

Guardians of the Record

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I. Introduction

Court reporting is one of the most crucial yet underappreciated professions in the legal system. Known as the "Guardians of the Record," court reporters play a pivotal role in maintaining the integrity of the judicial process. Their task is not merely to transcribe spoken words but to ensure that an accurate, reliable, and untampered record is preserved. This role is indispensable in trials, depositions, hearings, and other legal settings, where an accurate record often becomes the bedrock of justice.

The term "Guardians of the Record" fittingly describes court reporters because they protect and maintain the legal system's archives. This paper explores the evolution, significance, and future of court reporting, focusing on its role in preserving truth and justice. Drawing from history, case studies, and real-world experiences, it will delve into the mechanics of stenography, debunk myths about the profession, and explore its future amid emerging technological alternatives.

The speaker's personal connection to court reporting began with her uncle, Don Pierson, who played a significant role in shaping her interest in the field. Don purchased the legal supplies company Pengad in the 1980s and managed to corner the market for court reporting supplies, such as stenography paper and deposition report covers. He worked tirelessly, never retiring, and was beloved by clients. His enthusiasm for the business made a lasting impression on Julie, planting the seeds of her fascination with court reporting and its importance in maintaining the integrity of the legal process.

As this paper unfolds, it will examine how the court reporting profession has evolved from its early roots in handwritten shorthand to modern digital tools, and the indispensable nature of this profession in ensuring justice will be highlighted.

II. The Role of Court Reporters: Historical Significance

Court reporting, as a profession, has deep historical roots dating back thousands of years. The need to document important proceedings, whether for legal, governmental, or societal purposes, has always been a fundamental aspect of civilization. The earliest known records, such as Sumerian cuneiform, were carved onto clay tablets around 3000 BCE. Similarly, Egyptian hieroglyphics served as a visual record-keeping system for religious, governmental, and legal matters. These ancient methods highlight how record-keeping has always been intertwined with maintaining societal order.

In the context of legal proceedings, accurate documentation became a cornerstone of justice. This need was formalized in the early days of the U.S. Congress, where it became apparent that maintaining precise records of debates and decisions was critical for governance. Before microphones and stenography, U.S. House of Representatives officials relied on scribes who scrambled across the chamber to take notes. As one scribe exhausted their efforts, another would seamlessly take over to ensure no gaps in the record. Despite these efforts, the process was inefficient, leaving room for human error and incomplete documentation.

The advent of stenography, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries, revolutionized the field. With the introduction of systems such as the Pitman Shorthand in 1837 and Gregg Shorthand in 1888, record-keeping in legal contexts became more efficient and accurate. Over time, stenography evolved into machine shorthand, or steno-type, a method that allowed for even greater speed and reliability. Court reporters, now equipped with specialized stenographic machines, became vital players in legal and congressional proceedings. They ensured that every word spoken in the courtroom or legislative hall was accurately documented, preserving the integrity of the justice system.

III. Evolution of Stenography Technology

The technological evolution of stenography has been a critical factor in the advancement of court reporting. Early shorthand methods, such as the Pitman and Gregg systems, allowed for quicker transcription of spoken words by condensing language into symbols. While these methods made significant strides, the process still required intensive manual effort and left room for errors. However, the true breakthrough came in the late 1800s with the invention of the stenotype machine, marking the transition from manual pen shorthand to mechanical writing.

Miles Bartholomew, credited with the development of the first stenotype machine, pioneered the concept of "machine shorthand." This allowed court reporters to write at a much faster pace, capturing spoken language as it occurred in real time. Unlike typing, which involves pressing one key at a time, stenography functions more like playing chords on a piano, where multiple keys are pressed simultaneously to form syllables or words. This process enabled stenographers to transcribe speech at over 200 words per minute, a speed necessary to keep up with rapid dialogue in legal settings.

Further innovations came with the work of Ward Stone Ireland in the early 1900s, who spent six years analyzing the English language to design the most efficient keyboard layout for stenography. His design, which placed consonants on the left, vowels in the center, and consonant endings on the right, is still used today. Over the decades, this technology continued to evolve. The introduction of digital capture in the 1960s, LCD translation in the 1990s, and real-time stenography in the 2000s transformed the profession. With real-time stenography, court reporters can now produce instant transcripts visible on monitors, facilitating immediate review by lawyers, judges, and other legal professionals. These advances have cemented stenography as an indispensable tool for legal proceedings, offering accuracy, speed, and reliability.

IV. Why Court Reporting Matters

Court reporting plays a fundamental role in upholding the principles of justice. The phrase "No record, no justice" encapsulates the essential need for accurate, reliable court transcripts to ensure fairness in legal proceedings. Without a written record, reviewing or appealing a case becomes difficult, if not impossible. This section explores why court reporting is critical, focusing on the real-world consequences that arise when records are incomplete or missing, with a detailed examination of the landmark case *Wansley v. Commonwealth of Virginia* (1964).

The Wansley case involved a 17-year-old Black male accused of raping and robbing two women in Lynchburg, Virginia. Tried as an adult in February 1963, Wansley was found guilty and sentenced to death. The trial itself was plagued by procedural failures, most notably the absence of a court reporter to transcribe the proceedings. Despite multiple requests from the defense attorney for a continuance, these were denied, and the trial proceeded without any official transcript. When the defense attorney filed an appeal, the lack of a written record became a central issue, as it prevented the appellate court from properly reviewing whether any errors had occurred during the trial.

Adding to the complexity of the case was the untimely death of Wansley's defense attorney, who died unexpectedly in March 1963, just weeks after filing the appeal. This tragic event compounded the defense's challenges, as new counsel was brought in without a clear understanding of what had transpired during the original trial. The new attorney filed a motion for a new trial based on over 30 errors, but the main argument hinged on the absence of a court transcript. Without a written record, the court could not determine whether the trial court had erred in its handling of the case.

The case gained further attention when famed civil rights attorney William Kunstler became involved in Wansley's retrial efforts. Kunstler, known for defending controversial and high-profile cases during the Civil Rights Movement, brought additional public focus to the case. His involvement underscored the broader civil rights implications of Wansley's trial, particularly in the context of systemic racial injustice and the lack of proper legal representation for marginalized defendants. Kunstler's reputation for challenging injustices added weight to the defense's arguments, and his presence amplified the scrutiny of the case.

Ultimately, the Virginia Supreme Court ruled that the trial court had abused its discretion by not granting the continuance. Citing both the lack of a court transcript and the death of the defense attorney, the court reversed and remanded the case in 1964. Kunstler's participation helped elevate the case beyond a local matter, positioning it within the broader civil rights struggle of the time. This outcome reinforces the idea that accurate court records are not just procedural necessities but foundational elements of justice. The absence of a reliable transcript in Wansley's case highlights the far-reaching consequences of inadequate documentation in the legal system.

V. Real-World Dispatches: Court Reporting in Practice

Court reporting is not only a highly technical skill but also one that comes with unique challenges and pressures. The role demands an ability to maintain focus in high-stakes environments where every word matters. To illustrate the practical realities of the profession, this section draws on real-world examples of court reporters who have worked in various contexts, highlighting the personal stories and challenges they face.

One such individual is Carol White, a federal court reporter with a 30-year career spanning multiple states, including Florida, Washington D.C., and Virginia. Certified in numerous stenographic qualifications (RPR, RMR, RDR, FCRR), White's work has made her a fierce advocate for the importance of verbatim documentation in the legal system. White often speaks about the critical role stenographers play, not just in documenting the spoken word, but in capturing the subtle nuances of legal proceedings, including the tone of voice and the emphasis placed on certain words, which can sometimes sway a case. Her advocacy highlights the need for more people to recognize court reporting as not just a technical job, but as a profession that ensures justice.

Another compelling example is Dyane Muhammad, whose career in court reporting took her from the NYPD to the Kings County Supreme Court in Brooklyn, and eventually to remote closed captioning in San Diego. Muhammad's journey began in the early 1980s as an NYPD hearing reporter, where she faced long shifts and emotionally challenging cases. Her first day on the job included transcribing a hitman's deposition, and over the years, she would be tasked with documenting deathbed confessions and testimonies in high-stakes criminal cases. These intense experiences, combined with the racial tensions she witnessed, left a lasting impression on her.

After over a decade in New York, Muhammad transitioned to closed captioning, where she provided real-time transcription services for major networks such as CNN, Fox News, and ESPN, and for the hearing impaired in educational settings. This career shift allowed her to step away from the courtroom while still using her stenographic skills. Muhammad's career reflects the versatility of court reporting, showing how stenographers can work in diverse settings beyond the courtroom, from media and sports to education.

Both White and Muhammad's stories reveal the resilience and adaptability required to thrive in the field. The ability to handle high-stress environments, maintain accuracy, and remain impartial is what makes court reporters "silent witnesses to history," as some describe them. Whether capturing crucial testimony in a criminal trial or providing closed captioning for televised events, court reporters play a vital role in ensuring that the spoken word is accurately preserved for posterity.

VI. Common Myths About Court Reporting Debunked

Despite the vital role court reporters play in the legal system and beyond, several myths and misconceptions persist about the profession. These myths often obscure the complexity and importance of the work, leading to misunderstandings about the skills involved and the opportunities available in the field. In this section, three of the most common myths surrounding court reporting will be debunked.

Myth #1: Stenographic reporting is old-fashioned and will soon be replaced by technology.

One of the most widespread misconceptions is that stenographic court reporting is outdated and that technology—such as voice recognition software—will soon replace human stenographers. While technological advancements have certainly impacted the field, the reality is that no machine or software can replicate the accuracy and nuance provided by a human court reporter. Voice recognition software often struggles with multiple speakers, accents, and legal jargon, leading to errors that could have serious consequences in legal settings. Court reporters, on the other hand, are highly trained professionals capable of producing real-time, precise transcripts under challenging conditions. Their ability to discern different speakers, adjust for regional accents, and understand complex terminology makes them irreplaceable in many settings. Moreover, the demand for stenographers remains strong, with many legal professionals preferring human-generated records due to their accuracy and reliability. As such, the myth that court reporters will be replaced by technology is far from becoming a reality.

Myth #2: Court reporters are simply glorified secretaries.

Another common myth is that court reporters are merely glorified secretaries, tasked with taking notes or typing what they hear. This could not be further from the truth. Court reporting is a highly specialized profession that requires extensive training, certifications, and mastery of stenography—a skill that enables reporters to transcribe speech at speeds of up to 225 words per minute or faster.

Capturing every word spoken in legal settings, often under high-pressure conditions, requires the ability to write in real-time while maintaining accuracy and impartiality. This is far more complex than simple note taking or typing. Furthermore, court reporters are responsible for creating a permanent and legally binding record of court proceedings, depositions, and hearings, a task that carries significant responsibility and legal implications. Court reporting is a profession of precision, skill, and expertise, not clerical work.

Myth #3: Court reporters only work in courts.

While the title "court reporter" suggests a narrow focus on the courtroom, the truth is that court reporters work in a variety of environments, many of which are outside the legal system. In addition to courtrooms, stenographers are employed in law offices to transcribe depositions

Guardians of the Record

and pre-trial hearings. They are also crucial in television and media, where they provide real-time closed captioning for broadcasts, including live sports events, news, and entertainment programs.

Furthermore, many court reporters specialize in Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), a service that helps provide live transcription for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community in educational and public settings. As technology has advanced, so have the career opportunities for court reporters, making this a flexible and rewarding profession with applications far beyond the traditional courtroom.

VII. Current and Future State of Court Reporting

Court reporting, as a profession, remains indispensable in today's legal system, but it is not without its challenges. While demand for accurate, real-time transcription remains high, the industry faces hurdles that affect both its current operations and its future prospects. This section explores the current state of court reporting, the challenges it faces, and the innovations and trends that are shaping its future.

Current Challenges: A Growing Shortage of Court Reporters

One of the most pressing issues facing the court reporting industry is a growing shortage of trained professionals. This shortage is due in part to an aging workforce, as many experienced court reporters are approaching retirement age without enough new stenographers entering the field to replace them. According to the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA), the demand for court reporters is expected to continue growing in the coming years, particularly in legal settings, but the number of professionals capable of meeting that demand is dwindling. This shortage is particularly acute in states that do not require certification for court reporters, which has led to a lack of standardization in training and qualifications. Additionally, the rise of digital recording and voice recognition technologies, while still flawed, has led some jurisdictions to experiment with alternative methods of capturing court proceedings. However, legal professionals continue to prefer human stenographers due to their ability to provide immediate and highly accurate transcripts, especially in complex or multi-speaker situations.

Innovations in Court Reporting Technology

Despite the challenges, the profession is also evolving in exciting ways, driven by technological advancements that enhance the work of court reporters. Real-time transcription technology has significantly improved, allowing court reporters to provide immediate, on-screen transcripts that can be reviewed by judges, attorneys, and even clients as proceedings unfold. This capability is invaluable, especially in depositions and trials where quick access to transcripts can influence legal strategy.

Additionally, many stenographers now use specialized software that integrates with their stenotype machines, allowing them to instantly upload and store transcripts in secure databases. This digital shift has streamlined the reporting process, enabled faster turnaround times and reduced the likelihood of errors. Court reporters are also increasingly using mobile stenography machines, which allow for greater flexibility and mobility in capturing proceedings, whether in the courtroom, at a deposition, or even in remote locations.

Future Outlook: Balancing Human Expertise and Technology

Looking forward, the future of court reporting will likely involve a continued balance between human expertise and technological tools. While there is growing interest in computer-

Guardians of the Record

generated transcriptions, the limitations of these technologies make them unreliable for replacing human court reporters in the near future. Automated systems struggle with the nuances of speech, such as overlapping voices, accents, and legal terminology, and are prone to errors that can jeopardize the accuracy of the official record.

However, innovations in artificial intelligence and machine learning may eventually improve the capabilities of voice recognition software, creating hybrid systems that can assist human stenographers rather than replace them. In the meantime, programs like **Project Steno** are working to recruit and train the next generation of court reporters, emphasizing the importance of the profession and its continued relevance in the digital age.

Despite the evolving landscape, court reporting remains a career with significant growth potential, offering opportunities for both traditional court reporters and those interested in working in media, closed captioning, or CART services. The future of the profession will likely involve a fusion of new technologies and the irreplaceable skill set of human stenographers, ensuring that the integrity of legal records remains intact for years to come.

VIII. Career Opportunities – Court Reporting and Beyond

Court reporting is a profession that offers a diverse range of career opportunities, extending far beyond the courtroom. For those with the necessary skills and certifications, the field provides not only stability but also flexibility, with the potential for freelance work, employment in various industries, and specialization in high-demand areas like captioning and Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART). This section explores the wide array of career paths available to court reporters and highlights the growth potential within the industry.

Courtroom Reporting and Legal Depositions

The most traditional and well-known career path for court reporters lies within the courtroom. These professionals are tasked with documenting every word spoken during trials, hearings, and other judicial proceedings, ensuring that a reliable transcript is available for appeals or future reference. In this setting, court reporters play a vital role in preserving the legal record, often working closely with judges and attorneys to ensure that all testimony and arguments are accurately captured.

Outside of the courtroom, many court reporters work in legal depositions, where they transcribe sworn testimony given under oath before trial. These proceedings, which often take place in law offices rather than courtrooms, provide significant opportunities for freelance court reporters. Legal professionals highly value the skillset of freelance reporters who can provide accurate and timely transcripts, making this a lucrative option for those looking to manage their own schedules and client base.

Closed Captioning and CART Services

As technology and media have expanded, so too have the opportunities for court reporters to work in non-traditional fields. One of the fastest-growing areas is closed captioning, where stenographers transcribe live broadcasts for television programs, sports events, news, and entertainment. With the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) mandating closed captioning for most television content, the demand for skilled stenographers in this sector continues to rise. Many court reporters find fulfillment in working behind the scenes to make television and live events accessible to the hearing-impaired community.

CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) stenographers provide live transcription for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. CART reporters are often employed in educational settings, such as universities, to assist students with disabilities by providing real-time captions of lectures and discussions. This service is also used in public forums, government meetings, and conferences, making it a versatile and rewarding option for court reporters seeking to make a positive impact through their work.

Freelancing and Entrepreneurship

The flexibility of court reporting can provide opportunities beyond traditional employment. Many court reporters choose to work as freelancers or start their own reporting businesses. This allows them to set their own schedules, select their clients, and even specialize in niche areas of the industry. Freelancing can be especially attractive for individuals looking for autonomy and control over their career path, as it provides the opportunity to balance personal and professional commitments while still enjoying a financially rewarding career.

Entrepreneurial court reporters may also expand their services to include transcription for a variety of fields beyond legal work. These can include medical transcription, corporate meetings, academic conferences, and other high-stakes environments where accurate records are needed. As demand for transcription services continues to grow across industries, court reporters are finding new ways to apply their skills and tap into emerging markets.

Training, Certification, and Career Growth

Becoming a court reporter requires specialized training and certification, with various paths available to enter the profession. Most court reporters complete formal training programs, often offered online or at community colleges, which typically last between two and four years. These programs teach stenographic shorthand, legal terminology, and real-time transcription techniques, among other essential skills. Upon completion, students must pass certification exams, such as those offered by the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA), to demonstrate their competency.

Certification opens the door to a wide range of opportunities, and many reporters choose to continue their education throughout their careers to expand their skill sets. Specialized certifications, such as those for real-time reporting or CART services, can lead to higher earning potential and greater job prospects. As the demand for qualified court reporters continues to grow, investing in training and certification remains a sound career decision.

IX. Conclusion

Court reporters, often described as the “Guardians of the Record,” play an indispensable role in the legal system and beyond. Their work ensures that the spoken word is accurately captured and preserved, providing the foundation for fair trials, appeals, and historical documentation. Through their mastery of stenography and their ability to work in high-pressure environments, court reporters maintain the integrity of legal records, ensuring that justice is served.

The evolution of court reporting, from the early days of shorthand to the advanced real-time transcription technology used today, highlights the resilience and adaptability of the profession. Despite advancements in voice recognition and automated transcription technologies, human stenographers continue to outperform machines in terms of accuracy, reliability, and the ability to capture nuances in speech. As new technologies emerge, court reporters will likely collaborate with these tools, enhancing their work while maintaining control over the accuracy of the final record.

The career opportunities in court reporting are vast and varied, extending far beyond the courtroom. From legal depositions to closed captioning and CART services, stenographers can find rewarding work in a range of industries, contributing to accessibility, legal accuracy, and historical preservation. The flexibility of freelance work and the potential for entrepreneurial ventures further enhance the appeal of the profession.

As the field continues to evolve, court reporting remains a vital and growing profession, offering career stability and growth potential. Organizations like the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) and initiatives such as Project Steno are actively working to recruit and train the next generation of stenographers, ensuring that this critical profession continues to thrive.

In the face of technological advancements and changing industry demands, court reporters will remain essential in upholding the principles of justice and maintaining accurate records for future generations.

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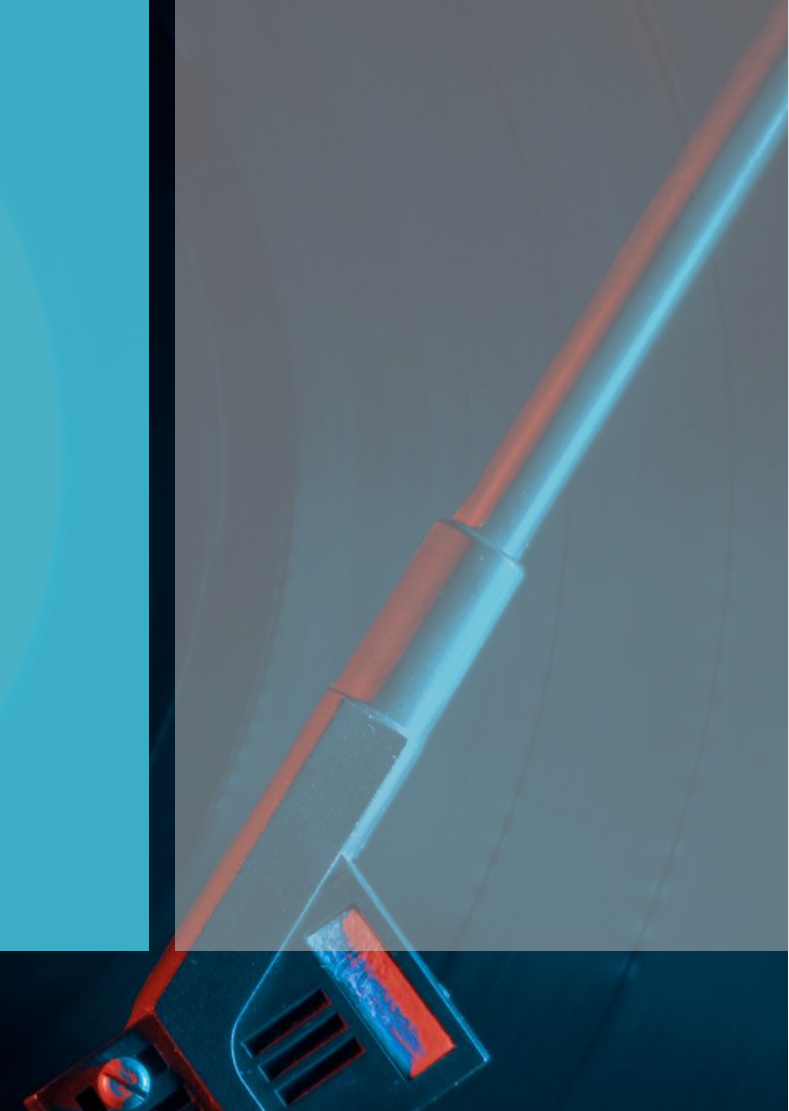
September 26, 2024



Can You Handle the Truth?

Guardians of the Record

The history and importance of Court Reporting



Guardians of the Record Overview

1. Why Interested?
2. What Covered vs. What Not Covered
3. Why Important?
4. History of Court Reporting
5. Mechanics of Stenography
6. Dispatches from the Real World
7. Current and Future State of Court Reporting

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Why?



- Company started in 1936 by Jules and Shirley Penn
- Legal supplies
 - ✓ Stenography paper
 - ✓ Exhibit stickers
 - ✓ Deposition report covers
- 1985 Ownership change
 - ✓ Don Pierson

Why?



Why?



Carol White

- 30-year career
- Federal court reporter
- Florida, DC, Virginia
- RPR, RMR, RDR, FCRR
- Fierce advocate for the importance of verbatim documentation of court proceedings

Methodology

Interviews

- Court Reporters
- Lawyers
- Judges
 - Ellen White
 - Norman Moon
- Court Reporter Vendors
 - Pengad
 - Evans Court Reporting

Other Sources

- Books, Articles
- Podcasts, YouTube
- Documentary
 - "For The Record"
- Virtual tour
 - The Gallery of Shorthand
- NCRA, VCRA
- Movies, TV

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Guardians of the Record

What's Covered?

- Why is this still a thing?
- Historical perspective
- Mechanics of stenography
- Real World Stories
- Certification
- Future Outlook

What's Not?

- Live Demo
- State by State Comparison
- Legal Videography
- Voice Writing
- Close Captioning
- CART (Communication Access Realtime Transcription)

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Wansley v. Commonwealth of Virginia

- 1962 Lynchburg robbery and rape
- 17-year-old male tried as an adult - Feb. 1963
- City of Lynchburg Corporation Court
- Defendant found guilty; sentenced to death
- Decision reversed and remanded by Supreme Court of Virginia in September 1964



Wansley v. Commonwealth of Virginia

Lynchburg - 1963

- **Feb. 5**
 - Continuance requested due to lack of court reporter; denied
- **Feb. 7**
 - Continuance requested again; denied; trial commenced; guilty verdict
- **Feb. 12**
 - Court reporting services secured by Court for another trial
- **Feb. 28**
 - Appeal filed by defense attorney based on multiple “assignments of errors”
- **March 23**
 - Defense attorney unexpectedly dies
- **April 1963**
 - New counsel files motion for new trial based on 30+ errors and death of counsel

One error became focus:

“lack of sufficient record on which the court can determine whether or not the lower court has erred.”

Wansley v. Commonwealth of Virginia

Wansley v. Commonwealth of Virginia 41561 Record No. 5770

Criminal Procedure:

“Lack of Court Reporter in Rape Trial; Held Error Not to Grant Continuance”

*“In light of the fact that **defendant could not, because of the lack of a reporter and the death of his counsel, furnish on appeal a transcript** in compliance with the Rules, from which the Court could determine whether he had had a fair trial, it was held that the trial court abused its discretion in not granting the continuance. The judgments were accordingly reversed.”*

We hold that the trial court abused its discretion in not granting the continuance prayed for so as to enable accused to employ a court reporter for the purpose of recording the evidence and other incidents of the trial.

For the foregoing reason the verdict of the jury in each case is set aside, the judgments of the court reversed, and the cases are remanded for new trials.

424 *Reversed and remanded.* *424

Why Important?

“No Record – No Justice”

“No Transcript – No Appeal”

What About New Technology?

Why not simply use audio and/or video recordings?

What about computer-generated transcriptions?

Comparison of computer-generated record vs. human stenographer

https://youtu.be/f6l2_3dAqtE?si=TkypHvQiM-zDvoMi






























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History of Court Reporting

- Written records date back to at least 3000 BCE
- Sumerian cuneiform
 - wedge shapes on clay or stone
- Egyptian hieroglyphics
 - symbols, pictures on papyrus



HIEROGLYPHIC				ALPHABET		
 A	 B	 C	 D	 E	 F	 G
 H	 I	 J	 K	 L	 M	 N
 O	 P	 Q	 R	 S	 T	 U
 V	 W	 X	 Y	 Z	 CH	 KH
			 SH			

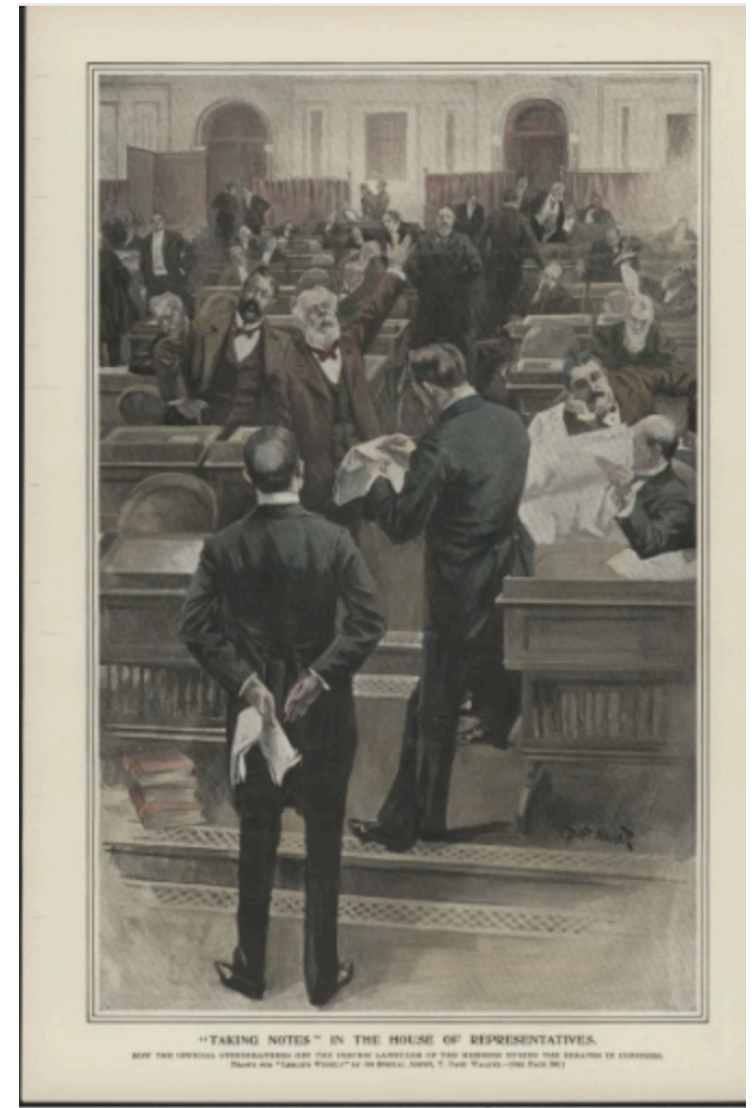
History of Court Reporting

Importance of documentation

- Carving
- Pen and paper
- Printing
- Typing

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives :

“Before microphones and stenographs entered everyday use in the House Chamber, official reporters scrambled around the room to hear speakers. As one stenographer took notes in the aisle, another waited to take over, pen and paper in hand, to ensure every word was recorded.”



History of Court Reporting

Pen Writing Methods

Shorthand

- Pittman 1837
- Gregg 1888

SHORTHAND ALPHABETS			
Pitman		Gregg	
—	K	⌒	(TH
—	G	⌒	/ CH
⌒	M	—	/ I
⌒	N	—) Z
⌒	NG	⌒	Z
⌒	P	⌒	⌒ SH
⌒	B	⌒	⌒ ZH
	T	—	⌒ H
	D	⌒	⌒ H
o	S	⌒	/ R
)	S	⌒	⌒ R
⌒	F	⌒	⌒ L
⌒	V	⌒	⌒ W
(TH	⌒	⌒ Y

History of Court Reporting

Shorthand

Pen Writing



Stenography

Machine Writing

Nuremberg Trials

Nov. 1945 –
Oct. 1946



Over the course of 1,200 days,
36 stenographers produced over
half a million pages of transcripts in
German, French, English and Russian.

Congressional Writers

Official Reporters of the Debate



Official Reporters of the Debate





Official Reporters of the Debate

History of Court Reporting

Evolution of Stenography

- Congress
- Courts
- Law Offices
- Television/Media
 - ✓ Closed Captioning
- Classroom
 - ✓ CART (Communication Access RealTime Transcription)

3 Myths Debunked



Myth #1

“Stenographic reporting is old-fashioned and will soon be replaced.”

3 Myths Debunked



Myth #2

“Court reporters are simply glorified secretaries.”

3 Myths Debunked



Myth #3

“Court reporters only work in
courts.”

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History of Court Reporting

Stanley Sakai

"The intersection of language, communication, and technology is what fuels my fire."



[Stan's Quick and Dirty: How Stenography Works](#)

History of Court Reporting

Stenography

- Steno machines developed in late 1800's
- Miles Bartholomew
- "Machine shorthand"
- Musical chord analogy



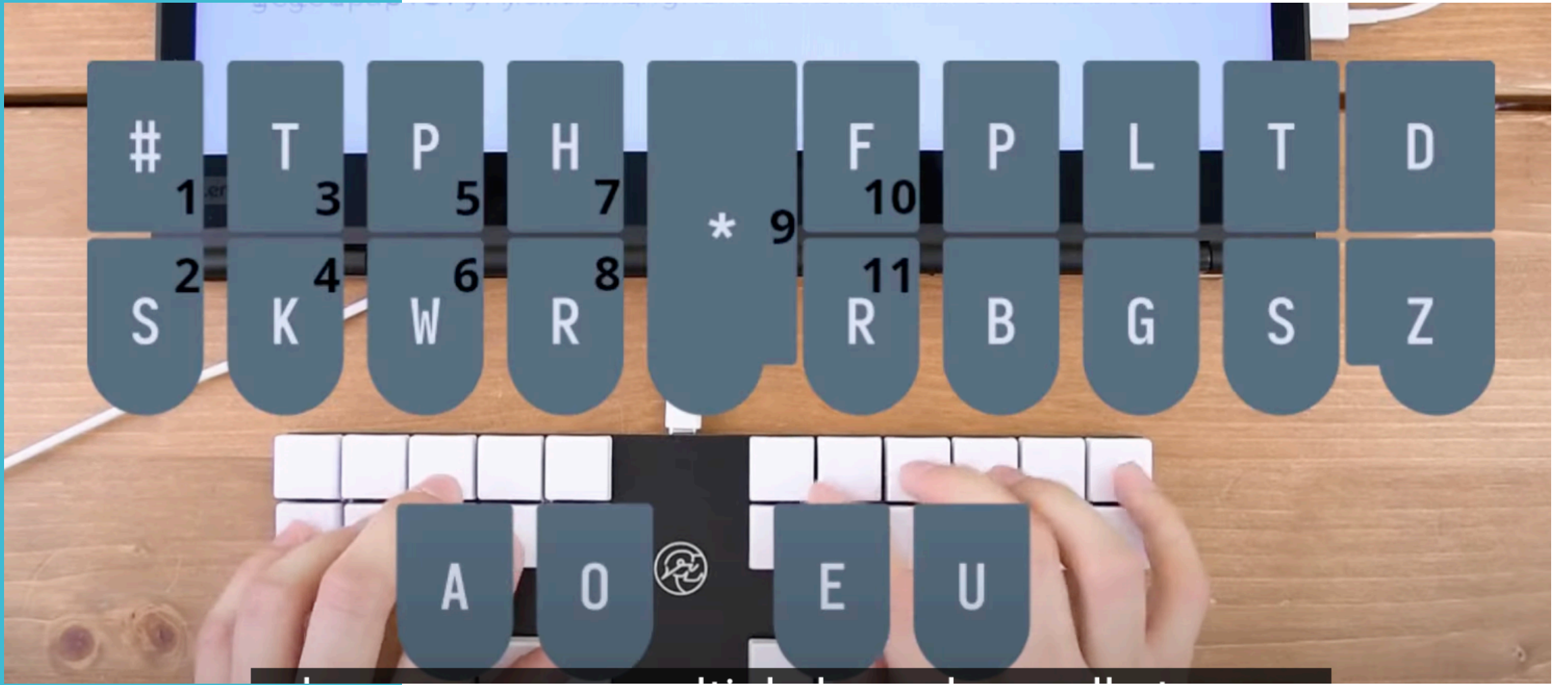
Guardians of the Record

History of Court Reporting

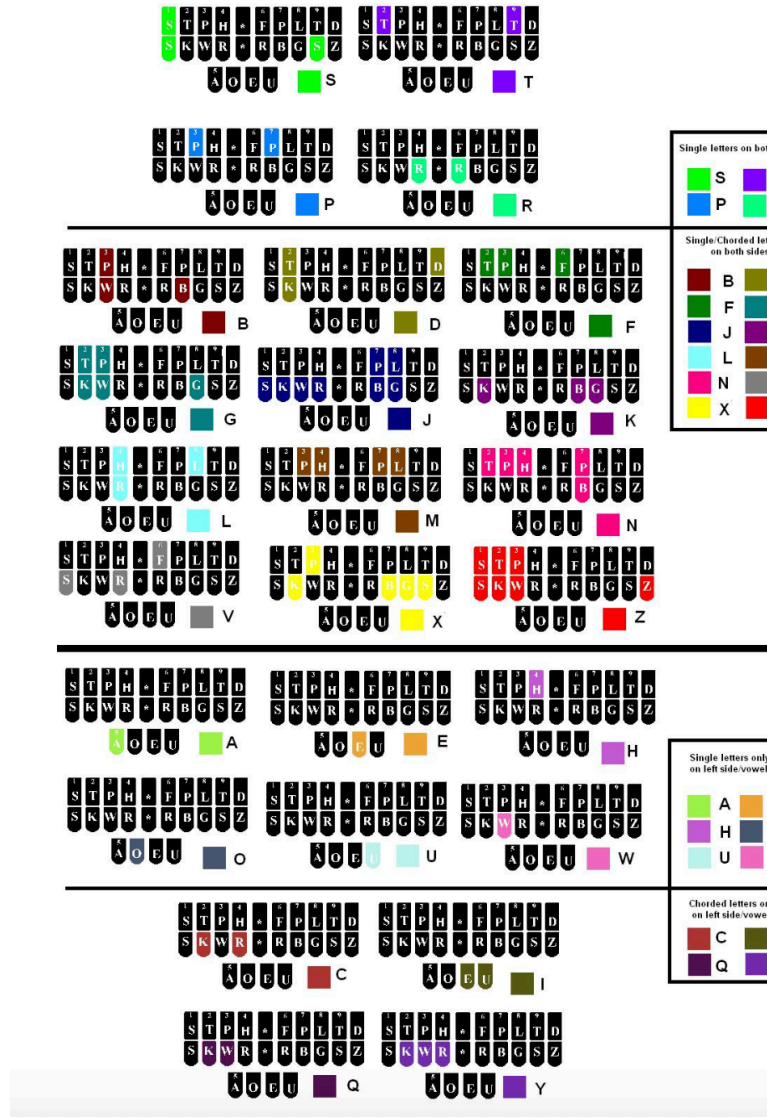
Commercial Steno Machine

- Early 1900's
- Ward Stone Ireland
- Analyzed English language for 6 years to determine most efficient keyboard design





History of Court Reporting



Ward Stone Ireland

- Which letters typically follow each other
- Which letters rarely follow each other

History of Court Reporting

Typed Steno Captured on Paper



Digital Capture in Steno (1960's)



LCD Translation (1990's)



RealTime Stenography (2000's)

History of Court Reporting

Luminex® II

The Ultimate in Writer Technology



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Dyane Muhammad

- 36 Year Career

Part One: NYPD Hearing Reporter

- ✓ Brooklyn – early 1980's
- ✓ 12-hour shifts within the NYPD
- ✓ Challenges
 - Hitman deposition on first day
 - Deathbed confessions
 - Traveling with police to crime scenes
 - Racial tensions



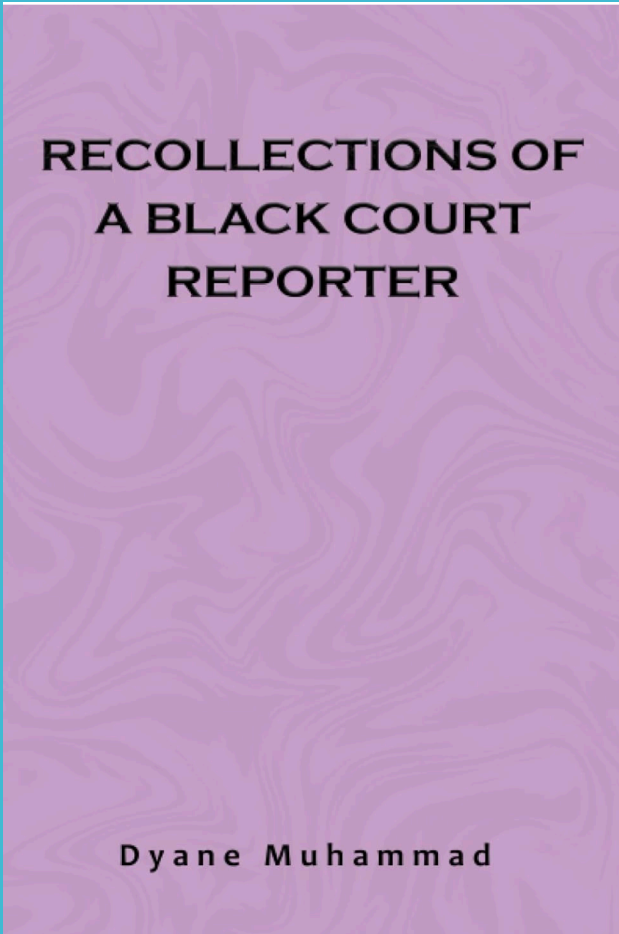
RECOLLECTIONS OF
A BLACK COURT
REPORTER

Dyane Muhammad

Dyane Muhammad

Part Two: Brooklyn Court Reporter

- NYPD transition to recorded statements
- Grand Jury court reporting
- Independent Contractor
 - ✓ Civil work; corporate depositions
- Criminal Court
- Kings County Supreme Court



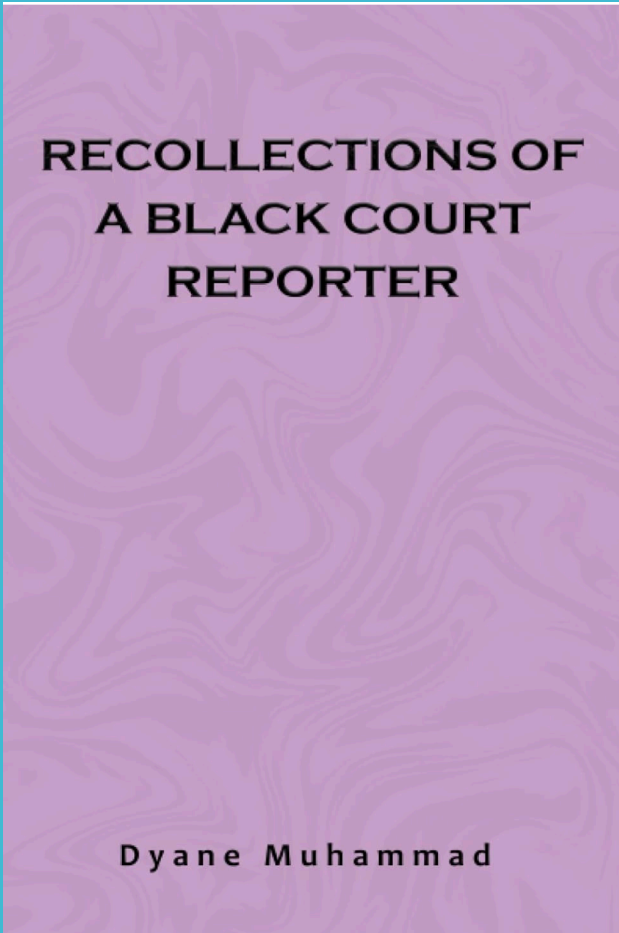
Dyane Muhammad

Part Three: Close Captioner – San Diego

- Reached a breaking point after 12 years
 - ✓ Racial tensions
 - ✓ Internalized trauma
- Moved west to San Diego
 - ✓ Recertified in California
- 26 years as remote closed captioner
 - ✓ CNN, Fox News, ESPN, ABC, NBC, CBS
 - ✓ NBA, MLB, NFL
 - ✓ CART for Hearing Impaired and ESL students

Part Four:

Retirement – North Carolina



The People of the State of New
York
v.
Donald J. Trump

April – May 2024

The People
of
the State of New
York

v.

Donald J. Trump

Realities of the Federal Court System

- No video or audio recording in courtroom
- Reporters captured testimony on laptops and fed it out to others
- Written transcripts were turned around very rapidly each day
- News anchors relied heavily on the court reporters

[New York Times Interactive Transcript Tool](#)

The People
of
the State of New
York

v.

Donald J. Trump

Jury Deliberation - Re-charge

4909

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF NEW YORK - CRIMINAL TERM - PART: 59
----- X
THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, Indict. No.
71543-2023

-against- CHARGE

DONALD J. TRUMP, FALSIFYING BUSINESS
RECORDS 1ST DEGREE

DEFENDANT. JURY TRIAL

----- X
100 Centre Street
New York, New York 10013
May 30, 2024

B E F O R E: HONORABLE JUAN M. MERCHAN
JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT

A P P E A R A N C E S:
FOR THE PEOPLE:
ALVIN BRAGG, JR., ESQ.
DISTRICT ATTORNEY, NEW YORK COUNTY
One Hogan Place
New York, New York 10013
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BECKY MANGOLD, ESQ.
KATHERINE ELLIS, ESQ.
Assistant District Attorneys

BLANCHE LAW
BY: TODD BLANCHE, ESQ.
EMIL BOVE, ESQ.
KENDRA WHARTON, ESQ.
NECHELES LAW, LLP
BY: SUSAN NECHELES, ESQ.
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Principal Court Reporter
LAURIE EISENBERG, RPR, CSR
LISA KRAMSKY
THERESA MAGNICCARI
Senior Court Reporters

Susan Pearce-Bates, RPR, CCR, RSA
Principal Court Reporter

The People of the State of New York

Against

Donald J. Trump

Jury Deliberations - Read back

4942

1 of the Donald J. Trump Revocable Trust and kept or
2 maintained by the Trump Organization.
3 And two, that the Defendant did so with intent to
4 defraud that included an intent to commit another crime or
5 to aid or conceal the commission thereof.
6 If you find that the People have proven beyond a
7 reasonable doubt each of those two elements, you must find
8 the Defendant guilty of this crime.
9 If you find that the People have not proven
10 beyond a reasonable doubt either one or both of those
11 elements, you must find the Defendant not guilty of this
12 crime.
13 I believe that concludes my response to your
14 first question.
15 Was that responsive to you?
16 JURY FOREPERSON: Yes.
17 THE COURT: We will get the read-back, now.
18 THE COURT REPORTER: I will read the questions as
19 if I am the lawyer and my colleague will read the answers
20 as if she was the witness.
21 The first read back relates to the first question
22 you had for David Pecker's testimony, re: Phone
23 conversation with Donald Trump while Pecker was in investor
24 meeting.
25 (Whereupon, the testimony as requested was

Susan Pearce-Bates, RPR, CCR, RSA
Principal Court Reporter

Jury Deliberations - Read back

4943

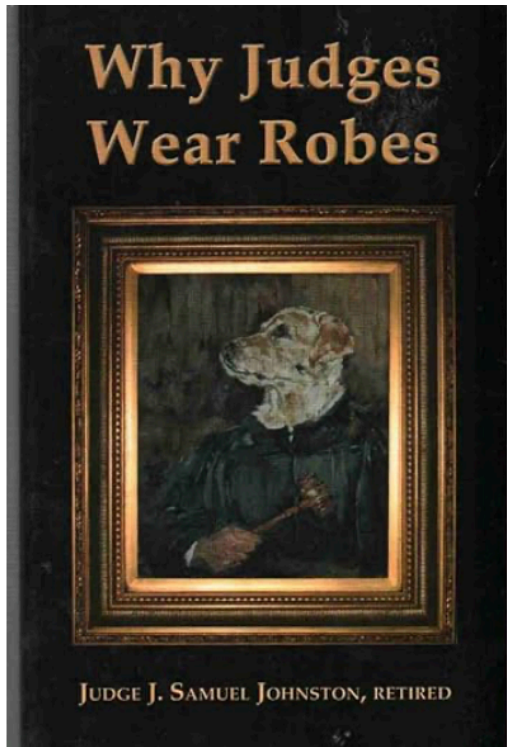
1 read back in open court.)
2 THE COURT REPORTER: This is cross-examination by
3 Mr. Bove of the witness David Pecker.
4 (Whereupon, the testimony as requested was
5 read back in open court.)
6 THE COURT REPORTER: This is in response to your
7 request number two.
8 This is redirect examination of David Pecker by
9 Mr. Steinglass.
10 (Whereupon, the testimony as requested was
11 read back in open court.)
12 THE COURT REPORTER: We are now on request number
13 three, David Pecker's testimony of the Trump Tower meeting.
14 This is, again, direct examination of David
15 Pecker by Mr. Steinglass.
16 (Whereupon, the testimony as requested was
17 read back in open court.)
18 THE COURT REPORTER: This is cross-examination of
19 David Pecker by Mr. Bove.
20 (Whereupon, the testimony as requested was
21 read back in open court.)
22 THE COURT REPORTER: This is still cross
23 examination. It is just the next day.
24 (Whereupon, the testimony as requested was
25 read back in open court.)

Susan Pearce-Bates, RPR, CCR, RSA
Principal Court Reporter

Dispatches From the Real World

A High Stress Job

- Congressional reporter has a breakdown during extensive budget negotiations ([clip](#))
- Court reporter quits in a blaze of glory



- "Free at Last"
- "This Opinion Stinks"
- Wachovia Bank
✓ "Walk All Over You" Bank
- Compilation
✓ "Copulation"

On the lighter side.....

SNL

The Southern Lawyer

On the lighter side.....

Guardians of the Record Overview

1. Why Interested?
2. What Covered vs. What Not Covered
3. Why Important?
4. History of Court Reporting
5. Mechanics of Stenography
6. Dispatches from the Real World
7. **Current and Future State of Court Reporting**



Carol White

RPR, RMR, RDR, FCRR

Master Court Reporter
to
Master Hiker



Carol White

RPR, RMR, RDR, FCRR

Central PA Business
School

Assoc. in Specialized Business

225 words per minute
95%+ accuracy

Virginia State Requirements

Certification

Certification Mandatory? None Required

State Association

Virginia Court Reporters Association

[VCRA](#)

VCRA Membership

[Download Form](#)

Education Day

[March](#)

Accepted Method

Steno and Voice



Commonwealth of Virginia

Virginia Court Reporters Association (VCRA)

Alphabet Soup



"CCR" means Certified Court Reporter, which is a designation attained by meeting the requirements established by the Virginia Court Reporters Association.

RSR

"RSR" means Registered Skilled Reporter, which is a designation attained by meeting the requirements established by the National Court Reporters Association.

RMR

"RMR" means Registered Merit Reporter, which is a designation attained by meeting the requirements established by the National Court Reporters Association.

CRR

"CRR" means Certified Realtime Reporter, which is a designation attained by meeting the requirements established by the National Court Reporters Association.

CVR

"CVR" means Certified Verbatim Reporter, which is a designation attained by meeting the requirements established by the National Verbatim Reporters Association.

RVR

"RVR" means Realtime Verbatim Reporter, which is a designation attained by meeting the requirements established by the National Verbatim Reporters Association.

RPR

"RPR" means Registered Professional Reporter, which is a designation attained by meeting the requirements established by the National Court Reporters Association.

RDR

"RDR" means Registered Diplomate Reporter, which is a designation attained by meeting the requirements established by the National Court Reporters Association.

CRC

"CRC" means Certified Realtime Captioner, which is a designation attained by meeting the requirements established by the National Court Reporters Association.

CM

"CM" means Certificate of Merit, which is a designation attained by meeting the requirements established by the National Verbatim Reporters Association.

CSR

"CSR (other state)" means Certified State Reporter for a state other than Virginia.



7 Semesters -- 85 Credit Hours

(Courses identified as General Education are indicated with an asterisk.)

Semester	Credits
Semester 1:	
*C110 Foundations of Language and Writing	3
SH100 Theory I	6
*LT200 Foundations of Law	3
Total Credits:	12
Semester 2:	
*C100 Communications	3
*C160 Culture & Society	3
SH120 Theory II	6
Total Credits:	12
Semester 3:	
T110 Court Reporting Transcript Production	3
*MT100 Medical Terminology/Related Anatomy	3
SH130 Speedbuilding III (80/100/120/140)	6
Total Credits:	12
Semester 4:	
*C210 Human Relations	3
T210 Introduction to Realtime Technology	3
SH200 Speedbuilding IV (100/120/140/160)	6
Total Credits:	12
Semester 5:	
CR200 Court Reporting Procedures	3
CR210 Technology I	3
SH220 Speedbuilding V (120/140/160/180)	6
Total Credits:	12
Semester 6:	
CR280 CSR/RPR Preparation	3
TE201 The Captioning Environment and Producing Captions	3
SH230 Speedbuilding VI (140/160/180/200)	6
Total Credits:	12
Semester 7:	
CR290 Courtroom/Court Reporting Practicum	1
*C150 Vocabulary and Usage	3
*C260 Personal Finance	3
SH240 Speedbuilding VII (160/180/200/225)	6
Total Credits:	13

Salary and Growth Outlook

Careers

Court Reporters and Simultaneous Captioners



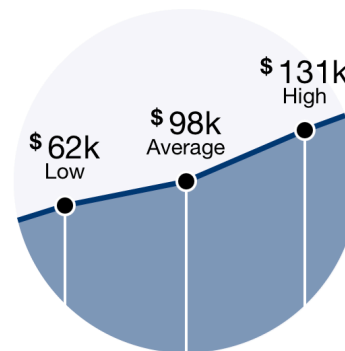
Education Level

Postsecondary nondegree award

Salary, Growth and Careers

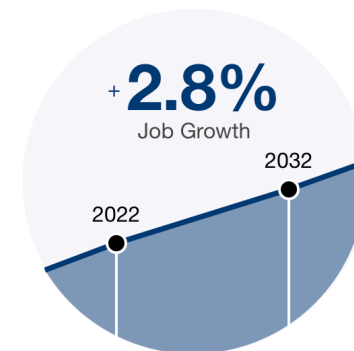
Salary

Careers associated with this program have a salary range from \$62,000 to \$131,000 with an average salary of \$98,000.



Growth

Career opportunities for this program are expected to grow nationwide from 2022 to 2032.





Events & News

The Profession

Start your career

Certification

Get Involved

About NCRA

Virtual Open House *for prospective students*

Thursday, October 10 | 7- 8:30 p.m. (Eastern)

Join us to learn more about various court reporting programs. Register by Oct. 9.

[REGISTER](#)



NCRA A to Z[®] Online Program

LearnSteno

Appreciation



“We are STENO. This is why we are still here.”

Ana Fatima Costa

Thank You, Steno Woman in White Blazer



- Brian Williams and Senator Claire McCaskill
- 31JAN2020 live broadcast of President Trump's 1st impeachment trial

“We are STENO”

Rachel Maddow Thanks Court Reporters



Excerpt from speech
given by court reporter
W.C. Jones at the 1964
NCRA Conference

Who Am I?

W.C. Jones

I protect the truthful witness,

And I am the Nemesis of the perjurer.

I am a party to the administration of Justice under the law and the Court I serve.

I discharge my duties with devotion and honor.

Perhaps I haven't made history, but I have preserved it through the ages for all mankind.

I AM THE REPORTER.



QUESTIONS?