



Tennessee Court
Reporters Association



The Volunteer Reporter

Davidson County Courthouse

In 1784, four acres was set aside in Nashville's original town plan for a public square and public building. The current courthouse, built in 1936-37, is the fifth courthouse to stand on the site and is notable for its Art Deco detailing and pays homage to classical architecture with its Doric colonnade. This combination of architectural styles exemplifies the New Deal architectural style known as PWA (Public Works Administration) Modern. It was designed by Nashville architect Emmons H. Woolwine and Hiron and Dennison of New York, who won a design competition for the project. Rene Chambellan's sculptures on the exterior embody American principles such as loyalty, strength, and justice while murals in the lobby by Dean Cornwell represent Industry, Agriculture, Statesmanship, and Commerce. It also has the distinction of being the first building with central air conditioning in Davidson County.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Kristin Burke, LCR
TCRA President 2021-2022

As we come to the end of another year, I think we all hope we are better for the experiences it's brought us and the lessons we've learned along the way. Court reporting is definitely a career that can teach us something new with any given job/case. And as with all things, evolution is constantly occurring in the world of court reporting. If you keep up with current events in our profession, you know that there are some very concerned colleagues across the nation that are feeling the change in the air in regard to one of our most trusted companies, Stenograph, and other large court reporting firms who seem to be focusing in on electronic reporting formats instead of maintaining razor-sharp focus on stenographers. While I try to read and ingest as much information as I can on a subject before I speak on it or form a definite opinion, there always comes a point in time where it becomes clear what my position is or where my "line in the sand" gets drawn. I will always consider stenography the highest standard of capturing the record. Whatever software enhancements come along to help us stenographers do what we do best, I appreciate and applaud those developments when new technologies can be utilized to aid us.

As I stated in my last President's Message, I am not diminishing the job that qualified electronic reporters do here in Tennessee. What is concerning to me are the number of out-of-state ERs I see obtaining licensure here and the way in which large court reporting companies and product suppliers are advertising and promoting electronic reporting instead of stenographers or voice writers. If you are concerned about this issue, as well as other issues facing our profession, and you would like more information or first-time information, look into the [Protect Your Record Project](#), Inc.

Another area of great concern are the instances of contracting in our state. We are a no contracting state, but it seems to be happening more and more and the frustration grows when long-time clients tell you they cannot use your services because they are directed by their client to call an out-of-state or national firm. Almost all of these national CR firms are not located in Tennessee which means they send out e-mails asking for coverage from the local area of the job. This is another "line in the sand" area to consider. To coin a phrase from a trusted friend and colleague: Do you want to build someone else's business in your own backyard? Better yet, do you want to perpetuate the instances of contracting in our state whether stipulations are made by the attorneys or not? It takes each of us to combat this problem and it

takes a monetary sacrifice on our part to do so sometimes.

No one can predict the future or know exactly where the evolution of our profession is going to take us, but while we have a voice, an opinion, and a say-so, please do not be shy about where your "line in the sand" is. Being a part of this association and NCRA is incredibly important now more than ever. The greater our number, the louder voice we have against those that threaten our profession. I am not sure what the solutions are to the issues our profession is facing, but the ethical questions of the issues have the easiest answers for me.



CONVENTION COMMITTEE

April Lassiter-Benson, RPR, CSR, LCR
TCRA Vice President 2021-2022
Convention Committee Chair

With the Holidays fast approaching us, our hearts are filled with gratitude for the many blessings bestowed upon our membership. This year has been one of challenges and triumphs. Reporters across the globe have stoked embers that seemingly have threatened to be extinguished, where the future of court reporting is concerned. With considerable changes in the industry nipping at our heels, we've had to rethink how to navigate the waters of "Court Reporting". With the advent of courthouse closures amid the COVID Pandemic, issues we faced came in the form of: slow work; Zoom hearings vs. in-person hearings; being able to hear litigants on Zoom/Microsoft Team platforms; being "All" to "All" (i.e., tending to the needs of our loved ones and virtually-schooled children, while maintaining our work calendars, the angst of not remembering enough math/algebra to assist in homework assignments). But in the face of it all, TCRA's tried-and-true resolve has strengthened our ranks and we're ready to forge ahead.

A huge "thanks" goes out to those who submitted responses to the Convention Survey that went out last week. Our endeavor to continue in our effort to promote the profession at all costs has prompted us to have an "unconventional" convention of sorts, without sacrificing the professional development needs of TCRA's membership. CEUs were our primary focus when considering what the convention would look like. And we've garnered that the majority of our membership need 10-plus hours for licensure renewal. With that in mind, we've decided to have the convention parsed out in 2-to-3-day non-consecutive segments, with seminars being had virtually. These seminars will take place over a few months, in which we will culminate (1) in-person day of software training (Eclipse/CASECatalyst/ProCat). The ABM luncheon will be had in late May (date pending). Be on the lookout for new developments.

Whether you're needing CEUs for licensure renewal or just wanting to grow in your career, we encourage you to join us for the 2022 Convention. We've got a great lineup of speakers that are going to deliver outstanding seminars to help you move forward in your personal and professional lives. We look forward to experiencing this convention with each TCRA member.

Blessings to you and yours during the Holidays!

In Service,

April Lassiter-Benson, RPR, CSR, LCR
TCRA Vice President & Convention Chair



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Patricia Nilsen, RMR, CRR, CRC, CRI
TCRA Middle Director
Education Committee Chair

The education committee has been working with the convention committee on providing continuing education opportunities this spring, which will be a work in progress as we sort through the results of the convention survey.

We have been brainstorming on a presentation for attorneys in Tennessee on "Making the Record Better," and have also been discussing a distributing the recent NCRA letter from President Debbie Dibble, as well as the best ways to find LCRs in the State of Tennessee to members of the Bar.

If any reporters are interested in being a part of Project Steno or hosting an A to Z program, or if you



FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Katherine Gale, RPR, LCR, CSR (CA)
TCRA Secretary/Treasurer
Fundraising Committee Chair

The Fundraising Committee would like to wish ALL our wonderful members a blessed and joyful time with family and people you love during this holiday season!

This quarter our mask orders have still been trickling in from even nonmembers across the country! We have officially run out (yay!) of our "Madam Court Reporter" masks and still have a few "The Court Reporter" masks available for sale. We would like to again thank everyone who supported our mask sales endeavor. We are churning up some new fundraising ideas that we will share with everyone soon! We are working out fair advertising rates for our newsletter and are hoping to have those set by the first of the year. In the meantime, if you or anyone you know would be interested in advertising in our newsletter, please keep in mind that you will have that opportunity very soon!



LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Kristin Burke, LCR
TCRA President 2021-2022

TCRA has again retained the services of H. LaDon "Don" Baltimore to monitor legislation for TCRA during the 2022 Session of the Tennessee General Assembly. We are also pleased to report no new issues or areas of concern during the 2021 Session.

NCRA is once again offering its Leadership & Legislative Boot Camp March 6-8, 2022. This event has not been offered the past two years due to COVID. Pending TCRA Board approval, we hope to send two representatives to take advantage of the valuable training this event provides.

Students Corner

New A to Z Class beginning March 17, 2022!! Email max@elitereportingservices.com for information.

LIVE DICTATION AVAILABLE!!!

Thanks to the efforts of Max Curry, B.C.R., RPR, LCR, CRI, CCR, NCRA Past President, for the past year and counting and with over 200 participants taking advantage of Literary, Jury Charge and Testimony (Q&A) live dictation, Max is opening up the opportunity to join this group to all who need practice time. With NCRA's deadline looming near (December 2021) for holding onto tests you have passed for the RPR, among other credentials, this is the perfect time to join up and log in. Please email max@elitereportingservices.com and indicate it is in reference to his speed building class to get yourself on the list for the Zoom invite to this weekly event typically held on Tuesdays or Wednesdays. A link to a recording will also be sent to you in case you can't make the live class and would like to use it at a time more convenient for you. Good Luck to all on your testing endeavors!!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SYMPATHY

At this time the Board would like to express our deepest sympathy to one of our very own, Sheryl Weatherford, who lost her husband, Andy, on September 20th following a heart attack and open heart surgery. Sheryl, you've always given our association so much support and now it's our turn to lift you up in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

The current contract for Grand Jury and Deposition Services for the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Tennessee will expire in early 2022. The contract covers all of East Tennessee and applies to both criminal proceedings and civil proceedings. The successful candidate will be required to undergo a background search and comply with other security measures. Any vendors of court reporting services, who are interested in competing for this contract, should contact Matt Warner at matthew.warner@usdoj.gov, as soon as possible.



TCRA MEMBERSHIP

Professional	171
Associate	3
Student	5
Total	179

[Join or Renew Membership](#)

2021-2022 TCRA Officers and Directors



Kristin Burke
President



Mindy Rutherford
President-Elect



Misty Brigham
Past President



April Benson
Vice President



Katherine Gale
Secretary/Treasurer



Tracy Hollis
Western Director



Stefani Simmons
Western Director



Jennifer Checuga
Middle Director



Patricia Nilsen
Middle Director



Debbie West
Eastern Director



Jennifer Short
Eastern Director

Meet your 2021-2022 TCRA Officers and Directors! Your association is in good hands with these highly qualified reporters. We are grateful for their willingness to donate their time and talents to benefit us all. You can find their biographies [here](#).

RULES, REGULATIONS, AND RED TAPE

Notice of Public Rulemaking Hearing: Tennessee Board of Court Reporting

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 4-3-1306(d), you are receiving this notice because you have elected to receive notification by e-mail of certain changes or potential changes to the law applicable to your profession.

The Tennessee Board of Court Reporting (herein, Board) will be conducting a Rulemaking Hearing on Friday, March 25, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. This rulemaking hearing will be held at the following address:

500 James Robertson Parkway
Davy Crockett Tower, Conference Room 1-B
Nashville, TN 37243

The proposed rules are in response to statutory changes made with the passage of Public Chapter 549 signed into law on May 26, 2021, by Governor Bill Lee which became effective on October 1, 2021. Specifically, Tenn. Code Ann. § 20-9-611 required the Board to impose a prorated fee for any license that is for a period less than twenty-four (24) months. There was ambiguity as to the parameters around prorating this renewal fee, notably the percentage or amount to prorate a license renewal fee. Effective October 1, 2021, Public Chapter 0549 clarifies the statutory requirement to prorate the fee and now states that the renewal fee for initial licenses held for less than one (1) year is reduced by fifty percent (50%).



Further, the rules reflect the change in Tenn. Code Ann. § 20-9-612(b) which waives continuing education requirements in case of renewals of initial licenses held for less than one (1) year.

A copy of the rules to be considered at the rulemaking hearing can be viewed online at:

https://publications.tnsosfiles.com/rules_filings/11-07-21.pdf

Pursuant to the Tennessee Open Meetings Act (Tenn. Code Ann. § 8-44-101, et. seq.), the above-referenced hearing is open to the public, and you may attend the hearing in person. If you have any comments regarding the rules, you may either submit your written comments in advance of the board meeting to Hugh Cross, Assistant General Counsel, at (615) 741-3072 or electronically at Hugh.Cross@tn.gov, or appear at the rulemaking hearing to make your comments on the record.



ADVICE FOR NEW REPORTERS

From Jim Beres

Question: What advice would you give to a new reporter?

Answer: If there were only one or two pieces of advice I would give to a new reporter, it would be don't ever stop enhancing your skills constantly to get better so as to handle any job that comes along and, secondly, don't be a reporter just because of the money everyone says you can make. If you hone your skills, try to pass your RPR and RMR, the money will always follow you. Remember one thing, attorneys and their staff know who the good reporters are – and who the not so good ones are. Be a good one and

you'll never have to worry.

Question: What would you go back and do differently?

Answer: If there were one thing I could go back and change, it relates to the advice above. I wish I would have ventured outside the world of "legal" court reporting earlier in my career. It wasn't until the last 15 years that I was able to travel everywhere to all the greatest pro sporting events in the world to take the interviews of the professional athletes competing. Had I thought outside the box when I was younger, there would have been numerous opportunities for me to travel earlier – AND always on someone else's dollar. Also, the pay wasn't so bad, either.

Question: Tell us about a bad experience. How did you manage it?

Answer: Worst thing that ever happened to me – too many to remember – was taking a doctor's depo at Vanderbilt with 3 attorneys and the taking attorney – who I had before from Atlanta – was unreportable because she had to catch a flight and wanted to finish. After about an hour into the depo and asking her to please slow down and her telling me that she had to catch a flight, I asked for a break. We went outside and I told her that we couldn't continue like this, as making a record was becoming impossible and it was her record. She informed me that she had a flight to catch and was sorry, but we had to continue. At that point I offered her the Yellow Pages – yes, this was long ago – so she could call another firm to come take the depo. Again, she had a plane to catch. I finally told her she had two choices, go back in and slow down and we finish and she'll need to book another flight or she can call another reporter and she'll still have to book another flight – the choice was hers. After giving it some thought, as I went back in to pack up, she decided to slow down and we finished – and she caught her flight on time.

Question: Tell us one of your funny stories.

Answer: One of the funniest things that ever happened was I was taking the depo of a big country music star that lasted all day. Attorneys from both sides were my client, so it was a comfortable situation. About 7 hours into it, things kind of turned and the witness and my client taking the depo started arguing with each other, then the other attorney started objecting. After a back and forth session the taking attorney turned to me and said, "Jim, would you please read back my last relevant question?" I turned to him and said, "State your name, please." As the room went silent, it dawned on me that even though both of the attorneys were a client of mine, I may have over-stepped a bit. After what seemed like 10 minutes, the entire room burst into uncontrollable laughter. Clients saved! To this day, whenever I have a depo with this attorney he always tells that story to the other side and everyone gets a good laugh.

READ AND SIGN

By Mindy Rutherford, LCR, CLR
TCRA President-Elect 2021-2022
Newsletter and Social Media Chair



Read and Sign – for those of us who have been doing it wrong, here’s the rule on reading and signing in Tennessee. Deposition testimony is automatically read and sign unless expressly waived. Thanks, Sheila, for digging this out for us. And thanks, Katherine, for not giving up until you found your answer.

30.05. Submission to Witness; Changes; Signing. — When the testimony is fully transcribed the deposition shall be submitted to the witness for examination and shall be read to or by the witness, unless such examination and reading are waived by the witness and by the parties. Any changes in form or substance which the witness desires to make shall be entered upon the deposition by the officer with a statement of the reasons given by the witness for making them. The deposition shall then be signed by the witness, unless the parties by stipulation waive the signing or the witness is ill or cannot be found or refuses to sign. If the deposition is not signed by the witness within 30 days of its submission, the officer shall sign it and state on the record the fact of the waiver or of the illness or absence of the witness or the fact of the refusal to sign together with the reason, if any, given therefor; and the deposition may then be used as fully as though signed unless on a motion to suppress under Rule 32.04(4) the court holds that the reasons given for the refusal to sign require rejection of the deposition in whole or in part. [As amended July 1, 1979.]

Getting to know some of our members

Dawn Scruggs, LCR, CCR, is a long-time member of TCRA and currently serves on our legislative committee. Dawn raised two small children and worked a full-time job while attending the Academy of Court Reporting and School of Professional Studies and graduated and began reporting in 1991. She stated, “I was a paralegal before becoming a court reporter, so I had a great legal background as well as a very good client base once I graduated.” Dawn also ghost writes from time to time for a local newspaper and has co-authored a Christian fiction novel called *The Deliberation*. She is an avid traveler, and one of the highlights of her travels has been traveling with a group of legal professionals from the United States to Russia where she toured the Russian Supreme Court. She stated, “I absolutely love to travel. I’ve been to some amazing places in this world and have met wonderful people.” Dawn, along with her husband Keith and their cat, Snowy, lives on a farm in Lafayette, Tennessee.



10/21/21 – TCRA was in action for the 8th Annual Macon County Career Day

Two high schools with approximately 1,100 students made their way through the event. Anthony, pictured below, was one of our favorite visitors. We lost track of how many times he came by to visit with us. We look forward to seeing him again next year.

We were able to grab the attention of 19 male students and 40 female students. If they agreed to watch a short video about the career of court reporting, then they were able to play our mystery gift game where they drew a number from a bag and received a random gift from a thrift store. 59 gifts were handed out on this day, plus each student was given enough candy to send anyone into a diabetic coma. Bribery still works!

QUICK LINKS

[Court Reporter Licenses](#)
[Join or Renew Membership in TCRA](#)
[TCRA Board of Directors](#)
[TCRA Committees](#)
[Bylaws Resolution Form](#)
[Nomination Form](#)
[The Court Reporter mask sales](#)

TCRA Certified Court Reporters:

CCR forms for reporting CEUs or requesting a transcript are in the Member Benefits section of our website. You must log in to access them.



**TCRA President-Elect
TCRA Newsletter & Social Media Committee Chairperson**

The Volunteer Reporter is a publication produced quarterly for members of TCRA and other interested parties and is dedicated to the improvement of our profession and to provide a link between TCRA and its members.

Letters for the newsletter are welcomed and will be printed according to space availability. The Newsletter Committee reserves the right to edit letters according to space and formatting requirements or as ethics require, so long as the original meaning remains intact. Additionally, research articles may be written to earn TCRA CEU credits. Author must submit online and receive approval of such in order to earn CEUs. Contact the Newsletter and Social Media Committee for details.

Submission and advertising deadline is 15 days before publication date. Material received after deadline will be held for next issue.

Statement of fact, opinion, and all advertisements are made on the responsibility of the author and do not imply endorsement on the part of TCRA or its officers. Reprint rights are granted to all NCRA-affiliated publications, with appropriate attribution.

DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY
24 Christmas Eve	01 New Year's Day	5-12 Court Reporting and Captioning Week
25 Christmas Day	17 Martin Luther King, Jr., Day	14 Valentine's Day
31 New Year's Eve	29 TCRA Board Meeting	21 Presidents Day

Having trouble viewing our email? [View as Webpage](#)
Join us on social media!

