and super-fast speakers; those accents become even harder. Over the last almost three decades of being a stenographer, I've noticed how people's speech has gotten faster and faster. I have no doubt I am not alone in recognizing that, but add that increase in speed to the jargon of a tech conference, or the nuances of politics, the diversity of arts & culture, and any other subject you can think of, then it's obvious we need to be at the top of our game when it comes to speed and also accuracy.

Something which was once a challenge was not knowing my software AND my computer, and how to troubleshoot. Stenography in all its guises, whether in court, depositions, arbitrations or captioning, brings with it its own trials and tribulations. Knowing the software you are using



is paramount, and sometimes you can be using more than one on a job. For example, in a deposition you might be using Case CATalyst and sending your realtime to iPads via the iCVNet app, or when captioning you might be using your usual reporting software but also using Text on Top, which is a favourite amongst captioners/STTRs (Speech-to-Text Reporters) here in the UK and Europe.

Taking the opportunity to do software training whenever you can will give you that peace of mind that you know the capabilities of your software.

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

A Conversation with...

Leah Willersdorf



These challenges are probably the same the world over, but once you've prepped, are confident that you know your software (and ports haven't been automatically turned off), you can have a good night's sleep before you do that tech conference tomorrow!

2. What do you love about captioning and CART reporting?

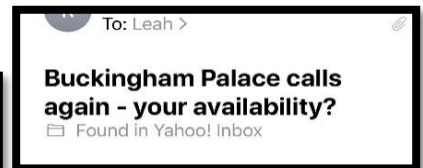
Everything.

I love the good days and I love the bad days. The bad days make you appreciate those good days even more, and after a few days those bad days are a long, distant memory. I love that I am never in the same place for very long. I love the fact that being a stenographer means we can be doing a job about a pharmaceutical patent one day and then captioning the London Pride concert in Trafalgar Square the next.

I love that I get to learn at least one new thing every day.

I love the adrenaline of realtime and seeing the words come up on the screen, whether that's to 20 iPads in an international arbitration or it's a big-screen event (though that latter did used to

petrify me, I have to say, and I much rather 50 iPads!) I love the places, cities and countries that weird-looking machine takes me, from holding court on an Aboriginal Reserve back home in Australia to covering depositions in a converted windmill in the Netherlands. I love when I get emails like this in my inbox to caption at the Queen's Gallery...



I love that nobody in the room can do what I am doing. I love that I can watch co-workers' fingers and wonder what the heck they're doing, and then realize I do the same thing. Speaking of co-workers on captioning jobs, we work hard but I love catching up with everyone in the evening. And taking photos of all the tools of

our trade... I love being a stenographer.

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

A Conversation with...

Leah Willersdorf

3. What tips or tricks do you wish you had known 20 years ago that you employ today as you are doing a job?

- A. Fingerspelling. And the reason why is because I think I missed class the day they taught the upper-case and lower-case alphabets, and also because I didn't know my software as I got out in the field.

I was never a dab hand at fingerspelling but my friend and fellow Aussie expat, Jade King, was my inspiration for becoming proficient at fingerspelling. For me, the best time to practice was before a job, and then also whenever I was on a deposition where an interpreter was being used.

For me, fingerspelling is compulsory for captioning and all other areas of reporting.

- B. Google is a stenographer's best friend. Back in the day (I can't believe I just said that!) we had to use telephone books, encyclopedias, textbooks, even make phone calls to find out a spelling. Thank goodness for Google and the internet.



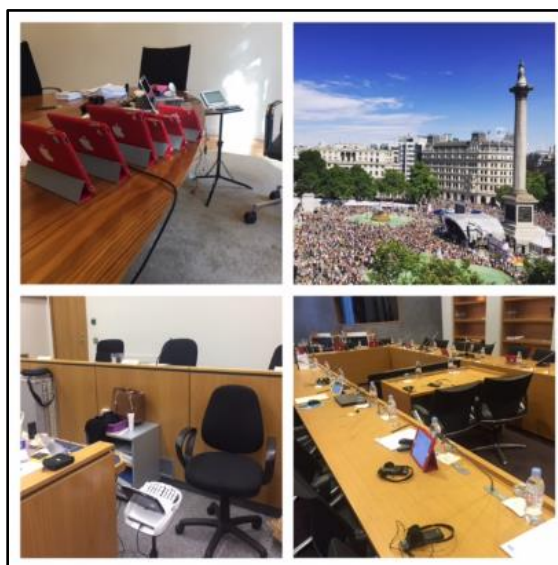
The Luminex and the Burj Kahlifa, Dubai

- C. The tilting tripod - I wish it had been invented when I first started training in 1990. I've been a tilter since I've had my Luminex circa August 2015 and I can honestly say I won't go back to flat. The Luminex itself was an innovation akin to writing steno on marshmallows, but the tilting tripod makes me feel like I could write for hours upon hours with little or no fatigue. Highly recommend it!

4. If you didn't become the realltime rock star you are, what do you think your career would be?

Rock star? The closest thing I come to that is doing a bit of air steno as opposed to air guitar! But thank you for your kind words.

That sure is a tough question. I don't know how to do anything else. A stenographer/court reporter was my dream from 15 years of age. At some point before that, I thought of journalism. Nowadays, though? I think I'd be what's known in the perfume industry as a Nose. Perfume has also been a passion since the ripe old age of 15!



Stenography in the deposition room;
in Trafalgar Square at London Pride;
in a courtroom;
and in an international arbitration in Paris.

By Sharon Velazco, RPR, FPR, CLR
Immediate Past President

TO BE MISTAKEN FOR THE COURT REPORTER



I was recently amused when I came across the article in which accomplished female judges and attorneys were interviewed, and they were relating instances in their career when, because of their gender, they were often mistaken for the court reporter. And, although I am sure it is the intentions of the author, the tone of the article assumes that to be mistaken for the court reporter would be somehow demeaning. So, to the average reader who has probably never met a court reporter, I would like to explain what it is that court reporters do, and how it is actually an honor and privilege to be a member of this niche, necessary profession which, ironically, given the theme of the article, was once mostly held by men.

There's a common tenet in the medical community, "If it's not written down, it didn't happen," referring to the importance of a written record in the care and treatment of a patient. The same premise may be applied to the legal process. The written record is the foundation of our system of justice, and court reporters are the scribes and keepers of that written record. That same written record will be needed and relied on by the jurist in order to prepare and advance her case. In our American institution of jurisprudence, the legal process is dependent on the written record – the record prepared by the court reporter.

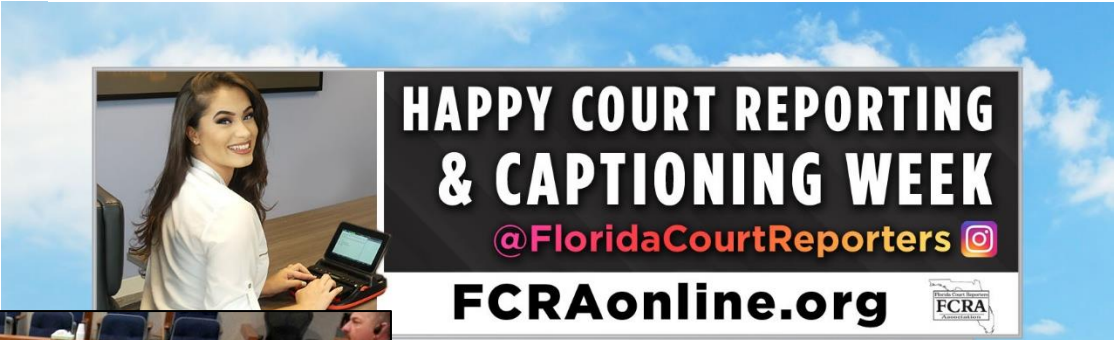
Contrary to popular belief, this is not a skill which is acquired in a few weeks or that can be performed by just anyone. This is not just a job. This is a chosen career. The uniquely qualified individual will spend an average of two to three years to complete the basic training necessary to become a court reporter. It takes about a year just to learn the stenographic theory of the writer, and then the remainder of the time is spent building speed, accuracy, and taking other classes to complement the knowledge base

needed to produce a transcript. In addition to the obvious requirement for advanced English and grammar, there is the prerequisite for legal and medical terminology. It is often necessary to study a wide range of material in order to be prepared to take down the specific, vital testimony of a doctor, engineer, or other expert witness whose opinion may be crucial to a case. There is no script from which to prepare until the court reporter writes it – in realtime.

Additionally, the qualities of innate human intuition and skill combined with modern technology provide for real-time capturing of the spoken word to text in a readable, useable format, regarding of accent or subject matter. So whether that court reporter is working in a legal setting and giving realtime, immediate access to the transcript, or perhaps working behind-the-scenes doing the closed-captions for a television broadcast, please know that it takes a special kind of talent, dedication, and determination to achieve the level of skill required to provide that invaluable service. And, while the close-captions are, without a doubt, appreciated by the viewer, that viewer is probably unaware that it's all being done by a court reporter.

So, in summary, this occupation is a challenging, constant education-in-progress. This occupation is flexible, exciting, and never boring. This occupation offers opportunities to travel the world. This occupation also happens to be extremely rewarding financially. So, without taking away from the successful careers and accomplishments of our respected members and leaders of the legal community whose experiences were the bases of the original article, let me turn the article's slant the other way. I would like to ask that author, now that they know a little about what we do, who WOULDN'T want to be the court reporter?

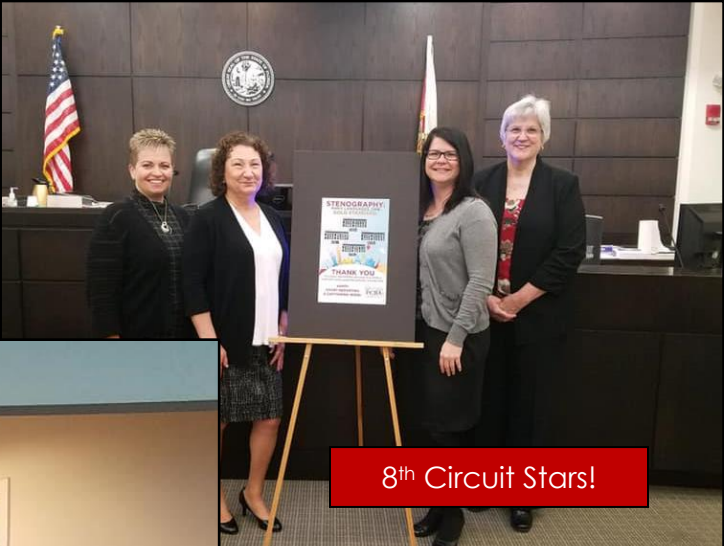
Court Reporting & Captioning Week!



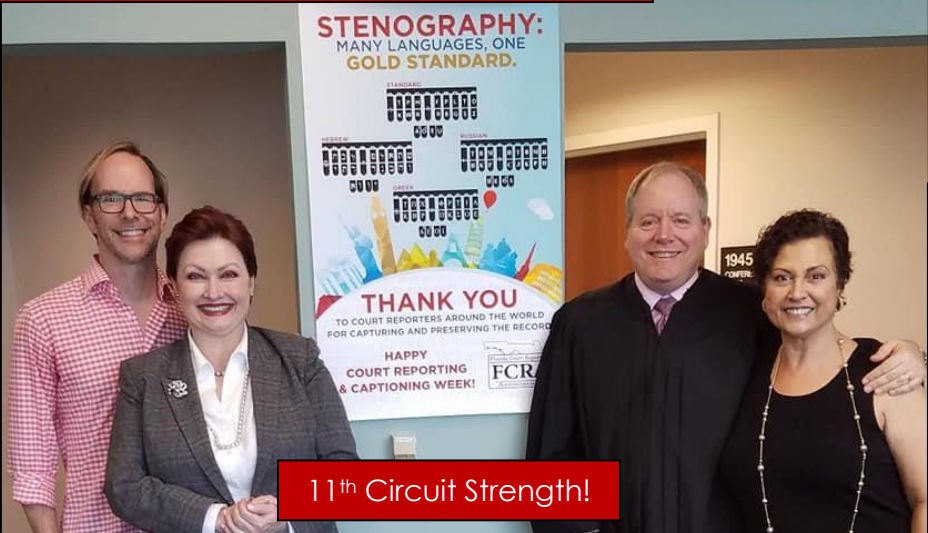
FCRA put up billboards!



12th Circuit Spotlights Officials on web site.



8th Circuit Stars!



11th Circuit Strength!



4th Circuit Support!



2nd Circuit Celebration!



By Michael A. Sciré, RPR, CMRS, FPR
Director at Large, Associate Editor



TWINSPIRATION: The Mock Trial Competitions

It was one year ago after driving by the courthouse on a Saturday when I noticed the 12th Circuit Mock Trial Competition was going on. I thought then what a great opportunity for court reporters to get involved. I contacted the Florida Southern College Mock Trial Program and asked if I could volunteer. I was assured I would be added to the list.

A year later they reached out to me to let me know that I was, in fact, added to the list. With the help of social media, Richard and I were able to gather up some more volunteers. Saturday, February 8, Yvonne Corrigan, Rhonda Breuwet, Tara Shuck, Beverly Foor, Richard, and I gave up our Saturday to realtime report nine different trials. Also volunteering were local attorneys, who critiqued the event as "jurors," as well as judges from the 12th judicial circuit, Frederick Mercurio, Diana Moreland, Lee E. Haworth, Andrea McHugh, Kim Bonner, Hunter Carroll, Erika Quartermaine, and Stephen Walker.

This is a statewide competition with participation from all 20 judicial circuits. Imagine the exposure we could bring to these students if we all volunteered.

Scheduled were three rounds (four trials per round) of approximately two hours each: 9:00 am, 12:00 pm, and 3:00 pm. The competition grew and eight high schools were expected to participate: Manatee High School, The Classical Academy, Riverview High School, Booker High School, Southeast High School, Manatee School for the Arts, Invictus Home School Group (last year's winner and first time competitor), and a new competitor, Pine View School.



Champion Twins with the Court Reporter Twins

According to the Florida Southern College website, The Florida High School Mock Trial Program was designed in 1991 by Annette Boyd Pitts and former Florida Bar Executive Director Marshall Cassedy. Hundreds of student participants have graduated, attended law school, and become members of The Florida Bar or other state bar associations. Many former student participants have returned to coach teams at the schools they once attended or at other schools throughout the state.

The Florida High School Mock Trial Competition has grown into a multi-level academic championship. Its popularity among students, coaches, parents, and the legal and judicial communities continues to strengthen and expand the program. At the program's inception in 1991, the competition was an open invitational where any school could send a team to compete at the state level. As the program grew, county level competitions were implemented. Winning

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TWINSPIRATION: The Mock Trial Competitions



teams from participating counties would advance to the state competition. When that model became too large, the competition was organized by judicial circuits. In this model, counties hold competitions to advance teams to the circuit level and one team from each judicial circuit advances to represent the circuit at the state competition. This is the model currently implemented in Florida. With 20 judicial circuits, a maximum of twenty teams may advance to the state finals.

Hundreds of attorneys and judges volunteer to participate in the circuit and state competitions annually. Members of The Florida Bar Law Related Education Committee develop the case materials annually. The winning state team is eligible to represent Florida in the National High School Mock Trial Championship held annually in different host states.

Students learn critical thinking skills, legal reasoning, analysis, and professionalism, in addition to the structure and function of the courts and the legal process.

The Florida program is sponsored by the Justice Teaching Center for Civic Learning and is named in honor of JTC founder, R. Fred Lewis.



The students were amazed at what we could do. After each trial, students would come over to engage and inquire about our skill and were even utilizing the realtime during their trials. It was very inclusive and long overdue that the court reporters were part of this.

The mock trial days were as follows. Each trial only lasts two hours. You also are qualified for the \$100 discount towards your FCRA membership and can earn PDC points through NCRA. It takes place every year in the month of February. If you would like to volunteer for next year, please email michaelscirefcra@gmail.com

- First Circuit - February 24-27
- Second Circuit - February 14
- Third Circuit - TBA
- Fourth Circuit - February 21
- Fifth Circuit - February 14 (tentative)
- Sixth Circuit - February 22
- Seventh Circuit - February 7
- Eighth Circuit - TBA
- Ninth Circuit - February 19 (tentative)
- Tenth Circuit - February 5
- Eleventh Circuit - February 20 & 21 (Must register directly with the MDCPS)
- Twelfth Circuit - February 8
- Thirteenth Circuit - February 22
- Fourteenth Circuit - TBA
- Fifteenth Circuit - February 7
- Sixteenth Circuit - TBA
- Seventeenth Circuit - February 7
- Eighteenth Circuit - February 8
- Nineteenth Circuit - TBA
- Twentieth Circuit - February 21-22

One on One with...

Eve Barrett

of **EXPEDITE**



Q. Please introduce yourself.

A. My name is Eve Barrett, Registered Professional Reporter in the state of Florida. I am a busy freelance court reporter, firm owner, U.S. Army veteran, tech entrepreneur, marathoner, triathlete, mother, and wife.

Q. As a veteran reporter, what are some of the biggest changes you have seen in the court reporting industry?

A. The biggest changes in our industry have been ushered in through technology. From the Internet in 1999, to my first cell phone in 2000, to audiosync in 2003, to RealLegal e-Transcripts in 2005, to wireless realtime connections in 2006, to my first SmartPhone in 2007, to Facebook connecting us on another level in 2008, to DropBox in 2010, to videoconferencing in 2016, to RealTeam in 2018, technology allows us to connect, share resources, and work more efficiently.

Q. What are the biggest challenges you see in our industry?

A. Currently, the biggest challenge in the legal industry is the willingness to utilize technology to streamline redundant, antiquated processes. The legal industry is resistant to embracing efficient ways of performing repetitive tasks.

For tech to be truly effective, you need to ensure that the people are effective and will be effective using the available technology.

Q. What was your motivation for creating Expedite?

A. As a court reporter, firm owner, and problem solver, I have the unique ability to experience firsthand the pain points in the legal market. Although technology is bridging the gap on the supply-and-demand components in various industries, there is nothing in the legal industry to solve this issue. As a firm owner, I wanted to create a solution that would allow me to instantly locate legal support service providers, thereby never having to say 'no' to another job opportunity again. As an avid on-demand app consumer, I took the best features from my faves and built a solution for all of us! The national court reporting shortage is a very real threat, and Expedite is the solution.

Q. Can you tell us about Expedite, the concept and how it works?

A. Expedite is a first-to-market on-demand platform, available through Apple and Android. We recently also launched an accompanying web-based portal. A real-time, GPS-based mobile-app platform, Expedite connects attorneys, paralegals, and agency

owners with available legal support providers in the immediate vicinity of a job request. We initially built the platform to address last-minute legal support requests, but shortly after launching, attorneys requested that we add a future-booking option. As attorneys are our customers, we listened to their feedback and incorporated the upgraded feature in October of 2018. In April of 2019, we launched a 'Remote Reporter' category to provide more opportunities to capture the record across the nation! The best part about being the captain at the helm is it allows me to implement consumer suggestions at a moment's notice. Qualified legal support providers can join the Expedite network to fill their time between jobs. Because the platform offers actual jobs – not leads – legal support providers have an opportunity to eliminate downtime and increase earning potential. The real reward is in assisting nationwide providers with maximizing their earning potential. Expedite has deep-seated intuitive logic built in, and through pop-up notifications, reminders, emails, texts, and Apple Watch-integrated technology, problem-solving has never been so easy, fun...and efficient!

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One on One with...

Eve Barrett

Q. Where is Expedite available?

A. Expedite launched in Tampa Bay in April of 2018. Although Expedite is available nationwide, our marketing efforts are mainly focused in Chicago, Illinois, the state of Texas, and we are currently working in Los Angeles, California. We receive numerous requests from attorneys and court reporters to market in many other states, but our goal is to grow organically.

Q. When a reporter or provider completes a job, when can they anticipate payment?

A. Upon completion of an 'Accepted' job through Expedite, the Provider will receive direct payment to their specified bank account within 24 – 72 hours. And Expedite keeps track of all invoices and amounts paid through the year.

Q. Who does the production?

A. Expedite allows the providers the freedom to choose. Since Expedite is not a national firm, we had to think outside the box when it came to possible solutions for production.

Once a court reporter has 'Finished' a job through Expedite, the transcript and billing component is handled by the Provider 100%. We suggest three options when it comes to production. 1) The reporter is free to produce and invoice themselves, 2) the reporter can take the production and billing component to a trusted firm, 3) the

reporter can utilize clearinghouses and/or use SmartDeps as their personal production departments. The joy of being an independent contractor is you are free to explore options and make educated decisions.

Q. What if the client hires the provider for the next job outside of the Expedite app?

A. Expedite is a connection platform ONLY. The Providers are not Expedite Providers. All Providers are encouraged to hand out their everyday business cards for ALL jobs picked up through the app. Expedite is a marketing tool that allows attorneys, paralegals, and agencies to instantly find qualified Providers to assist with job opportunities. Once the connection has been made, it's up to the Provider to close the deal.

Q. Can agency firms use the app?

A. As an agency owner, I receive last-minute calls at least three times a week. Since launching Expedite, I have been successfully pushing jobs through the app to efficiently cover these opportunities. When we are successful, it's a win/win/win as the attorney is thrilled, my firm has efficiently found coverage, and the reporter is ecstatic for the unexpected windfall. On those days we are not successful in connecting the Customer with a Provider, we simply beef up our marketing efforts to add more Providers to the platform. In the last half of 2018, our firm grew 28% due to saying 'yes'

to many more requests. The legal community is small and word travels fast.

As for production and billing, we do not expect reporters to send it our way. A happy consequence has been that eight out of ten reporters are asking us to handle this component, and we are only too happy to continue filling the legal industry needs.

Q. Can a court reporter or provider decline a job?

A. Providers on the Expedite platform are encouraged to 'Accept' jobs. We recently added the 'Responsiveness' rating within Expedite as we aim to work efficiently and effectively. The goal of Expedite is to build a network of Providers working toward a solution.

Q. How does the rating system work?

A. The rating system has been highly successful in many industries. Ratings provide transparency in today's fast-moving culture. Expedite has a reciprocal rating system which allows Providers to rate Customers and Customers to rate Providers. Customers can view the Provider's rating as soon as the Provider accepts the job. Providers can view the Customer's ratings before they accept the job. How nice would it be to learn how your colleagues rate their experiences in the market?

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One on One with...

Eve Barrett

Q. What are the biggest misconceptions about Expedite?

A. The biggest misconception about Expedite is that it's a national firm. Expedite is an on-demand mobile-app platform that connects the supply-and-demand sides in the legal industry. The app is free to both Customers and Providers, and Customers only pay for a service once a Provider has accepted and completed a job. The Provider keeps 100% of the appearance fees, and it is paid directly to their associated bank account.

Another misconception about Expedite is that firms will lose work, and/or reporters, due to this platform. We believe it's quite the opposite. Armed with Expedite, agencies will have access to a larger network of reporters to cover jobs all over the state and country. Staff reporters affiliated with firms will enjoy filling gaps when jobs run short or cancel last-minute.

Q. There's been some skepticism among agency firm owners. Can you dispel some of their reluctance?

A. If there is a firm owner out there that is reluctant to use this technology, it's because they don't understand it. Any firm owner is free to call me so I can further explain how they can leverage this technology, as I have.

Q. The goal for Expedite is not to steal clients?

A. Expedite facilitates connections between attorneys, paralegals, agencies, and legal support providers. Providers are encouraged to display the Expedite decal. This allows for easy identification of Providers by Customers. Expedite is NOT a firm and does not have clients. Providers are encouraged to pass their firm or personal card upon arrival.

Q. Tell us about your blogs.

Once Expedite launched, I wanted to share the results of my many months of independent industry research. The most effective way to do that was through blogs on the Expedite website. My blogs are based on personal observations, experiences, as well as my journey as a legal tech entrepreneur. Over the last two years, I have attended numerous national conventions, seminars, presentations, and networking events where I ask fellow colleagues and mentors the tough questions and learn the latest about technology in their neck of the woods. A LOT is changing in our industry, and as a reporter, I expect more straight talk from industry leaders. In the absence of this straight talk, I created a blog with accurate information from personal research.



FCRA Takes on Florida School Counselor Association to Promote, Recruit, and Educate



Attention All Court Reporters!
FCRA is proud to announce their
National "Men of Court Reporting" Calendar

- ✚ Nominate your entry by March 18th
- ✚ Nominees do not have to be Florida reporters
- ✚ Multiple entries accepted
- ✚ Selections will be announced in April
- ✚ Selections will be contacted with further instructions



Email nominee's contact information and/or any questions to
CalendarEntryFCRA@gmail.com



The Diamond Vault

The History of FCRA The Fourth Decade, Part II 1996-2001



By Donna M. Kanabay, donna@kanabay.com

We begin this installment in June of 1996 with a question arising about the old, long defunct (sunsetted) voluntary Florida CSR. Apparently some reporters were still using the designation, and the board decided to consult NCRA about whether that was appropriate. NCRA came back with a strong No to the question.

Officials in Orlando (Orange County,) were being told to prepare themselves to implement realtime in all courtrooms for an additional salary of \$3000 per year.

Mark Stuart became editor starting with the Summer 1996 issue of the magazine. In President Ryan's column, he ended with, "Since we have a new product to introduce –realtime reporting –each of us should appropriately place a value on this service and strategically market it." Today, it really is amazing to think that just a little over 20 years ago, realtime was still "new."

The magazine had an article about another thing that was new and revolutionary in that era, RTF/CRE conversion. The software companies agreed to work together to develop it, and its intent was to allow reporters and scopists on different CAT systems to convert back and forth. (Personal observation: it works, but not seamlessly, and is frankly more trouble than it's worth with all the format tweaking you have to do.)

Awards at the Annual Convention in Cape Canaveral: Pro Bono: Tanya Ward English; President's Award, George Vouvakis; Arlene

Sommers, Joseph C. Kingdon; EMDSA, Linda Miller Dyer. The Frank Sarli Scholarship went to Shannon Fisette.

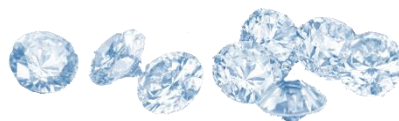
Virginia "Ginny" Hyland became our 1996-1997 president, and she had a heck of a year...

The 1996 Winter issue of the magazine unveiled a new column called "Behind the Scenes," detailing the panic when the Miami NCRA test site rescinded its reservation just days before the test was to take place. Thomas Hughes, Doreen Strauss and Theresa Hayes scrambled to secure a new site just in time for the test.

Attorney Mary April, a former court reporter, assisted with obtaining a ruling out of Hillsborough County that went up to the 2nd District Court of Appeal that the reporter's backup tape is not an official/judicial record. The ruling was appealed to the (Florida) Supreme Court and upheld. The case was Holt v. Allen, 677 So.2d 81, Florida, 1996. It is one of the foundational cases in a court reporter's assertion that the tapes are not public record. See the next page for the entire ruling.

As reported previously, but now it's official, the Supreme Court formally rejected the proposed "Original Only" rule, stating that "the proposals would impose additional notice requirements and would shift the burden of maintaining the integrity of original deposition transcripts and exhibits from court reporters to attorneys, which

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The Diamond Vault

The History of FCRA The Fourth Decade, Part II 1996-2001

Holt v. Allen, 677 So.2d 81, Florida, 1996

- [1] THE DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA
- [2] CASE NO. 96-00037
- [3] 1996.FL.0001562 <<http://www.versuslaw.com>>
- [4] Opinion filed July 19, 1996.
- [5] JULIANNE M. HOLT, AS PUBLIC DEFENDER FOR THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA, PETITIONER
v.
DIANA ALLEN, AS CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA, RESPONDENT.
- [6] SECOND DISTRICT
- [7] Petition for Writ of Mandamus.
- [8] Julianne M. Holt, Public Defender and Jack D. Evans, Assistant Public Defender, Tampa, for Petitioner.
- [9] David A. Rowland, Tampa, for Respondent.
- [10] PER CURIAM.
- [11] Julianne M. Holt, as Public Defender for the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, Hillsborough County, Florida, has filed a petition for writ of mandamus seeking to compel the Honorable Diana Allen, as circuit court judge for the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, to provide her with a "back-up" audiotape of a docket call held in her court. The audiotape is currently in Judge Allen's possession pursuant to the judge's request. In support of her petition, the Public Defender asserts that the audiotape is a judicial record to which she is entitled access. See Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.051(a).
- [12] The audiotape which is the subject of the petition is an informal audiotape made by the court reporter to utilize at a later time to complete official transcripts of court proceedings. The audiotape was not taken in accordance with Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.070(b). That rule provides for electronic reporting. The recording was not made pursuant to any court rule, law or ordinance, or in connection with the transaction of official business by the court or any court agency. Further, the audiotape in question is not a judicial record as defined in Rule 2.051(b). See In re: Amendments to Rule of Judicial Administration 2.051 - Public Access to Judicial Records, 651 So. 2d 1185, 1188 (Fla. 1995). We conclude that the audiotape is not transformed into a judicial record by a circuit court judge requiring the court reporter to relinquish possession of the audiotape to the court.

- [13] The petition for writ of mandamus is denied.
- [14] PARKER and PATTERSON, JJ., Concur.
- [15] CAMPBELL, A.C.J., Dissents with opinion.
- [16] CAMPBELL, Acting Chief Judge, Dissenting with opinion.
- [17] I respectfully dissent. Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.051 provides, in pertinent part, as follows:
- [18] RULE 2.051 PUBLIC ACCESS TO JUDICIAL RECORDS
- [19] (a) Generally. Subject to the rulemaking power of the Florida Supreme Court provided by article V, section 2, Florida Constitution, the following rule shall govern public access to the records of the judicial branch of government and its agencies. The public shall have access to all records of the judicial branch of government and its agencies, except as provided below.
- [20] (b) Definition. Judicial records for this rule refer to documents, exhibits in the custody of the clerk, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, recordings, data processing software, or other material created by any entity within the judicial branch, regardless of physical form, characteristics, or means of transmission, that are made or received pursuant to court rule, law, or ordinance, or in connection with the transaction of official business by any court or court agency.
- [21] (Emphasis supplied.)
- [22] I do not have great difficulty in concluding that a recording tape made of an official and public "docket-call" of the circuit court by an official court reporter to aid that court reporter's performance of assigned duties is a "judicial record" that is clearly subject to public access pursuant to Rule 2.051.
- [23] I would grant the petition and issue the writ of mandamus requested.
- 19960719

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could raise questions regarding the integrity of those items. "They also rejected condensed transcripts as the official record. If you'll recall, FCRA worked hard on addressing this issue, and it was nice to have a Win!

At the January 1997 board meeting, the board voted to start a PAC and appointed Mike Musetta as Chair. \$200 was allocated to open and maintain the PAC.

Judge Peter Webster, Chair of the Court Reporter Certification Planning Committee, had asked us to examine testing electronically, and President Hyland appointed an ad hoc committee consisting of Ann Mendenhall,

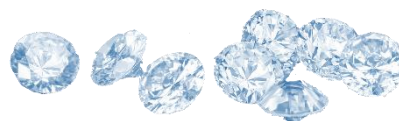
Michael Wierzbicki and Shirley King. Motion passed to advise Judge Webster that FCRA would do what it can with NCRA to explore creating an acceptable test.

The 1997 Spring magazine contained the position paper on certification that FCRA had developed:

Toward that goal, FCRA supports a certification process that includes the following components:

- grandfathering for experienced reporters;

Continued on next page



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- reciprocity for all National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) Registered Professional Reporters (RPRs);
- a majority of court reporters to serve on the Florida Court Reporter Certification Board;
- certification designations that specify reporting method;
- an adequate grace period for testing of working reporters once certification program is implemented;
- rules that assure the impartiality and independence of Florida court reporters.

And Certification indeed did heat up, and not in a good way. Per our Bylaws, in accordance with Article V, Meetings, Section 2, Special Meetings, there was a member-driven petition to force a special meeting: "The purpose of the meeting, per the membership petition calling for the meeting, is to discuss the Proposed Rules for Certification and Regulation of Court Reporters, and to determine, by vote of the membership attending said meeting, whether the Florida Court Reporters Association should withdraw its application for certification from the Supreme Court of the State of Florida.

"The meeting was very contentious and President Hyland had her hands full keeping order, with a lot of help from our Parliamentarian. It cost FCRA a great deal of money to have been forced into this [unbudgeted] meeting, but on the flip side of that, our membership increased significantly, as many people joined strictly for the purpose of being able to vote at the meeting. The motion on the table

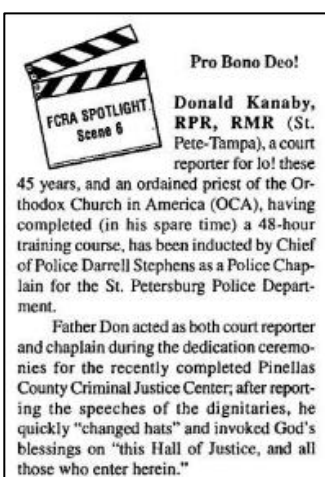
was whether FCRA should rescind the pursuit of certification. 103 voted against the motion, 72 voted for. (There was a great deal of confusion and explanation of the motion needed because it was phrased almost as a "negative." A vote against the motion meant we WOULD CONTINUE; a vote for the motion, meant we would NOT continue.)

Several articles were submitted to the magazine, for and against, leading up to the special meeting, and they can be read in their entirety in the supplemental Dropbox folder:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9a7glgi2rmbstza/ABALiwTXA5MR12L9k1b3NB9a?dl=0>

The next magazine contained a recap of the meeting, which is contained on page 35.

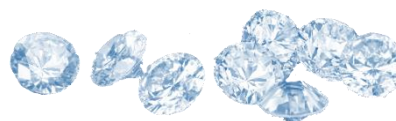
The magazine also contained something personal to me, and I can't resist giving it a nod here. (Too bad they spelled our name wrong. I remember how irritated Dad was about that LOL!)



Our Midyear was held at Tradewinds, and I can't resist this picture of Judy Everman (on the right, in white,) with her contest-winning performance:



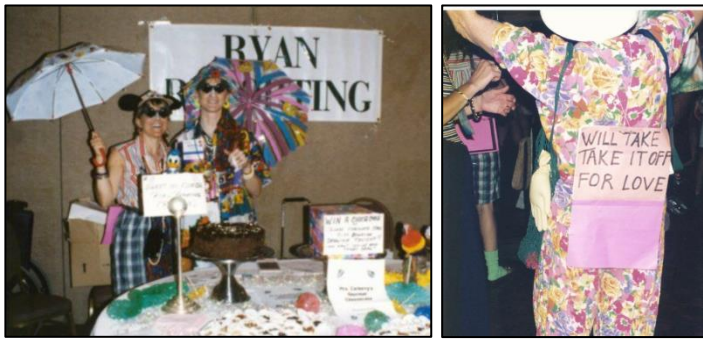
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National was in Orlando that year, and FCRA sponsored the Tacky Tourist Party. Here are just a couple of photos to whet your appetite, and please go to the Dropbox supplements for all the pictures of this whacky party.



<https://www.dropbox.com/s/cd42fulwwkyp3qn/Photo Insert 1997 08 NCRA Orlando 014 Tacky Tourist 0003.jpg?dl=0>

You can see all the whacky and wonderful pictures of the party in the supplemental Dropbox:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7srq16rv1xhum00/AADjGF_ukMGOeQx2MwO0J7kHa?dl=0

President Hyland ended a tumultuous and action-packed year at our Annual Convention in September of 1997, with the following awards: Special Recognition, Donna Kanabay; President's Award, Ann Mendenhall; Meritorious Service, Shirley King; Arlene Sommers, Rosa O. Morgan; EMDSA, Marie Splane.

The Frank Sarli Scholarship went to Elizabeth Beyer. I was able to track her down online and it appears she did indeed go on to become and remain a reporter. I reached out to her to chat, and we did connect, but she didn't follow through on my request for an interview ☹

Robert Dempster became our next president, for the 1997-1998 term.

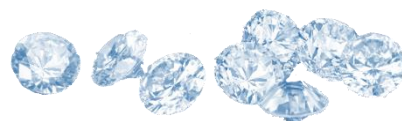
In November of 1997, Past President Jack Besoner passed away. Jack was the first Emily Mann recipient, in 1978.

President Dempster's theme for his presidential year was, "Let's Make It Happen." The Winter, 1997 magazine heralded a new editor, Shirley King. The magazine debuted Richard Sherman's Ask Mr. Modern column. Today, it's a fascinating lookback to the days of dial-up modems, where the kind of high-speed always-on connection we have today wasn't even a glimmer in our dreams. A sample of the questions in the column that truly made me chuckle: "Everybody seems to be talking about the Internet, but what is it." "Are the Internet and the World Wide Web the same thing?"

At the January, 1998 board meeting, Immediate Past President Ginny Hyland informed the board that the Electronic Reporters and Transcribers had developed a certification test and had recently administered it for the first time. There was discussion about FCRA developing its own test. Motion passed to set up a Testing Committee to explore.

Judge Webster had submitted a draft petition for certification to the Court Reporter Certification Committee, and it continued to lack a grandfather clause. \$5700 had been raised for the legal fund and an attorney agreed to accept that amount to write a brief and present oral argument on only the grandfathering issue.

Continued on next page



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The Spring, 1998 magazine reported that NCRA had passed a motion to lobby at the state and federal levels for laws limiting third-party contracting "in order to maintain the impartiality and independence of court reporters in their capacity as officers of the court."

In April, 1998, the board approved a NCSA resolution to take to the national convention, "Whereas court reporters are capable of determining their needs and desires for continuing education, and that NCRA is the sole grantor of CE credits, be it resolved that NCRA rescind and abolish the entire core curriculum program." The NCRA core curriculum program had been resoundingly reviled over the years. It wasn't enough during that "experiment" that you simply get CEs to maintain your certifications; you had to get a specific number of CEs in four specific categories. (CEs are now CEUs.) The core curriculum was indeed abolished in July 1998.

In the It's Always Something category, a new problem has arisen, that of reporters charging more for appellate transcripts than for "regular" transcripts. Judy Everman took on the task of gathering information and working on the topic. The issue eventually resulted in the case law of Palomares vs Palomares, 730 So.2d 705, which can be read in the supplemental Dropbox folder. (Although the case really dealt more with the issue of whether a Designation can be Original only or Original/1 Copy.)

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/30zm6dvbe8uv5ge/1998%20Palomares%20vs%20Palomares.doc?dl=0>

Awards at the 1998 Annual Convention in Ocala: Pro Bono was awarded posthumously to Patricia

Hartsock; Special Recognition, Donna Kanabay; President's Award, Carol (Coblentz) Williams; Arlene Sommers, Randee Gunderson; EMDSA, Virginia Hyland. Ann Mendenhall accepted the gavel for the 1998-1999 term.

The Oct-Nov-Dec issue of our magazine had an article laying out the points we would be arguing before the Supreme Court on the grandfathering issue. The article is in the supplemental Dropbox folder.

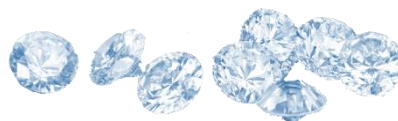
Finally, to finish out the year, in December of 1998, the Supreme Court passed Certification, without a grandfather clause, pending funding by the legislature. (Which to this day has not happened.)

In January of 1999, the board voted to end the FCRA Frank Sarli Scholarship after 10 years (started in 1988,) with the remaining funds to be turned over to NCRA's Friends of Frank Sarli Memorial Fund at the NCRA national convention. And finally, we have a web site! Its address is www.machineshorthand.com/fcra.htm (don't bother trying, it no longer exists. It was a subpage of a general site. Hey, it was a start!)

In the first magazine of the new year, President Mendenhall reported on the growing crisis of declining enrollment in court reporting schools nationwide.

President Mendenhall had a quiet year, with the Certification battle over –for now at least–and there wasn't much of note to report on, until, in September, Emily Mann died.

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At the October, 1999 board meeting, the board voted to permanently discontinue the speed contest, due to the "expense of creating the tape." Arrangements needed to be made to get the trophy from last year's winner and return it to HQ (back then the trophy was passed along from year to year.)

And a new issue on our state-wide horizon loomed: Constitutional Amendment V, which would transfer funding for the state courts from the individual circuits to the state. Once again, change was in the air.

Judy Everman reported on several issues: A new rule preventing judges from swearing witnesses in telephonically; what court reporters can charge for appellate transcripts; the Supreme Court submitted a budget request to the legislature for startup funding for certification.

Awards at the Annual Convention: Pro Bono, Diane Emery; Special Recognition, Vicki Johnson; President's Award, Shirley King; Meritorious Service, Judy Everman; Arlene Sommers, Mary Dryden, EMDSA, Philip Narup. President Mendenhall passed the gavel to Freida Sclafani Williams for the 1999-2000 term. President Williams forevermore referred to herself as our "Millennium President." Freida Sclafani Williams died in 2018. I created a video memorial to her, which can be viewed here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/2gb1vq20qa3unhk/2018%20Freida%20Sclafani%20Williams%20Memorial.mp4?dl=0>

At the post-convention board meeting, our short-lived PAC was dissolved, and there was discussion about changing the schedule to eliminate the

Midyear and move Annual to June. (That did eventually happen, but not for many more years.)

Editor Shirley King passed the editing baton to Deborah Waters.

It was the very, very early days of "broadband" and videoconferencing, and NCRA debuted Distance Learning, with seminars to be broadcast for CEUs.

At the January, 2000 board meeting, the board decided to shorten the Annual Convention, to all day Saturday and half day Sunday, with the board meeting taking place on Friday.

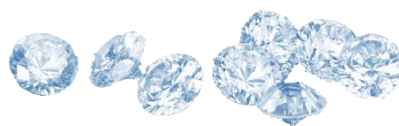
Sarasota reporters had been told that Sarasota courtrooms are going to be wired for recording and that they will all be out of jobs in two years.

In the first issue of the millennium, Judy Everman submitted the letter she had written to Judge Webster, past chair of the Court Reporting Certification Planning Committee, laying out why reporters charge differently for appeals versus depositions.

At the April, 2000 board meeting, President Williams reported that she had attended a paralegals' meeting in Sarasota and was told that it was only the juvenile courts that were being "wired" as a pilot and that the officials were not in danger of losing their jobs.

The April-May-June, 2000 magazine had some interesting material: An article about Rosemary Locklear, a reporter in Philadelphia, suing large

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law firms over copying of transcripts. I found information on it online, and the cases ended up settling, although the terms were confidential:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/stories/2000/04/17/story8.html>

In 1996, NCRA had decreed that a 4-year bachelor's degree would be required. NCRA has now "reluctantly" rescinded that. And the Bureau of Labor Statistics reclassified court reporting from Office and Administrative Support Occupations to Legal Occupations.

The July-August-September, 2000 magazine reported that NCRA had changed the requirements of the RPR from having to pass all three legs at once, to being permitted to pass one leg at a time. To this day, many refer to that change as a "dumbing down" of our profession.

By the time of our Annual Convention in September of 2000, it's become clear that the reduction of the number of students in court reporting schools was getting dramatically worse. In addition, our membership numbers continued to drop. NCRA announced that it's making student recruitment a national priority. Meanwhile, FCRA had been informed that it's up to us to obtain a sponsor to put forth a bill for funding for Certification.

Dues were increased to \$115.

Awards: Pro Bono, Paulita Kundid; President's Award, Paulita Kundid; Arlene Sommers, Theresa O. Hayes; EMDSA, Ann Mendenhall.

Our very own Judy Everman was now a Director on the NCRA board, and served as our national rep for the Annual Convention in Daytona Beach, swearing in Shirley King as our 2000-2001 president.

At her first board meeting, President King announced that "Florida Treasures" seminars throughout the year will take the place of Information Exchanges. Later that year, the new e-mail E-Flash was introduced. We're in the digital age for sure, now!

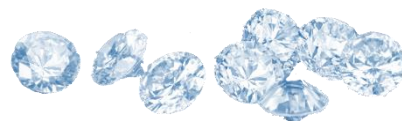
2001 was our 40th anniversary year!

At the February board meeting, the subject of the growing trend of "gift-giving" was discussed.

Rus Weathers proposed a Rosie Sclafani Award to be presented to a member for encouraging a fellow reporter. Deborah Waters suggested putting an article in the magazine giving a history of the FCRA awards and how they came into being. President King asked the chairs of those committees to write a description of the award that can be included in the call for nominations.

President King established a task force, consisting of Rick Greenspan as the chair, Paulita Kundid, Cindy Bender, Louise Johnson, Vicky Johnson and Carol Williams as members, and Judy Everman and Gayl Hardeman as advisors, to study whether FCRA should develop and administer the certification exam. President King asked the task force to have a skeleton plan in place to discuss at the May 31st Board meeting.

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Mike Wierzbicki reported that at the business meeting on June 5th, 1993, the board had adopted a motion as follows: That the Florida Court Reporters Association actively pursue legislation and/or rules that will assure the continued impartiality and independence of Florida court reporters by regulating commercial and contractual arrangements, other than arrangements with governmental entities, which undermine the impartiality and independence of court reporters. President King appointed Michael Wierzbicki to head a task force and to appoint members as needed to pursue anti-contracting legislation.

The board discussed changing Article III, Section 1 of the Bylaws to include stenomask reporters based on the response of stenomaskers and their interest in joining FCRA. It was moved, seconded and passed to invite stenomaskers to become members of FCRA. The motion was subsequently determined to be invalid. (reason unknown)

In the February-March-April, 2001 magazine, President King pointed out the role that court reporters played in the 2000 election, showcasing our role nationwide. Additionally, there was an article about the Florida Bar Rules Committee working on changing the language of the rule that sets out margins and pitch, to convert it to computer technology (i.e. "font" instead of "pitch," as an example of a terminology difference.)

Last, the Supreme Court had ordered that court reporters file electronic as well as paper transcripts in death penalty cases. The order stated that

the electronic format be in WordPerfect 5.1 or higher. I personally submitted my own letter, pointing out that there can be difficulties in converting files from one program to another for use, and that the format should be the "lowest common denominator," ASCII. FCRA's comments were in a similar vein, mentioning that many reporters would have to purchase the WordPerfect program. (Why, oh, WHY do they do this stuff without talking to the people responsible for it and who know the most about the subject!)

And with that, we start to close the door on our Fourth Decade and move into the beginning of our Fifth Decade, next time!

Please visit the Supplemental Dropbox for tons of additional photos and items that there's just not room in the magazine for!

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7srq16rv1xhum00/AADjGF_ukMGOeQx2MwO0J7kHa?dl=0

Special Membership Meeting Results

On Saturday, April 12, 1997, according to the FCRA Bylaws Article V, Section 2, a special membership meeting was held in Winter Park at 1:00 p.m. The purpose of this meeting by petition was to decide—by vote of those members present—"whether the Florida Court Reporters Association should withdraw its application for certification from the Supreme Court of the State of Florida." There was a great turnout! We had 175 members present to debate this contested issue. There was thought-provoking discussion presented on a myriad of concerns. Thank you to all members for caring enough about the profession to take the time out of your busy schedules—especially on Saturday—to attend and let your views be heard.

After input by all concerned, a vote was taken at approximately 4:20 p.m. The results of the ballot were: 103 members present were against the mo-

tion to rescind pursuit of certification; 72 members were in favor of rescinding pursuit of certification. Thanks also goes out to Dr. Franklin B. McKechnie, the parliamentarian whose services were secured for this special meeting.

There was a further four-pronged motion made by Rus Weathers as follows: "Because FCRA is our strongest voice, I move that FCRA continue its involvement in certification for court reporters in Florida provided that FCRA and its representatives continue to educate and inform all concerned of the following:

1. FCRA maintain and exhibit through its leaders, by their words, deeds, and actions, a steady and unwavering support for a majority of court reporter members on the certification board.

2. FCRA maintain and exhibit through its leaders, by their words, deeds, and actions, a steady and unwavering support for a reasonable grand-

father provision for experienced reporters as part of any certification in Florida.

3. FCRA does not support, and does not lend support to any group whose goals include qualifying by testing tape recorder operators of any kind, whether using a mask, videotape, or any other type of recording device, as being a method of making the record capable of producing a product generally equal to that of a stenographic or shorthand reporter.

4. FCRA avoid giving any responsibilities related to certification to any committee members, officers, or directors who are not committed to the above propositions."

There was a motion made, seconded, and passed to postpone discussion of Mr. Weather's motion until the regularly scheduled business meeting on May 31, 1997, 12:00 noon at Mid-Year Conference at the TradeWinds Resort on St. Pete Beach.



Engaging Minds

Empowering Success



**Join FCRA in Key Largo
For the 2020 Annual Convention**

A Convention like no other...



By Richard S. Sciré, RPR, FPR
FCRA President-Elect, Editor



Stenographic Reporters' Free Publicity from MSNBC

There's an old saying that there's no such thing as bad publicity. It's most often associated with Phineas T. Barnum, the 19th century American showman and circus owner. For those of you who stay away from social media or do not watch too much television, just on the brink of Court Reporting & Captioning Week, MSNBC's *The 11th Hour* host, Brian Williams, was covering the impeachment hearings of President Trump. His interview analyzing the proceedings was with Claire McCaskill, former senator of Missouri. During the interview, Brian Williams asked Claire McCaskill about the roving stenographer and why we're still using stenographers in 2020. McCaskill, a former prosecutor, replied saying she didn't know. She did attempt to explain their shifts from what little she knew. Brian Williams finally said it looked like the stenographer was carrying around a cash register.

From there, a firestorm brewed. Reporters and captioners everywhere took to social media to express their outrage. In full support of stenographic reporters, and as president-elect of FCRA, I created a meme that went viral. The meme was a jab at Brian Williams' ignorance of what we do while also giving him a zinger for that time he lied on *NBC Nightly News* and got caught. It was modern-day warfare fighting fire with fire. (He was ultimately suspended from NBC for lying and was later relocated to MSNBC.) The meme was shared over 300 times in a few short hours. I, along with so many other reporters, tweeted Mr. Williams and Ms. McCaskill with the meme and articles of what we do, demanding an apology and even threatening lawsuits. When

those went unanswered, we started tweeting and hashtagging Rachel Maddow of *The Rachel Maddow Show* on account of the her frequent use of court transcripts and her show's past appreciation of court reporters and sketch artists. I have to be honest, I don't watch MSNBC, so I was unfamiliar with Rachel Maddow. Just as this issue of *The Florida Reporter* was about to go out, Rachel Maddow responded on her television show. She first gave a shoutout to court reporters everywhere, explaining to her audience the important work we do. She went on to explain how quickly she gets transcripts that she relies on for her show. She concluded with saying that one day, if she's lucky enough, she will be reincarnated as one of us in her next life.

Just when we thought it was over, Ms. Maddow returned with Lawrence O'Donnell, host of MSNBC's *The Last Word*. Together, they both went on to compliment court reporters with their appreciation for what we do (video link below). I'll admit again that I am not familiar with Mr. O'Donnell, but I have a newfound respect for him, as I now do for Rachel Maddow.

State associations and NCRA are on an ongoing effort to promote stenography as the gold standard. One dumb statement from an anchor like Brian Williams obliterates those efforts that cost us time and money. But what is the real lesson here? We did it together. Brian Williams tried to knock us down and Rachel Maddow lifted us up. The ultimate power came our opportunity to provide the ladder.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olyUzmXrhrQ>



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Florida Court Reporters Association

*Name (Please print) _____ NCRA # _____ NVRA # _____

*Company _____ ☐ Owner ☐ Co-owner ☐ Manager

*Mailing Address _____ Website: _____

*City/State/Zip _____

*Telephone: Home (____) _____ Office (____) _____ FAX (____) _____

CHECK ONE: ☐ OK to publish home phone number in directory. ☐ DO NOT publish home phone number.

*Email address _____ Secondary Email Address _____

*METHOD OF REPORTING: ☐ Stenographic ☐ Voicewriter ☐ Gregg ☐ Pittman ☐ Other _____

*TYPE OF REPORTER: ☐ Freelance ☐ Official ☐ Deputy Official ☐ Federal ☐ Teacher ☐ Student ☐ Other _____

*DESIG: ☐ CSR (List State(s) other than FL) _____ ☐ FAPR ☐ FPR ☐ RPR ☐ RDR ☐ CMRS ☐ RMR ☐ CLVS ☐ CRI ☐ CRR ☐ CPE

*Asterisk indicates required information.

I make application for Membership as a: (CHECK ONE)

☐ **PARTICIPATING MEMBER**\$300.00

Open to anyone engaged in active practice of official or general court reporting by either stenographic or voicewriter method. (Please indicate method above.) **PAYMENT PLAN AVAILABLE**

☐ *Pre-Authorized Payment Plan Attached
(Participating Members Only)

☐ **STUDENT MEMBER**\$35.00

Open to any student of shorthand reporting who is endorsed by a court reporting training program instructor or director.

☐ **RETIRED MEMBER**\$45.00

Open to any participating member in good standing who has retired from the active practice of shorthand reporting.

☐ **ASSOCIATE MEMBER** \$90.00

This category is open to the following (please check one):

- ☐ Teachers of shorthand reporting
- ☐ Individuals officially connected with a school or college conducting shorthand reporting course - School Name & Location _____
- ☐ Non-member individuals retired from active shorthand reporting
- ☐ Non-reporters professionally associated with or employed by a member of FCRA whose application is endorsed by a participating member in good standing (*please print sponsoring member's name below where requested*) _____
- ☐ Anyone qualifying for Participating membership, but residing outside of Florida - State of Residence _____

☐ **VENDOR MEMBER**\$500.00

Open to any firm or corporation engaged in selling products or services to FCRA members.

PRO BONO: Are you interested in donating time to the Pro Bono Program?

☐ Yes ☐ No

FLORIDA MANUAL: The guide to court reporting in Florida — sample forms, guidelines, and rules of court. Cost for members: \$75.00. Subscription to updates: \$25.00.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY: Searchable geographical and alphabetical members' listing in Member's Only section of our website.

The dues year is November 1 through October 31. Annual dues must accompany application. Those joining in August, September or October of a given year will be paid through October 31 of the following year. Dues payments are deductible by members as an ordinary and necessary business expense. In accordance with Section 6033(e) (2)(A) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, members of the FCRA are hereby notified that an estimated 10% of your FCRA dues will be allocated to lobbying and political activities, and therefore is not deductible as a business expense.

For Administrative Use Only

Date Rec'd _____ Ref # _____ Amount _____

Date Approved _____ Computer _____

I hereby make application for membership in the Florida Court Reporters Association and pledge myself, if accepted, to abide by the requirements of the Bylaws and Code of Professional Responsibility of the Association as they are now and as they may be amended in the future.

I understand that all applications are subject to review and approval by FCRA. All applicants must be sponsored by an FCRA member in good standing per FCRA bylaws.

Signature of Applicant _____

Date _____

Name of Sponsoring Member (Please print or type) _____

How did you hear about FCRA? Code: _____ Other: _____

PAYMENT ENCLOSED FOR:

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

☐ Check # _____ ☐ MasterCard ☐ VISA ☐ AmEx

Account # _____

Exp. Date: _____

CVV: _____

Amount to charge: \$ _____

Authorized Signature _____

Billing Address: ☐ Same as above

Address: _____

City/St/Zip: _____

***Participating Members selecting the pre-authorized payment plan option will need to sign and complete the payment section of the pre-authorized payment plan form.**

Make check payable to FCRA and mail to FCRA Headquarters, 222 S. Westmonte Dr, Ste 101, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714
Telephone 407-774-7880 • FAX 407-774-6440 (for charge payments only) • www.fcraonline.org



Pre-Authorized Payment Plan Form

Participating Membership Only

Please complete and return payment plan form and membership application to:

FCRA Headquarters
222 S. Westmonte Dr, Suite 101
Altamonte Springs, FL 32714
Fax: 407-774-6440

The FCRA payment plan is available only through submission of this form and is not available online.

INSTALLMENTS: Plan is payable by credit card only. Check payments will not be accepted.
All payments will be automatically processed as outlined below.

First Payment	Processed upon receipt of this form	\$100.00
Second Payment	Processed 30 days after first payment	\$110.00
Third/Final Payment	Processed 60 days after first payment	\$110.00

Member Name: _____

Member Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Terms of the Agreement: I hereby authorize FCRA to process the fees for my participating membership in three credit card transactions. All transactions will be processed to the credit card provided on this form. The first payment in the amount of \$100.00 will be processed upon receipt. The second installment in the amount of \$110.00 will be automatically processed 30 days following the first payment. The third and final installment in the amount of \$110.00 will be automatically processed 60 days following the first payment. Check payments will not be accepted under this agreement. I understand there will be NO REFUNDS for any installment (partial payment) processed under this agreement. I also understand that FCRA membership will not be considered active until all three plan payments have been processed successfully. The full amount paid under this plan for my FCRA Participating membership dues will be \$320.00 which includes a \$20 administrative fee for processing multiple payments.

☐ Please enroll me in the payment plan. I have included credit card information for all three installments below. I fully understand and agree to the Terms of the Agreement as stated above.

Signature

Payment Method:

☐ Master Card ☐ Visa ☐ American Express

Billing Address: *(If different from above)*

Account #: _____ Exp Date: _____

Cardholder's Name / Signature

Submit by Email

Print Form