



DECEMBER 8, 2010

COURT REPORTERS AND LEGAL VIDEOGRAPHERS – IS THERE A FUTURE? (MY OPINION)

Because I have been reporting a case that is requiring daily delivery of transcripts, I have not been disciplined in my blogging. I apologize.

But I have received quite a few heartfelt emails in the last two weeks from people who have been reading this blog and are thinking about changing careers, are starting court reporting school, and are worried about their future. They all have a recurrent theme, “Is there a future in court reporting.” They ask for my honesty.

I will begin my thoughts by writing about a conversation I had Sunday with a young woman in Los Angeles. Her mom had just passed the CSR, had gone to an online school (Bryan), and was starting a second career. The young woman I was talking to was about 31, so you can do the math to figure out her mom’s approximate age.

The mom took four years, sitting in her garage, practicing and “attending” school. She went to a DRA convention and made a friend with a “seasoned” reporter, and they became friends. The mom had someone in the industry to help her stay focused and excited about court reporting as a future.

Before the mom passed the CSR, she needed to work and found an agency that has “alternative” types of court reporting work. The mom does three days of CART work at UCLA and then goes to a writer’s home one day a week and takes dictation. I am not sure if the writer writes for film or novels. She loves her job and “can’t believe how great the money is.”

Depositions, court, hearings, arbitrations, statements are always going to be a part of the USA legal system. The transcript is considered to be sacrosanct. No one ever expects or suspects a court reporter to change the record or “color” the testimony. Thinking about it, court reporters are one of the most respected and trusted professions. We truly are “officers of the court.”

My head is not in the sand. The Governor of California has tried to oust steno reporters or machines to save money. His plan was knocked down. To protect our profession, court reporters must band together and be a part of state associations and national. I am relying on my court reporting colleagues to keep our profession great, and that includes being GREAT COURT REPORTERS.



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So the question is, would I start court reporting school at 50 as a second career? I have the type of personality that takes chances, goes for it, and loves excitement and adventure. If court reporting is something that I had always wanted to do, and I found myself laid off or needing to change careers, I would go to court reporting school and see what I thought. When I started school so many years ago, I was scared it was a mistake. I dropped out of college to go to court reporting school. My friends all begged me to stay in college and get a degree – BUT I ABSOLUTELY LOVED THE IDEA OF BEING A COURT REPORTER, AND I LOVED WRITING ON THAT LITTLE MACHINE.

There is a future in court reporting – but only for great court reporters and people who think outside the box. Our skill is amazingly unique.



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