

## Definitions of **Court reporter** on the Web:

- A court reporter, stenotype reporter, voice writer or stenomask writer is a person whose occupation is to transcribe spoken or recorded speech into written form, typically using machine shorthand or a voice silencer and digital recorder to produce official transcripts of court hearings ...  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Court\\_reporter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Court_reporter)
- A person who transcribes by shorthand or stenographically takes down testimony during court proceedings, a deposition, or other trial-related proceeding.  
[www.seniormag.com/legal/glossary/c.htm](http://www.seniormag.com/legal/glossary/c.htm)
- A person who makes a word-for-word record of what is said in court and produces a transcript of the proceedings upon request.  
[courts.delaware.gov/How%20To/court%20proceedings/](http://courts.delaware.gov/How%20To/court%20proceedings/)
- An employee of the court present during proceedings to make a word-for-word written record of all testimony and other oral statements.  
[cooscurrycourts.org/glossaryofterms/index.htm](http://cooscurrycourts.org/glossaryofterms/index.htm)
- A person who types every word said during the trial. The typewritten document is a permanent record of the trial.  
[www.teachervision.fen.com/law/vocabulary/702.html](http://www.teachervision.fen.com/law/vocabulary/702.html)
- The stenographer who witnesses and reports on what is said at a trial, deposition or hearing. A court reporter typically makes notes during the ...  
<https://www.depo.com/about/glossary.html>
- A transcriptionist who takes an oath as an officer of the court to transcribe all questions, answers and any other oral statements and sometimes ...  
[www.mussallilaw.com/Glossary.htm](http://www.mussallilaw.com/Glossary.htm)



## History of NCRA Celebrating Over 100 Years

As the 19th century came to a close, the movement to form a national association for stenographers sprang up against a backdrop of great upheaval and change in the United States. The Wild West was living up to its name with the likes of Billy the Kid, Wild Bill Hickok and Jesse James capturing the headlines and the imaginations of Americans everywhere. The Industrial Revolution was beginning to gather steam, making men like Rockefeller, Carnegie and Mellon wealthy beyond their dreams. Then there were the millions of immigrants who came to America seeking a better life but too often ending up in her mines and factories, doing dangerous backbreaking work and watching their families succumb to poverty and disease.

Inventors like Thomas A. Edison and the Wright brothers were changing the very fabric of the country's way of life. The United States went to war with Spain and ended up a world power. Political corruption, national financial crises and the birth of America's enduring love affair with baseball, football and the movies marked the era.

## Reporters Marshal their Forces

No one knows exactly when talk began about forming a national organization for reporters. It most likely started within individual state associations, many of which saw the benefits of a broader base of affiliation and professional development, especially as the country itself became more accessible with innovations like the telephone and cross-country travel by train.

Certainly by 1893, when the World's Congress of Stenographers met in Chicago, a national organization of shorthand reporters was foremost on the attendees' minds. Buford Duke took the next important step by organizing Stenographers Day at the Centennial Celebration in Nashville in 1897. It was there that the Committee of Organization was formed specifically to arrange the first meeting of the new association. Chairing the committee was Kendrick Hill, a reporter active with the New York state association, who spent the next two years working with reporters all over the country to make the dream of a national association come true.

In 1899 the dream became a reality. The first convention of the National Shorthand Reporters Association convened in Chicago. Kendrick Hill was unanimously elected its first president, the 156 reporters attending the convention became charter members, and the Association adopted a constitution and bylaws. In addition, representatives of several state organizations read papers and gave reports on related topics.

In his opening remarks, Kendrick Hill said, "We all know that a national stenographers' association could be made a power for good, to elevate, ennoble and advance the profession, provided, when it is formed, its machinery is put into aggressive action. A prominent potter and congressman of Trenton, a personal friend of mine, was asked to write an essay of 300 words on the secret of success. He wrote the essay in three words: very hard work. By earnest effort, wisely exercised, we may secure that rightful recognition, reward for merit, and justice to the profession which are our due.

"Education, experience and professional skill to a superlative degree are required in the practice of our art, and we are entitled everywhere to recognition and compensation to a degree commensurate therewith."

## Early Growing Pains

The newly formed association had a full plate of challenges to tackle in the early years. As NSRA continued to meet annually, its members took on a number of projects, including the compilation of a digest of decisions of the Appellate Courts of the United States and of the various states and territories relating to the rights, duties, powers, salaries, per diems and transcript fees of all official reporters and their assistants. Members also adopted *The Shorthand Writer* as the official publication of the Association and founded the annual National Speed Contest.

By the 1910 Convention membership was 580 strong and climbing. Members debated the question of official reporters in the U.S. District Courts, the standardization of shorthand systems and professional ethics. They welcomed demonstrations of new gadgets like the typewriter and listened to presentations on "Shorthand as a Profession for Women," "The Advancement of the Shorthand Profession," "200 Words a Minute: A Criticism" and "Sir Isaac Pitman and His Isms."

From 1910-1920 membership still grew, although the turnover also was high because of nonpayment of dues. Convention attendance was erratic during this period, ranging from 113 registered attendees at the 1912 Convention in New York City to only 44 attendees at the 1917 meeting in Cleveland.

The constitution was amended in 1912 to admit to membership any person demonstrating to a committee of one or more members appointed by the president that (a) he is of good moral character, (b) possesses a high school

education or its equivalent and (c) can write in shorthand general matter at not less than 150 wpm for five minutes and transcribe the same with at least 95 percent accuracy.

The next year the members adopted a new emblem: the letters NSRA surrounding a notebook on which rested a hand holding a pen (the logo was later modified to incorporate the shorthand machine).

In 1917 the United States entered World War I, and for many months courts all over the nation were practically suspended because litigants and witnesses were in the service. Many court reporters and lawyers were using courtrooms for the purpose of filling out questionnaires for draftees.

With the Armistice, NSRA got back to the business at hand, tackling the thorny issue of fraud in advertising from reporting schools and fraudulent claims in reporting practices. Meanwhile, the word stenotypy began falling off the lips of many reporters as machine shorthand became the topic of discussion. Even with the war years the membership increased by two-thirds to 773.

## Education and Ethics

As the newly elected NSRA officers and directors rolled up their shirtsleeves to advance the Association into its third decade of existence, the country was suffering postwar upheaval with labor strikes in the railroad, steel and coal mining industries. The American Communist Party was founded in Chicago under the slogan, "Workers of the world unite!" The 18th Amendment (the Volstead Act), banning the sale of beer, wine and liquor, ushered in an era of bootlegging, bathtub gin, speakeasys and the mobster wars. And American women finally won the right to vote.

NSRA continued its drive to bring state associations into the fold and its Committee on Relief recommended forming a mutual benefit life insurance society to provide life insurance for members. There was an increasing demand for verbatim reporters, and, in turn, reporters had to learn brand-new vocabularies to accompany technical inventions. In 1921 Thomas Bengough, a chartered shorthand reporter from Toronto, stressed the need for training, testing and certification of reporters, and urged NSRA to increase its admission speed requirement from 150 to 175 wpm.

Debate continued on how many years of study were necessary for certification as a reporter - most thought a four-year course leading to a college degree in reporting was sufficient while some argued that six years of study would be even better. This did not sit well with many older, experienced reporters who had never attended college. Part of the discussion centered around which system of shorthand should be taught as well as how to recruit both instructors and students and pay teaching salaries. Three states were successful in passing mandatory CSR laws: New York, Colorado and Iowa.

At NSRA's 28th Convention held in 1927 in San Antonio, Texas, President R.T. Russ of Shreveport, La., talked about the unusual depressed financial conditions everywhere, in his view the most depressing year financially since the "Panic of 1907." During the past year he had visited 31 states and said of the experience: "I have not found a single man who told me that he had enjoyed a prosperous year." Sizable legal firms reported practically no business. Large cases that would ordinarily have been tried and appealed were settled because litigants needed the money too badly to wait through a full trial. Large meetings were held with no record made. Big reporting firms whose usual problem was getting enough reporters to cover their business had their entire staffs idle for weeks. And many official reporters received only their salaries with no transcript income.

Also that year NSRA adopted its first Code of Ethics, and women reporters were finally given the opportunity to play a more active part in future convention proceedings. Florence C. Chamberlain of Omaha, a member of the Necrology Committee, made the point that the committee's work was difficult and "has always been wished off on the women of the association." It was the only committee composed entirely of women.

During the 1928 Convention in Minneapolis, Richard Blume of Kansas City presented a paper on "Reporting the Republican National Convention Over the Radio." Will Rogers was to kick off the Convention with what was supposed to be a one-hour talk that would go on the wire services. Two reporters were sent to do the job, including their own typing. The first reporter wrote for 30 minutes, then the second reporter took over while the first typed his notes. Unfortunately, the first reporter assumed his relief reporter would also have a 30-minute take. But Will Rogers kept talking until midnight, and the second reporter wrote for three solid hours without a break!

## NSRA Starts Testing Program

When the stock market plummeted on "Black Thursday," October 24, 1929, the nation's economy went along with it. It was a frightening and confusing time for everyone, and it threatened to tear out the very heart of the industries and workers who built this country.

NSRA was deeply affected as well. Membership fluctuated with the rise and fall of the economy, and dues were reduced from \$10 to \$5 during the darkest times. Members busied themselves with two important issues: legislation and education.

The Legislative Committee secured the passage of a federal CSR bill in 1936 by unanimous vote of both houses of Congress, a goal the Association had been working toward since 1927. The celebration was short-lived; President Roosevelt vetoed the bill.

Members also continued the discussion of creating a college course for shorthand reporting, but a survey indicated that there was still a lack of interest among prospective students and insufficient funds for such an endeavor. The membership did agree on the need for continuing education and filled the void by directing the Association's Committee on Professional Education to write a series of educational articles in *The Shorthand Reporter*, covering such topics as law, medicine and English.

Another educational highlight was the completion, after 25 years, of the *Phrase Book of Pitmanic Shorthand*, arguably the most practical and valuable publication for Pitman reporters ever published. It was a labor of love for master Pitman writers Dr. Edward H. Eldredge, Thomas Bengough, Arthur Bailey and, later, John J. Healy.

During this time Joseph Van Gelder prepared, published and distributed *Making the Record*, a book describing reporters and their work. It was, and remains, an invaluable tool for members to pass along to judges, bar associations, law schools and legal publications.

But perhaps the most important accomplishment on the education front was NSRA's creation of the Committee on Certificates of Proficiency. The first CP test was given in 1937 at five locations around the country. In that year, 27 members passed the test and became the first CP holders in reporting history (today, more than 12,000 reporters hold the RPR, which replaced the CP).

Throughout the decade, controversy swirled over which system of shorthand reporting was superior, and the membership divided itself into two camps: the pen writer vs. the stenotypist. There would be no quick resolution to this "fight." Besides, something else was vying for attention - another world war.

## NSRA Members Serve Their Country in War

Once Adolph Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia and Poland, his intentions on world domination became clear. German forces took France, and the Luftwaffe, the German air force, bombed London. The last straw for Americans was Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941. The United States once again was going to war.

That also meant that much of the NSRA membership was in uniform too. There was very little activity in the courts with reporters, judges and lawyers serving in the armed forces. In fact, there was very little activity anywhere. America had one focus: Win the war. All efforts were directed toward that outcome - industry produced weapons, planes and ammunition, and women went to work in the manufacturing plants, and were nicknamed "Rosie the Riveter."

When World War II ended, the troops returned to a booming economy, as well as seemingly limitless opportunities in the reporting profession.

During the 1940s, NSRA began making inroads into the problem of official reporters in the federal courts. Judges could designate reporters to do the work of their courts, but the reporters were not paid salaries. Instead, they had to rely on the lawyers who tried cases for compensation. In other jurisdictions each lawyer brought in his own reporter, sometimes resulting in three or more reporters taking the same case.

While previous bills to establish some form of official system were introduced in Washington, they died before becoming law. At the 1941 Convention, NSRA members adopted a resolution favoring the introduction of such a system: "Under the merit system, provided that such legislation does not affect present incumbents in said courts; and provided, further, that adequate salaries and transcript fees be included in any such bill seeking that end."

In 1946 Congress did establish a system. NSRA's Berry Horne reported, "The system that was eventually established - by Act of Congress and the administration of the new law in the hands of the Judicial Conference - was not all that we desired but, on the whole, rather satisfactory. ... There is one inescapable conclusion on this phase of the subject: The final result was far, far better than it would have been had there been no NSRA or if we had not stepped into the picture as we did. Lacking our effort, the system established would not have attracted topflight reporters to the federal courts."

Even though the financial benefit from this effort accrued only to a small percentage of the membership, the legislation cost the Association over \$6,000, a large share of the year's income.

In 1947 NSRA authorized the Continental Casualty Insurance Company and its representative, Al Wohlers, to survey the membership to see if they were interested in group insurance. They were, and shortly before the 1948 Convention, the program went into effect. The initial enrollment was 180 members. In 1949 Wohlers started his own company, Albert H. Wohlers & Co., which has continued its relationship with the Association to this day. (Currently, Wohlers offers members 14 different insurance programs, with more than 9,000 members taking advantage of this Association benefit.)

Of great help to reporters everywhere was the completion of the Deposition Form Book, which set down the various forms used in state courts, federal courts and government agencies.

NSRA aided Kansas and Utah in joining the ranks of CSR states, and state associations were either started or reactivated in Indiana, Tennessee, Florida, Georgia, North Dakota, Arizona, Oregon and Maryland. NSRA's official journal, the National Shorthand Reporter, now had an editorial board, with a staff of 50 volunteer members.

## **NSRA Celebrates 50 Years**

In 1951, when members gathered in Atlantic City for their 50th annual convention, members honored the many individuals responsible for the successes of the Association and talked excitedly about goals for the next half-century.

In the 1950s, Association membership grew to almost 3,000 members, and by decade's end there were seven directors in NSRA's leadership, serving alongside its officers: the President, Vice President, President-Elect, Treasurer and Librarian-Historian.

This decade also saw the election of the first two women to serve as President, Ollie E. Watson (1951-1952) and Rachel M. Smith (1954-1955). (In 1931, Estelle Martin actually declined to serve as the Association's first woman president and complete the term of the deceased Ralph Peters. Harold Woodman was selected to fill the term as president.)

Two events took place that laid the groundwork for the future of the profession and the Association. One was the re-establishment of the National Speed Contest in 1952, and the other was the creation of the annual NSRA-sponsored seminar.

The seminar idea grew out of the success of similar seminars conducted by the Southwest Shorthand Reporters Association and the Kansas Shorthand Reporters Association. In 1954, NSRA President Rachel Smith appointed Gladys Joseph as director of NSRA's first seminar.

It was held the next year and ran for three consecutive days. Nathan Behrin and Ben Schuman headed the Pitman section, Charles E. Zoubek the Gregg section, and Berry Horne and Martin Fincun the machine section. There were 47 reporters and one student in attendance who listened to lectures on English, neurosurgery, electroencephalography and courtroom procedure. These seminars served as the building blocks for NCRA's current Convention, which focuses on continuing education and training.

An interesting discovery about NSRA members came to light in 1952 when the membership directory was revised to include more information than just the name and address. It turned out that NSRA members were using over 40 systems of shorthand writing!

In the last year of NSRA's sixth decade of existence, the Association added a new group life insurance to membership benefits, at term insurance rates; members could purchase an updated Deposition Form Book for \$3; and the Association endorsed the Smathers-Keogh-Simpson Bill, which offered self-employed reporters tax relief and retirement security.

## **A Decade of Steady Progress for NSRA**

The 1960s marked the beginning of a period of social and technological change unlike any era before it. Keith Welch and Don Thacker recorded American astronauts' words as they landed on the moon and explored its surface. Verbatim reporters keeping the official Congressional Record were busy round the clock as the Civil Rights Movement became the focus of the nation. And "live" reporters were chosen over electronic recording to keep the record for the Warren Commission's investigation into President John F. Kennedy's assassination.

To keep pace with the increasingly competitive career environment, NSRA had established the Distinguished Service Award during its 1959 Convention to encourage and recognize exceptional service in the field. Richard Mowers was its first recipient in 1960.

A new placement committee acted as a clearinghouse for reporters seeking new positions as well as a source for courts and others looking for reporters. NSRA also offered two new group insurance plans through the Wohlers company - family life and disability - adding to the list of membership benefits.

In 1960, only 7,000 reporters were employed in the United States. This small number of qualified verbatim reporters created a serious hardship in states with small populations. Alaska, which was granted statehood in January 1959, proclaimed its intention to use "Soundscribe" equipment instead of live reporters. When Puerto Rico had to create an official court of record, electronic recording equipment again seemed to be the answer to the lack of available reporters.

However, ER machines, the courts found, were no match for live reporters. NSRA launched a campaign to alert Alaskan lawyers and court officials to the failure of ER equipment in Puerto Rico.

To alleviate the shortage of qualified verbatim reporters, NSRA's Approved Reporter Training Committee screened schools to ensure that the high standards of the Association were being upheld. In 1960, NSRA reported only 32 approved reporter education programs in the United States. A critical shortage of qualified verbatim reporters loomed in the not-too-distant future.

On the legislative front, NSRA continued to push for Certified Shorthand Reporter legislation. Only eight states had CSR laws, and the Association saw this as contributing to the problem of verbatim reporting not being viewed as a profession. The Committee on State Legislation offered a CSR kit to state associations for use in educating legislators and answering arguments against such legislation. CSR legislation was thought necessary to ensure that reporters entering the field would meet professional standards, thus deterring unqualified persons from operating in courts and freelance fields to the detriment of the profession.

President Johnson signed H.R. 3997 on September 2, 1965, which required U.S. District Courts' proceedings to be recorded by both a tape machine and a live reporter. NSRA provided input on this version of the bill, and its requirement that a live reporter keep the record scored a coup for the profession.

In an ongoing effort to educate the public about reporting, the NSRA Public Relations Counsel contacted the three networks (NBC, ABC and CBS) with the Association's concerns about the inaccurate, and often negative, depictions of verbatim reporters on television. All three networks responded with promises to correct inaccuracies. Another public relations opportunity appeared when PBS chose verbatim reporting as the subject for its "Your Life in Business" program.

## A Turning Point for the Association

The eighth decade saw two of the most dramatic changes in the history of NSRA and the reporting profession: the transformation from a volunteer group to an organization with a full-time executive director and staff; and the advent of computer-aided transcription.

In 1972, NSRA's Board retained Fairbanks Associates Inc. to conduct a management survey of the Association. It took almost a full year for the 155-page report to be completed. John J. Evans, president of the firm, presented the survey's results and recommendations at the 1973 Convention in Seattle. He said, "For more than 70 years NSRA has been able, through modifications in the organizational structure, to move forward on a very slow and gradual basis. I say to you that in the decade of the '70s, you do not have the luxury of time to move at your previous pace. The rate of change and the assaults on your profession have reached a level when you are going to have to operate at a much faster pace as an organized group."

Recommendations included:

- An enlarged board of directors;
- Better use of the President's Advisory Board;
- The development of an Academy of Professional Reporters, and the establishment of a registry of professional reporters;
- The establishment of a council on approved reporter training;
- The formation of a delegate assembly consisting of representatives from each state association whose constitution and bylaws conform to ours;
- The creation of divisions, including a reporting systems division, a legislative and legal affairs division, an information and public affairs division, and an association affairs division; and
- The employment of a full-time executive director and the opening of a national headquarters in the most advantageous location.

This extraordinary vision to create an Association that would take the reporting profession into the future had very deep roots in the past. In 1933, NSRA President Harold Woodman of Colorado recommended that "we spend the money and buy the time" to create the full-time salaried position of executive secretary. Forty-one years later, Irving Kosky noted, "NSRA faced the future with an organizational structure designed to meet the demands of the last quarter of the 20th century and into the future."

A search committee interviewed prospective candidates for the office of executive director, and in 1974 James D. Hawkins of Fairfax, Va., an association executive with the American Pharmaceutical Association, was selected as the first full-time Executive Director of NSRA. Members chose Arlington, Va., just across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C., as the site of the first national headquarters for the Association.

The reporting profession now had an organizational structure whose *raison d'être* was to serve the NSRA membership.

With CAT technology becoming a topic of interest among the research and development segment - albeit at a slow pace - NSRA formed the Committee on Computer-Aided Transcription to study and help mold CAT's impact on reporting.

NSRA also began to flex its muscle in other fields. In 1972 members began reporting as a public service the meetings of the National Conference of State Trial Judges. Before, that organization relied solely on the Dictaphone Company to tape-record the annual meetings.

That same year the Office of Judge Advocate General, Department of the Army, joined forces with the Association on a pilot program for the training of Army personnel in machine shorthand through the use of NSRA-approved programs. One of the Army's requirements was that their personnel reach the speed of 200 wpm with one year's training. The experiment began in 1974 with five participants, and another group the next year.

NSRA spent the decade establishing strong ties with a number of organizations in the legal and judicial arena. At the 1975 NSRA Convention in Kansas City, the National Center for State Courts, the Federal Judicial Center and the National Association for Court Administrators participated in an all-day session on "Reporting in the Year 2000."

Kansas City also unveiled the new format for NSRA's annual conventions, complete with keynote address and concurrent education sessions to augment the already-established general business meeting and banquet.

The convention format wasn't the only innovation in 1975. The Registered Professional Reporter designation went into effect on July 1, dividing NSRA's membership into two classifications: Professional (today called Registered) or Participating Reporters. Members in good standing who met the RPR requirements would be grandfathered in. After July 1, anyone who wanted the RPR designation would have to pass a shorthand skill test at CP speeds and a written knowledge test.

The drive to earn the RPR, coupled with a strong membership campaign, boosted new membership in NSRA by 48 percent to 7,100 in 1975.

The National Shorthand Reporter underwent a design and editorial makeover, and Mary Louise Gilman was named the Association's first full-time, paid editor. Gilman was an experienced court reporter of many years, having learned from the famous Gregg teacher Helen Evans. Irving Kosky, NSRA President at the time, was instrumental in bringing Gilman on board to expand the magazine's content. "The magazine has helped keep the Association membership intact over the years," he said.

Association publications grew in number and content, and the membership directory became the kind of hands-on networking and informational tool every member could use.

NSRA had come of age. With a national headquarters to handle all of the details of the daily operation of a growing association, NSRA members could turn their full attention to policymaking and program expansion.

## **Pushing CAT**

When Sandra McFate assumed the NSRA presidency in 1979, she outlined three areas of concentration for the coming year: public relations, continuing education and technology. McFate formed committees with specific goals and deadlines - a successful first for the Association, with all committees meeting and exceeding their agendas.

NSRA spent that year trailblazing. The Association became a full member in the Coordinating Council of National Court Organizations, joined the CAT committee of the National Center for State Courts and the American Bar Association, and conducted its first annual videotape deposition seminar for judges at the National Judicial College in Reno, Nev. The seminar's success, coupled with McFate's prescience about the importance of videography in the legal setting, opened the door to NSRA's Certified Legal Video Specialist Program, which trains and certifies operators in videotaping depositions for use in the courts.

The Association also produced a film, "Keeper of the Record," to educate American audiences about the reporting profession, and participated in a forum on Cameras in the Courtroom before the New York County Lawyers Association.

In 1980 NSRA's Board of Directors authorized the establishment of a separate nonprofit corporation to be called the Heritage Foundation. The foundation would encourage charitable activities, promote research, develop strategic alliances, promote education and preserve the profession's heritage through a full complement of programs and projects.

That same year NSRA would hire a new executive director, Charles G. Hagee, to replace the retiring James Hawkins.

During the 1980s, NSRA's long-range planning committee instituted a five-year plan to get the majority of official reporters on CAT and a three-year plan to convince the courts, attorneys and decision makers that CAT was the reporting system of the future. CAT technology was on a collision course with audio recording in the courtroom. U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger told federal judges that "we need a system of recording district court proceedings that produces an accurate and usable record from which transcripts can be made, delivered on time and at minimal cost. If audio recording systems, properly monitored and managed, can meet that need better than other methods, judges have an obligation to consider using them."

## Preparing for the Future

The 1990s have been the genesis of major changes for NSRA - many of these were structural and operational changes that were instituted by a Board of Directors that understood the importance of focusing inward on the Association's governance, even while maintaining its traditional role of overseeing the many programs that NSRA had in place.

Those structural and operational changes received their impetus from an audit by Grant, Thornton, which revealed that the Association had been operating beyond its means financially. Additionally, a question of potential federal tax liability arose as a result of sales of books, dictation tapes and other items that the IRS called "unrelated businesses."

The Board passed several emergency motions that, for the first time, placed spending limitations on volunteer leaders and staff, implemented an austerity budget and moved virtually all board and committee meetings to the Washington, D.C., area, where they would be close to Association headquarters. This greatly reduced the drain that was being placed on the treasury by staff travel and allowed NSRA's conference department to negotiate more favorable hotel rates, while enhancing the efficiency of headquarters operations by reducing the time that staff was away. All of these actions put the Association back on a sound fiscal track.

## Changing Our Name

In 1990, NSRA established a task force to select a new name for the Association. After extensive research, the membership overwhelmingly accepted the National Court Reporters Association. And in 1991, the Association developed a new logo and renamed its magazine the Journal of Court Reporting.

NCRA also expanded the role of its Heritage Foundation, changing the name to the National Court Reporters Foundation and making it a separate entity from the Association. As a nonprofit, philanthropic organization, NCRF now could elect its own board of trustees to manage its various activities and programs, such as sensitivity training, student scholarships, Quality In Progress workshops, and the Robert H. Clark Library and Albert H. Wohlers National Court Reporting Resource Center.

The Foundation board is comprised of court reporters, judges, court administrators and representatives from disabled groups. This diversity ensures a foundation that will be able to reach beyond the court reporting community and

provide a unique perspective that benefits not only court reporters and the entire judicial system, but the public as a whole.

During the last few years, NCRA has continued to adapt to changing circumstances. In 1993, NCRA established the Member Services and Information Center. Members could now call a toll-free number to get answers to their questions regarding certification, continuing education, upcoming events and anything else having to do with the Association or profession.

1997 offered two major developments. First, NCRA created the NCRA Service Corporation, a for-profit subsidiary of the Association that provides such membership benefits as retirement programs and collection services. Second, NCRA acquired the Verbatim Reporters Center, making [www.verbatimreporters.com](http://www.verbatimreporters.com) the online center for reporting professionals. In addition to advertising their services on the Web site, members can discuss various topics with their colleagues in the VRForum, review past issues of the JCR and register for seminars online.

With NCRA celebrating its 100th anniversary in 1999, the Association has played both proactive leader and supportive parent within membership ranks and among those industries affected by the reporting profession. From helping to make the computer-integrated courtroom a reality to providing captioning to people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing, NCRA continues to carve out a valuable and permanent niche for its members and the profession they so dearly love.

## Heritage Foundation

In 1991, the Heritage Foundation was renamed the National Court Reporters Foundation and became a separate entity from the Association with its own board of trustees. Since then, it has offered thousands of dollars worth of scholarships and grants and funded such landmark studies as the "Analysis of the Work of the Official Reporter," the "1997 Surveys of the Official and Freelance Reporting Industries" and such publications as Computer-Aided Transcription: Current Technology and Court Applications, Realtime in the Educational Setting and The New Millennium Reporter: Court Reporting, the Computer-Integrated Courtroom and the Future. In addition, for several years NCRF has supported the administrator and court record manager position at Courtroom 21, recognized as one of the world's most technologically advanced courtrooms.

## Who Am I?

My profession stems from man's desire  
and his necessity to preserve the happenings  
of yesterday and today for tomorrow.

My profession was born with the rise  
of civilization in ancient Greece. I was  
known as a scribe. I was in Judaea, Persia  
and the Roman Empire before Christ.

I preserved the Ten  
Commandments for posterity.

I was with King Solomon while  
building the Temple and recorded  
the origins of Masonry.

My hand labored upon the  
scroll that set forth the Bill of Rights

wrested from the King of England  
at Runnymede.

I was with the founding fathers  
when the Declaration of  
Independence was drafted. I witnessed  
the signature of John Hancock.

I wrote the Dred Scott Decision  
for Justice Taney.

The immortal Abraham Lincoln  
entrusted me to record  
the Emancipation Proclamation.

I was commissioned to be  
with Roosevelt at Yalta.

I was with Eisenhower on D-Day;  
with MacArthur at Tokyo.

I have kept confidence reposed with  
me by those in high places as well as  
those in lowly positions.

I protect the truthful witness,  
and I am a 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.

This poem was written by reporter W.C. (Casey) Jones, and is here excerpted from his speech given at the 1964 meeting of the Kansas Shorthand Reporters Association.