

The Deposition Reporter

DEPOSITION
REPORTERS ASSOCIATION
OF CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER 2021

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MARY E. PIERCE, CSR NO. 6143 CalDRA PRESIDENT

In just a couple of weeks, we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of CalDRA in the shadow of the Coronado Bridge when we meet in beautiful San Diego for our annual convention. Celebrating 25 years of advocating for and educating the freelance court reporter, as well as licensee owners of reporting firms, large and small.

I can't imagine where I'd be without CalDRA. See, I'm one of those small firm owners.

On January 1, 2022, my firm, Pantera Court Reporters, will turn 20. And while Pantera is quite small, it doesn't shield me from the same challenges and legal dilemmas of a large agency or the deposition freelancer. You never know when a professional pothole is just down the road or when a seemingly typical assignment may leave you in a predicament. Because deposition reporters work more in solitude than ever before, it is more imperative than ever before that each of us knows how to navigate the issues that inevitably arise and invariably involve attorneys – individuals specifically trained to challenge, to argue, maybe even threaten.

CalDRA, and in particular Toni Pulone, was a godsend to me. Toni Pulone had the patience of a saint, the knowledge of an emeritus professor and a generosity of spirit that few possess. You see, sadly, as a firm owner, I didn't know what I didn't know. But Toni did. Toni knew it all, and she shared it with all of us. From the first time I heard



THE NATION'S LARGEST TRADE
ASSOCIATION DEDICATED TO
THE FREELANCE
DEPOSITION REPORTER

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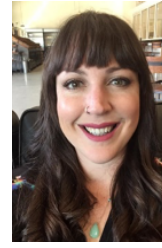
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CALDRA



CAL_DRA

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

her speak at a seminar, I knew she was golden. And she never disappointed. From her Bill Watch and Ask DRA contributions within every newsletter, to her legendary emails as the Depo Diplomat in reply to a member who reached out for help, to the best of all that was Toni – up on the dais for a seminar -- or three -- at a CalDRA convention. Simply put, knowledge brings peace of mind, and Toni had knowledge enough for all of us. Furthermore, she is singularly responsible for more legislative achievements than any other member has been or is likely to ever be.

As we rapidly approach the 25-year celebration, it's painful to think about those who won't physically be there with us -- from our dear Monyeen Black, whom we lost earlier this same year, to Lisa Michaels, who left us the year before, and John Squires the year before that. Last year two of the most integral of the founding members, without whom DRA would not have come to be, Lois Ludwig and Karen Klein, retired. All these giants of our profession, alongside so many others, gave their time over the years to educate, motivate and empower us all so that we'd become better, stronger, faster, smarter. They gave for years to the betterment of us all. I wonder who will be the giants of the next 25 years. Perhaps you will be one.

So as we mark this important milestone, I would like to extend my profound thanks to the 22 founding members of CalDRA – Richard Aiken, Mary Bardellini, Sylvia Becker, Cynthia Carroll Sells, Thomas Golding, Sharon Golding, Sephanie Grossman, Jennifer Harpster, Audrey Hill, Barbara Jarnagin, Judi Kaye, Karen Klein, Kimberly Burton, Mary Lang, Nancy Brink, Lois Ludwig, Dorothy Malone, Timothy McCoy, Julie Peak, Antonia Pulone, Frederic Tooker, John Zandonella -- who got it started and to the dozens of 25-year members whose continuous support kept it rolling and laid the foundation for the survival of this vital association. Further, I give my thanks to every person who has served on the board, helped to present a seminar, mentored or sponsored a student, volunteered at an event or made a donation to the War Chest. Every act of volunteerism moves us forward. Every dollar contributed helps strengthen our foundation so that we remain solid for the next generation of stenographers.

Because we are better together. We are stronger together. We are smarter together. We are CalDRA.

Happy 25th to all of us!

MARY E. PIERCE

CalDRA PRESIDENT



IN MEMORIAM

Antonia “Toni” Pulone

Antonia “Toni” Pulone, California CSR No. 3926, CalDRA Past President, Distinguished Service Award recipient and longtime Legislative Chair, passed away this August after a long battle with cancer.



In the history of the Deposition Reporters Association, no court reporter has had a more profound impact on, or made more significant contributions to, the organization and its membership. Serving as CalDRA’s “Depo Diplomat” for many seasons, Toni lent her years of expertise to providing authority on the most difficult ethical and legal dilemmas in the field of court reporting. If a definitive opinion was sought for a particular issue or predicament, Toni could always be counted on to deliver sage, accurate and insightful advice to a member in need. Anyone who has ever emailed her for guidance can attest to this. A thorough exploration of the situation would follow, along with sanguine advice and a tone that left you comforted and armed with enough information to move forward in a thoughtful manner.

Toni’s expertise extended well beyond the realm of her role as Depo Diplomat, however. Her vast knowledge of the California codes and their application to the profession also ensured that she was the single most prolific (and popular!) speaker at CalDRA seminars and conventions throughout the years, often being up on the dais for three discrete seminars in a single weekend. And the pearls would flow. Her encyclopedic recall of all things legislation, including bills in other

states, guaranteed a lively and informative discussion whenever she was at the helm. And her energy was infectious. She never seemed to tire in her zest for the good fight, even after decades in the arena, most of it on the front lines.

And Toni was not just an icon in California. She was a national treasure, often called upon to either serve on or co-chair an NCRA committee or two, and on many an occasion invited to speak both nationally and at conventions for other states’ associations. She and her agency, Pulone Reporting Services, were also Angels of the National Court Reporters Foundation (NCRF) for 13 years running. Toni’s name has garnered the respect of our colleagues across this nation for many years running thanks to her continual volunteerism, expertise, and dedication to the profession.

On a grand scale, perhaps more important than a long and impressive list of professional achievements, was Toni, the person. Strong, smart, funny, intuitive – she was the friend you counted on for an ear, for a hug, for a smile. She was tough but never a bully; analytical but never denigrating. In true vivacious Italian fashion, she talked with her hands; she was always elegant and polished; her chunky jewelry collection had no equal. Toni was pure class.

But perhaps her qualities were best summed up by her dear friend and colleague Ed Howard, who worked alongside her for nearly 15 years on legislative matters.

“I admired and loved that woman very much. Intellectually brilliant, sure. But smart people aren’t rare. It was Toni’s elegant, graceful goodness as a person that was so unique and, to me, both the source of her charisma and a humbling and inspiring example to me, always, and every time I spoke with her. Maybe the most consequential member of your profession...well, maybe ever.”

We, not only as court reporters but simply as people, owe not only our eternal gratitude to Toni, but also to her husband, Steve Walwyn, who so selflessly shared her bright light with us for so many years. With so much time and energy spent on protecting the profession, it had to have cut into the time they might have otherwise spent together. But somehow, Toni never wavered. Her dedication to our profession and its betterment was steadfast as she helped raise her baby, CalDRA. We extend our sincerest condolences, and thanks, to Steve, for allowing Toni to be part of our court reporting family for so many years. Our hearts are with you, Steve.

Godspeed, beautiful Antonia Pulone. We love you, we miss you, and we will never, ever forget you. We will do our best to honor and continue the important work that was your life’s mission. You can now be at peace.



PROJECT STENO'S PROGRAM FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

BY NANCY VARALLO, RDR, CRR, FAPR, DSA

There is a dire need in stenographic reporting and we all know what it is: we need more of us! Project Steno has a plan for getting young people into our profession, and we need your help to make it successful. I'm truly excited to tell you about it.

Project Steno has an Intro-to-Steno course which we call Basic Training that has proved highly attractive to young people. Now we want to promote it in high schools. We have designed a program that fits seamlessly into a high school's schedule, it's delivered via Zoom, and it's free.

And we need you to let your local high school know about it!

Our ask is simple: Reach out to your local high school and make an appointment with administrators to talk about bringing Basic Training to their school. That's all we need you to do – cross that threshold and get us a foot in the door! We'll take it from there. We'll meet with the teachers, we'll meet with the principals, we'll meet with the administrators and talk about how we have brought court reporting to high schools.

There's a shortage of court reporters today. You can help solve the shortage by reaching out to a friend, a neighbor, a relative, someone you know in a high school, or just knock on the door of your local high school and ask for an appointment with the admin. That's it! We even have the tools and materials to help you get that appointment.

I personally have had great success with this in my home state of Massachusetts where I've delivered our Basic Training course at nearly a dozen different high schools. Look at the photos to see how much fun I had sharing my passion for our profession.

Project Steno has developed an entire packet of material to make it easy to bring court reporting to a high school near you. Our program is an easy sell to high school administrators. We have the instructors, we have the loaner steno machines, we have the books,



we have the quizzes, we have readback materials, and videos. We have an entire turnkey package to bring to your high school. What we need is you to get us in the door! I know there's a high school near you. If each member of your association today could reach out to one high school, imagine how busy we'd be talking to people about this profession!

I encourage you to go to our website, ProjectSteno.org. You'll see right on the home page a nine-minute video we call "The Best Career You Never Heard Of!" If you haven't seen it, I want you to watch it. Past NCRA president John Prout described it as the best recruiting tool for court reporting he's ever seen. Go ahead and treat yourself to that uplifting video. I promise it will make you feel GREAT about our profession and remind you why we love what we do.

Take a look at the other short videos on our home page. They describe the flexibility of a career in reporting, the lucrative pay structure, and the overwhelming demand for court reporters and captioners. Then watch the testimonials under the Student Videos tab, where you'll hear heartfelt thanks from students Project Steno has helped through the donations of our many committed supporters. They'll bring a smile to your face and hope for the future.

We need to spread the word about court reporting. That's what Project Steno does. And we need your help in spreading the word to high schools. Time is critical. Each of us has a role to play if we are to save our profession. Please email me at Nancy@ProjectSteno.org for more information or to let me know you're ready to reach out to your local high school

Together, we can rebuild our profession. I know we can. I'm counting on you.

Nancy Varallo is the Executive Director of Project Steno.

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PROJECT STENO'S PROGRAM FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

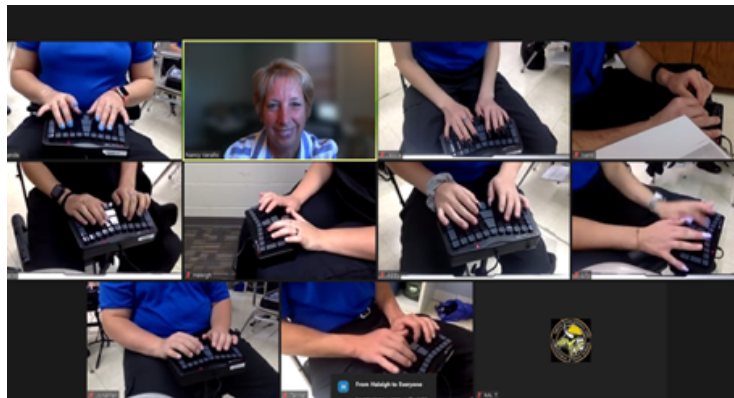
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About Project Steno

Founded in 2017, Project Steno is an independent, non-affiliated organization that relies entirely on financial support from the court reporting/captioning community. Its goals are to:

- Promote the stenographic reporting profession and recruit promising students;
- Partner with stenographic reporting schools and programs to graduate students in two years;
- Create incentives for students to reach speed milestones through the Merit Awards Program;
- Track performance of students who graduate in two years through data collection and analysis.

Project Steno is the tradename of Project TO Advance Stenographic Reporting, Inc., a 501(c)3 charitable organization. It operates entirely on a not-for-profit basis. In January 2018 Project Steno launched its program of tuition assistance and placed its first students in court reporting school. With the manifest enthusiasm of court reporters everywhere, Project Steno will continue to raise funds to promote widespread awareness of our unique profession and create a robust pipeline of students into court reporting schools and graduates into the field. Learn more at <http://ProjectSteno.org>.



Nancy Varallo teaching Basic Training to high school students via Zoom.



High school students receive a Certificate of Completion for their Basic Training course.

NAVIGATING OUR NEW WORLD OF REMOTE REPORTING

BY LINDSAY PINKHAM

I've been reporting for 45 years. In certain ways I'm old school. For example, I have always done my own scoping. I enjoy it; it makes me a better writer. Proofreading puts me to sleep. But I also love a challenge. I ask for technical expert witnesses, patent cases, pharmaceutical cases. I jumped on the realtime bandwagon as soon as it came out.

When the lockdown occurred in March 2020 and no jobs were set in my area for about three months, I wondered if and how this enforced idleness would ever end. Then around June or July, attorneys finally started setting depositions via Zoom and other remote platforms. I had to scramble to figure out the basics of this new-to-me technology. At first, I absolutely hated it, in part, because I don't think our clients did much to educate themselves. If I had unlimited resources, I would have sent every client a decent headset with a built-in mic. I wish I had a dollar for every attorney that showed up on Zoom, opened his mouth, and proceeded to blast everyone's eardrums with a reverberating echo!

So I'm taking the time to learn to troubleshoot others' problems in Zoom depositions. Of course, that's only half of it. The other half is getting an attorney to accept instruction from me. I don't know if it's because I'm a female or because they consider me their "subordinate" -- although it helps when I put on my no-nonsense "mom" voice. Sometimes you have to finesse how you phrase things: "Counsel, one of the participants in my last Zoom deposition had that same problem. Can I share the solution we came to with you?" instead of, "Hey, you're doing it wrong. Do this." Zoom keeps on improving. Keep it updated. Zoom audio filters have become more sophisticated.

At our upcoming annual convention in San Diego, September 24th to 26th, I will be one of the panel members addressing remote depositions. The others are John Tisa, a videography firm owner, and Mike Miller, who needs no introduction!

Instead of giving a presentation covering information that most of you have picked up already, we would like to address your novel concerns and questions. I know I have plenty myself! I will be representing the regular old reporter, no expert, who is curious but still has a lot to learn. But my concerns may not be the same as yours, so consider this a call for suggestions. Email them to district3@caldra.org, and we will incorporate them into the seminar.

We also need to hear about unusual situations so we can be prepared for them. Here's something weird that happened to me the other day. The witness's audio was constantly fading in and out. Sometimes I could hear him loud and clear, other times it faded to a whisper, impossible to hear. I interrupted him several times and made him fill in the words I couldn't hear. We all got tired of that, so I thought I could troubleshoot for him, and I had him go into his audio settings and uncheck "automatically adjust microphone volume" and change his "suppress background noise" setting from medium to low. It only helped a tiny bit.

So we continued on, and then the witness's attorney interrupted and said, "I've noticed when the witness is answering and Mr. Taking Attorney starts typing on his keyboard, Taking Attorney's box lights up and we cannot hear the witness's answer." I had been concentrating on listening so hard, I myself had filtered out the clickety-clackety keyboard and hadn't noticed the two video boxes' lights flickering on and off simultaneously. But when he pointed that out, I realized he was right. Taking Attorney said he would move his keyboard further away (lucky he wasn't on a laptop) from the mic. That helped a lot. Don't you hate those noisy keyboards? So that's one tip you can take with you next time you have a similar difficulty.

Be sure to attend our seminar Friday at 3:30 p.m. and share what you've learned so we can all help our clients help us! Email me any questions or suggestions you have -- audio setups, ethics, different parentheticals useful for remote depositions, how to troubleshoot an attorney's sharing of documents, et cetera. See you in San Diego!

Lindsay Pinkham
DRA District 3 Representative
district3@caldra.org

Student Corner



CYDNEY AGNO, CSR 14410, FREELANCE REPORTER BASED IN THE BAY AREA/NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Tell-Tale Signs of a New Reporter

It's been four months of reporting now, and WOW has it been a journey. A roller coaster full of surprises.

I finished school feeling like a rockstar, as it should be. Head still in the clouds when I received my beautiful CSR license. But that rockstar feeling was short-lived.

Some of the lessons I've learned since beginning my career:

- 1. Moving too fast:** Feeling confident, I dove into accepting jobs, adding away on my Google Calendar. I scheduled a job, then another job, oh, and then some more. Still trying to gauge my workload and not fully knowing what to expect, I booked an entire week of work. Students and soon-to-be reporters may not understand the magnitude of that decision. I surely did not. I've since learned reporters rarely book a job every day of every week. It's just not sustainable. Why? Because new reporter editing is so much different from test-taking editing. It's time-consuming and exhausting. Formatting? Sealed Confidential section? Mark that for hearing? Indexing? It all takes time to understand.
- 2. Backup:** Back up, back up, back up! Cannot reiterate this one enough. Yes, we learned it in school. But do you know what it's like to realize the implications of losing hundreds of pages of an edited transcript the night before it's due because of a computer crash? It's a painful lesson to learn the hard way. Set up Cloud backup before your first job and, even with remote reporting, save the job to a USB drive as soon as the job is done. Also, save to a backup as you're editing. That way you only lose a few edited pages. Side note: Thank

God for my amazing mentors! They've saved me from the deep end countless times.

- 3. Mic check:** Test runs on all equipment is IMPERATIVE. Working correctly yesterday does not mean today will go smoothly. Too many times attorneys can't hear me because of something on my end or I've had to uncheck a box for a setting that magically updated itself. My favorite, a driver needs to be reinstalled now that we're about to begin. You get the picture. . .

As fast as I started was as fast as I hit rock-bottom. I quickly realized the value of following the guidance of seasoned mentors. It's self-sabotage to move at lightning speed. The best way to figure out how much work is too much or too little is pace yourself and gradually learn the ropes. Despite being a court reporter that's mentally sharp and with obvious dexterity, give yourself time to acclimate. If you start with a 50-pound dumbbell versus a 5-pound dumbbell – well, it's just not practical.



Student Corner



A "THANK YOU" FROM ANGELA ROJO, A 2021 ZANDONELLA AND RENADO SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT AND HIGH SPEED STUDENT IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Thank you, CalDRA, for honoring me as one of the recipients for the 2021 scholarship. In doing so, Jessica Lobata of Southern California, the other scholarship recipient, and I were able to connect virtually. Over these past months since meeting while sitting in on part of a board meeting we have supported each other through school's ups and downs, celebrated progress, and have encouraged each other to gain speed and pursue certifications. One of the highlights was attending the CalDRA GAP training for soon-to-be certified stenographic court reporters. We had such fun comparing notes afterwards and really thrived from the motivating event!

I am a 200-speed student at Argonaut in Sacramento, California, serve on the NCRA Student/Teacher committee, am active in supporting and promoting school activities, am a single mom to a six-year-old future court reporter and chess player, provide round-the-clock care for a family member, and do my best to attend every training event and seminar available. I learned early on in my school

career the benefits of participating in local state and national associations. During these times of distancing I have looked to the summer series put on by CalDRA, the practice groups put together by students and professionals, opportunities to learn with and from mentors, and have gained not only knowledge but friendships. During these times of distancing, the added social aspect, the human connection even if virtually, has helped to uplift my spirits. I recommend to any student who attends online to reach out to your local state associations and become a member and/or serve in any way you can. Learn about local legislation and common practices to become prepared for your future career.

This little blurb was intended to be a thank you to CalDRA for extending support towards my future career. I have witnessed first-hand the countless hours many give in efforts to keep us all abreast of industry trends and to encourage and prepare students. I thank you, CalDRA, not only for this scholarship, but also for the opportunity to learn from so many skilled professionals. I look forward to earning my certification and comporting myself as set by the Gold Standard.

Student Corner



**JESSICA LOBATO,
A 2021 ZANDONELLA
AND RENADO
SCHOLARSHIP
RECIPIENT,**

A STUDENT SITTING FOR QUALIFIERS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Scholarship Spotlight

Jessica Lobato, mother to three young children and soon-to-be court reporter, is pleased to be a recipient of CalDRA's 2021 Zandonella and Renado Scholarships. Like most reporting students, Jessica began her steno adventure at South Coast College as a part-time night student. The journey has not been easy. Juggling work, school, and family has made the process longer, but it's also contributed to her passion and determination.

Currently Jessica is sitting for qualifiers and working to obtain those extra RPR initials behind her name. Because she is so close to achieving her goals, Jessica and her family made the difficult decision that she would suspend her full-time employment during her final push as a full-time steno student. Although only having the one income in the family makes it difficult, applying for and receiving this scholarship has helped her secure tuition fees for school and upcoming startup costs associated with becoming a CSR.

Mentor Trina Cox first introduced Jessica to CalDRA and the many benefits of becoming a member, an organization she now enjoys being a part of. Jessica is grateful for the opportunity to have an amazing mentor and support group who encouraged her to apply for this scholarship opportunity.

Stenography is something Jessica's never bored talking and learning about. Her dream is to become a working freelance reporter by the end of 2021 who can bring awareness to her dream profession and help support other court reporting students.

NOTE IT!

**CALDRA BOARD OF
DIRECTORS MEETING**

NOVEMBER 13, 2021 | 10:00 AM

LOCATION: TBA

SOCAL STUDENT PICNIC

OCTOBER 2021

DATE & LOCATION TBA

**CSR DICTATION/SKILLS
EXAM**

NOVEMBER 1 – 22, 2021
ONLINE

AskDRA

BY ANTONIA PULONE, DEPO DIPLOMAT

DEAR DEPO DIPLOMAT:

I've been a reporter for over 40 years, and I recently received my first notification of a consumer complaint made against me to the CRB Board.

The complaint was submitted by a party to a lawsuit. She claimed that I left out large portions of a 7-page transcript where the attorneys were arguing. Both attorneys agreed that the portion the consumer was complaining about was part of discussions that were held off the record.

Still, the CRB informed me that I had to submit my steno notes for review, and they did a comparison of my steno to my final transcript. They found more than a few places where the steno notes did not match my final transcript (due to me editing on the fly and in a couple of instances where I listened to the audio because the attorneys did not honor my request to slow down and speak one at a time after repeatedly asking them).

Ultimately, the CRB informed me that the matter was closed and there would be no further action or investigation. So while the final outcome was positive, the stress that I had to endure because of this experience was awful.

How can I protect myself in the future from this type of situation?

~ a veteran reporter ~

DEAR VETERAN REPORTER,

Thank you for this letter. I don't think it could be more timely, both from the standpoint of always reminding our members that you must interrupt and inform the participants if you are having a difficult time making a record, as well as the strongest warning we can issue to never just think to yourself "I'll get it later from my audio."

I have made it a habit for quite some time to always check the emailed reports from the CRB that reflects the current fines and citations issued to ensure that no one that works for or with me is on the list and hasn't informed me. On the past list, I saw something I didn't recall ever seeing before: B&P Code 8025 (d): Incompetence in practice... (multiple drops in stenographic notes).

Now, I don't know whether the CRB is becoming more aggressive in the process of investigating complaints -- and in particular, our raw steno notes -- or whether the two citations I saw, as well as two other recent requests by the CRB for steno notes of which I have become aware, is merely a cautionary tale to all of us that we must always fight for the record (even if your notes are sloppy, you still have notes rather than drops), we must interrupt and

inform the participants that the record is becoming compromised, and that those interruptions should, at the very least, be noted as a parenthetical in the record. Furthermore, it's a good idea to use other parentheticals, such as "overlapping speakers" or the like if that is happening repeatedly, even after your admonishment.

I have been much more careful about this personally ever since Yvonne Fenner commented during one of the seminars at the CalDRA convention in Napa a few years ago that we should not be writing ourselves into the transcript by capturing what we said from audio alone. She explained that if the CRB ever asked for a reporter's notes and they find that to be the case, you're exposing yourself to a citation, fine or other form of discipline.

While that practice seemed harmless enough previously, I did change the way I did things afterwards because I better understood the way that the CRB looks at things. After all, their job is to protect the consumer, not the licensed shorthand reporter. So protect yourself by fighting for every word, speaking up when you need to, and use those parentheticals to CYA!

Keep writing! **Depo Diplomat**

Advertising Opportunities in The Deposition Reporter

Want to highlight your small business to the court reporting community? Then look no further – advertise in The Deposition Reporter today!

THE IDEAL PLATFORM TO REACH PROFESSIONAL REPORTERS ACROSS CALIFORNIA

The Deposition Reporter has established a loyal readership through a long-standing commitment to quality coverage of trends and legislative issues that affect the industry. Our members are committed to improving their professional standards and advancing the profession, and that's why they read The Deposition Reporter.

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For more info, visit our website at <http://www.caldra.org/advertise-with-dra>. You can also contact the DRA office at memberservices@caldra.org or 888-867-2074.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH OUR PAST PRESIDENT, ERIKA SJOQUIST

Erika Sjoquist, CSR, RPR, CRR, is a past president of CalDRA and has recently been appointed to the National Court Reporters Association's Board of Directors, serving in a director position. We are thrilled to have one of our own representing us on the national stage and can't wait to see all that she will accomplish.

We recently sat down with Erika to get her take on the current state of the profession and to learn a little bit more about this amazing woman. Thank you, Erika, for all you do!



Name: Erika A. Sjoquist

Certifications: CSR (CA, GA & WA), RPR, CRR

City of residence: Savannah, GA

How long have you been reporting?

Since 1992; started school right after high school and then licensed in WA in April of 1992

How did you first get involved with DRA? How did that lead to your directorship with NCRA?

I first became involved with DRA after receiving a flyer in the mail about the convention coming up, recent association news, membership and benefits of membership as well as a leaflet regarding an opening for a representative in my district. So I filled it out and was contacted later by DRA, interviewed, and selected. Turns out... I was the only person who responded to the leaflet. I am so grateful I did. I was a representative for District 8, District 3 Rep after district reorganization, President and currently Immediate-Past President.

A few months after moving to Savannah, GA, I was contacted by, at that time, NCRA President-Elect Debbie Dibble. She asked me if I would accept her nomination of me being on the BOD of NCRA and working along with her and others. I was beyond honored that she even knew my name let alone wanted to personally nominate me to sit on the board with her. I immediately accepted, went

through the many steps of the interview process, and was slated to be on the board. My position as Director of NCRA commenced in July 2021. Another huge honor to be able to represent our profession on a national level that I believe would not have happened had it not been for CalDRA.

Who is your celebrity crush?

I have a couple ~ is that bad? 1. Clark Gable; 2. Sean Connery; and the third dimple boy, Matthew McConaughey. "All right, all right, all right!"

What is one professional accomplishment you would still like to achieve?

There are two, actually. I would like to obtain my BS in Court Reporting from Humphreys College of Law in Stockton, CA; and I also want the RMR certification. I started the BS at Humphreys, but it just became too much with demands of court reporting, two busy little kids, and a puppy... but what really threw it into a "not right now" pile was a math class. Yikes. Guess I have to buck up and ask my kids how to do math. LOL.

What is the most exotic place you have ever taken a deposition?

I have taken depositions internationally: Seoul, Hong Kong, Taipei, and Kyiv. Not sure any of those are exotic. Most interesting and thrilling of those was Kyiv. Because of the nature of the case, I had United States FBI escorts everywhere I went for the two weeks I was there.

What advice would you give to a struggling court reporting student?

PLEASE REACH OUT TO A WORKING COURT REPORTER! Yes, we are busy... but we will push everything to the side to help you out any way we can. There are always struggles in school, that speed you never think you'll get out of, and sometimes all it takes is just a small mind reset, and we can help you do that.

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What is one thing you wish you could change about your job?

I wish I could wave a magic wand and have all the laws in all 50 states be nothing but pro certified court reporter. No ambiguous language in law that allows the Decepticons to wiggle in; and strong-enough, fully funded, badass legal backing that wouldn't think twice about taking the imposters to court when violating state laws.

What is your dream car?

Aston Martin DBS

How has your career changed for the better since you first started reporting?

Oh, my gosh. That was SO long ago. When I was a baby reporter, I was worried about everything, not confident at all. Now I am definitely more confident. I'll report anything. I also no longer let jerk attorneys boss me around. True story: Total Jerk Attorney from Louisiana was completely out of line and out of control. So I told everyone in the room we were going to take 5 minutes for everyone to calm down, regroup, and hopefully continue after the break in a civilized manner. And he refused to go off the record. "We are NOT taking a break. This is a perpetuation deposition and we will be here until it's concluded without any breaks," as well as a few other rude comments. And I replied, "Yes, we are taking a break. Watch me." And I got up and left. Sometimes you just have to let the attorneys know who really is in control.

Why is DRA membership important to you?

There's that saying – that I now repeat often – "You don't know what you don't know." SO TRUE. Even though I had been a reporter for well over 20 years, I learned so much about associations, their purpose, their presence in legislature, the incredible complexity of what goes into creating a bill and then having it pass, or not. And I learned and understood more clearly sections of CA CCP and GC pertaining to court reporters and lawyers. The knowledge I gained, and to this day gain, is insurmountable. I looked forward to our meetings, our committees, the questions from peers I was able to answer. I was hungry for knowledge and passing that knowledge on to other CSRs. I was pushed "out of the nest" by Mo Black. She always had a way of doing that "ever so gently" so that you really didn't know you were flying by yourself until somebody would point it out to you. She was an incredibly special woman who was able to see in others what they didn't see for themselves. And Toni Pulone... another amazing woman who was full of knowledge, insight, and love for our profession, and her passion advocating for court reporters was contagious. I've definitely caught the bug! Working with Mo and Toni and the other incredible reporters that have served on the board of DRA and/or committees has instilled in me a pride, a dedication and a want to give back to our profession.

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