



An Active Relationship

By Mary Hicks Heinfeld, CCR • President, ACRA

Thanks to all who support ACRA. Please be patient with us as we continue to grow as a board and as a professional association. There is always room for improvement. It is important to recognize that an education is never finished, particularly in an ever-changing profession like ours. Without you, we would not be here, we would not need to be here. There would be no conference networking. There would be no speakers for motivation. Updates would sometimes get lost in the shuffle.



Mary Hicks Heinfeld
ACRA President

Knowledge can be more abundant and even more enjoyable to acquire as a group because of the domino effect. One statement can prompt many scenarios out of which questions begin to arise. If we were not attending conferences, we would just log in on our computer and watch an online seminar. Some prefer that method, and there's nothing wrong with it. Many have limited travel ability or schedule conflicts, and it can be a solution in a pinch. But for those who solely rely on the internet for learning and CEUs, they don't know what they are missing out on, do they?

Think about how much you gain just from sitting down, or standing up, and having a face-to-face conversation with someone else at the conferences. Consider something you learned at one of our past events. Would you have discovered it by reading it somewhere? Maybe, maybe not. And what questions have been prompted by a new subject that is broached?

I personally have made life-long connections through ACRA and this profession. And I still value time spent with all of you. Think of your relationships that came about in the same way, and imagine the ones you will establish in the future. There is so much value in that. I am thoroughly enjoying (and benefiting) from both the wisdom and knowledge of past ACRA presidents who have blazed a trail before me and the new board members with fresh insight and ideas. That combination is what will help us grow next year and in the future as an association. And we welcome your perspective and suggestions as members. Please reach out to the board members if there is a need or an idea to explore. ACRA is for all of us, not just a select few. Even if you have not submitted something in the past, it is not too late, albeit an FTR article.....anything! Help us help you!

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An Active Relationship

continued from the front cover page.

Take time to offer help to a student and give them encouragement. You never know how much someone may be struggling and needs positive words from someone who has been in their shoes and, not only survived, but is now successful in the path you set forth.

Thank you for being an active part of this wonderful profession! Until next time, be safe and be remarkable!



ALABAMA COURT REPORTERS ASSOCIATION

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Celebrating

Roy Isbell RDR, CRR

Submitted by Susan Zielie and Alan Peacock

Roy Isbell, RDR, CRR, attended Gadsden State's court reporting program and graduated in 1984. While in school, he started dating another young student in the program, Debbie Amos. Roy and Debbie eventually were married and moved to Mobile, Alabama. Although Roy started as a freelance reporter in Mobile, Alabama, in 1986 he accepted a position as a Federal court reporter for the United States District Court, Southern District of Alabama. In 1987, their son, Matthew, was born. A few years later they would welcome their daughter, Katie.

Keeping it in the family, Roy's twin brother, Ray, also went to CR school, who Roy's grandmother had encouraged by saying, "If Roy can do it, anyone can do it!" I'm not sure Roy's grandmother knew what a stellar court reporter Roy would turn out to be.

At the courthouse in Mobile, Judge Callie V. Granade describes Roy as always professional and a perfectionist, with the most accurate and impeccable transcripts she's ever seen.

Roy and Debbie invested in an historic home in downtown Mobile at 910 Government Street - affectionally called simply 910 — to be used as their office. They painstakingly have restored the historic home back to its original condition over the years. This office just happens to be one block away from the Mardi Gras parade route. So every year, for two weeks straight, both Roy and Debbie set up to entertain visitors, clients, reporters at their office. It becomes parade central and everyone has a wonderful time in their beautiful historic home.



Roy has a reputation among reporters in Mobile and the state as being one of the best. He streams realtime to his judge and attorneys on a daily basis. He has achieved the highest credentials you can obtain from NCRA and on the Federal reporter level. He is always available to help others, answer questions, to mentor new reporters.

Roy's legacy in the reporting community will be that he has always maintained a professional demeanor and set an example for others to follow. His professionalism and entire career are a testament to his commitment to this wonderful field that we all love.

So although Roy is retiring from his Federal position, he will still be working on a freelance basis. So we would like to raise our cups and

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Celebrating Roy Isbell. . .

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offer a toast of congratulations for his many years of Federal service and mentorship. He is an example for us all.

One last story I would like to share, just to show Roy's unique and hilarious sense of humor. Judge Terry F. Moorer is one of the other main judges that Roy works for, and Judge Moorer is a great storyteller.

Roy tells of a criminal trial, with the mild-mannered gentlemanly Southern charm that Roy possesses, where the prosecutor was questioning the witness on the stand and asks, "Ma'am, please identify the assailant.

Do you recognize anyone in the courtroom?

"Whereby the witness says, 'Oh, yes, most definitely.'"

The prosecutor then asks, "Would you please point to him and describe an article of clothing he's wearing." When the witness said, "He's wearing red," Roy thought to himself 'the defendant's not wearing red,' as he's trying hard not to look around the room but instead focusing on looking straight ahead.

"Right there, right on the other side of the woman in the blue dress." It was the second juror, who was wearing a red-and-black plaid shirt!

Immediately, the prosecutors says, "No more questions," and sits down.

The defense attorney gets up and asks the witness, "Can you stand up, look around the courtroom, and identify the assailant?"

"The witness stands up-- she didn't even look around-- looks straight into the jury box and says, 'Yes, that's him right there; never forget a face.' OMG, can you imagine trying to keep a straight face?"

We were all laughing so hard when Roy was telling this story!

Then Roy says, "Funny thing, the juror did look a lot like the defendant!"

Although Roy will have an official retirement with a heartfelt send-off, we are all hoping that, as Roy goes into Senior Status, no doubt traveling the globe, he will continue on at ALSD as a contract reporter and grace

us with his presence and his world-renowned stories from time to time.

Roy, we all love you and wish you the best life has to offer!

Roy Rogers said it best: "Happy Trails, until we meet again!"



Have you visited the ACRA Website lately?

Please visit us at www.alcra.org. We are working on adding lots of information for our members. We welcome any suggestions you have for content on our website.

COURT REPORTERS **MANUAL** NEWS

By Ashley Dickey, CCR, RPR • ACRA Membership Services Chair

I hope everyone enjoyed our annual conference in January. If you weren't able to attend, I made the announcement that the Court Reporters Manual update for 2023 has been completed. We are in the process of getting the updated version posted on ACRA's website. It will also be available to official court reporters via the UJS portal.

As always, if you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to reach out to me. I extend a heartfelt thank you to my fellow committee members for all their hard work.

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Recipes

Crispy Cheese Wafers

2 cups (8 oz) grated extra-sharp Cheddar cheese
1/2 cup butter, room temp.
1 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup crisp rice cereal

Directions

- Preheat the oven to 350°
Mix cheese, butter, flour, red pepper, Worcestershire, and salt in a large bowl until mixture forms a ball that lightly sticks together and pulls in all the flour. (hands might work best for this).
- Gently fold cereal into dough. Shape mixture into 1-inch balls.
- Place balls about 1 inch apart on an ungreased baking sheet.
- Flatten each ball with a fork, making a crisscross pattern.
- Bake 15 minutes or until firm. Cool on pan or wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

Chef's Notes: For best results, grate the cheese by hand. That small step makes a big difference in the success of the recipe. When you need only a quick sprinkling of cheese, the convenience of packaged pre-grated cheese comes in handy. However, when cheese is the star ingredient, a great recipe tastes best when made with freshly grated or shredded cheese. The term "grated" implies small, fine pieces, so a rasp-style grater works very well. Chilled, firm cheese is easiest to grate or shred.

Uncanny

By Sabrina Lewis, CCR, RDR, CRR • ACRA Immediate Past President

The doctor who was being deposed walked into the conference room, and the first thing I noticed was his physique. Tall, lean, athletic, he looked like the kind of guy you'd find strolling a college campus wearing a letterman's jacket. The doctor flashed a grin as he shook hands with each of us individually. That's where the pleasantries ended for me. The deposition began at 9:02 with the attorney and the witness speeding through the preliminaries like they had practiced them a dozen times the night before.

By 9:08, the doctor had his foot planted squarely in my you-know-where. Getting comfortable in his narrative answers, the sawbones stretched his long legs, and I could feel the tips of his New Balances tickling my epiglottis.

For every 220-words-per-minute question, the doctor responded with a 250-words-per-minute answer. He didn't even stop to think about his answers; he just gave them. He barely glanced at the six-year-old medical records.

Subconsciously, I retreated to the farthest recesses of my mind, fighting to recall briefs from my medical terminology class from almost 50 years ago. Maybe there was something I had forgotten from back then. God knows all my latter-day briefs were failing me.

I tried breathing exercises, but I started to wheeze.

I attempted the "pick a spot on the floor to focus on" trick, but my vision blurred and my eyes crossed.

Words were rushing past me, yet somehow, I made time to silently cry, "How did I end

up here??? What did I do to deserve this linguistic lashing, this polysyllabic pummeling? Somebody help me!!!"

"Hang on," I muttered to myself. "Hang on." Floundering, I was almost ready to throw in the towel. I clenched my jaw and lowered my head, struggling to keep my fingers on the keys of my steno machine.

That's when I spied the miniature copy of my license that I wear attached to my Stenographer lanyard.

Through the haze, I made out one word: "Uncanny."

Like a preserver tossed to me as I sank for the third time, I grabbed hold to that one word for dear life and struggled against the surge. "Uncanny."

"Uncanny." It was the jolt I needed. I began to regain my strength. Slowly, I was able to loosen the doctor's grip and return his leg and, eventually, his foot back to him.

As the ordeal ground to a halt, I noticed that the "mercilessly relentless onslaught" had lasted less than 50 minutes. I felt like a ragdoll that had been shaken by a rat terrier and slung over into the shrubbery.

The lawyers and the witness filed out, and I packed up my equipment in the now-silent conference room.

I limped the three blocks to the parking deck while I licked my wounds and tried to analyze what I could have done differently. I acknowledged that:

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Uncanny

continued from page 7.

1. The witness wasn't unreportable. He was just slightly fast. And prepared. And thorough.

2. Oddly enough, the only normal word the doctor used that I wasn't 100 percent clear on and asked for a repeat of was "reamer."

3. I had performed my due diligence before the job. I reviewed the plaintiff's complaint and the interrogatories. I felt like I had familiarized myself with the doc's educational and work history. "The guy's an orthopedist," I remembered thinking to myself. "How hard a deposition could it be?"

4. There's some stuff you can't prepare for.

Later, I looked back and discovered that I had made the rookie mistake of glossing over four very important words on the doctor's bio: Professor. Section Chief, Trauma.

The guy was a walking emergency medicine textbook. Go ahead; pick a medical discipline. You name it, he opined on it.

To quote my friend Laura Nichols, CRR, I got ripped. It wasn't the first time, nor will it be the last. But every time I get knocked down and trampled upon, I get back up faster, wiser, and stronger, ready to go on to the next assignment.

The background for "Uncanny" begins with a Facebook post by Greg Weiland, CRR. After reading Greg's post, I took my wallet-sized court reporting license and wrote the word "Uncanny" on it. I wear my Stenographer lanyard with my license attached to proudly identify myself as a Certified Stenograph Reporter. The word "Uncanny" is my personal daily reminder to aspire to greatness.

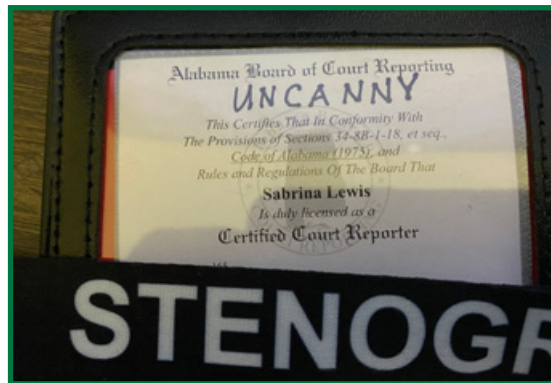
I hope you, too, will be encouraged by Vance's example. Greg wrote:

This is a story about recognizing greatness. I had a Zoom deposition yesterday in the comfort of my condo in the South Loop of Chicago. I had never been on the case before, didn't know any of the attorneys, and wasn't familiar with the parties involved. After an hour on the record, I realized this was not going to be ending soon and got myself prepared to do a full seven hours on the record. As is usual, about 5:30 on a Friday night, when everybody is getting punchy, tempers flared, and after a little squabble on the record, the attorneys decided to take a break to regroup.

While we were off the record, I was chatting with the taking attorney, and we started talking about realtime. He started telling me about this phenomenal court reporter he had worked with in a trial five or so years ago. I asked him where; he said Seattle. I had pretty much already figured out who he was talking about. I asked him if his name was "Vance." Of course it was. Without any prompting from me, he went on to tell me how incredible Vance's realtime was.

He said Vance's realtime was so good it was "uncanny."

They were in awe. He said he and his colleagues still talk about Vance's abilities to this day. It was probably just another trial for Vance, but his incredible talents made a huge impression, and we as an industry surely benefit. I'm proud to call him a colleague.



Recipes



Olive Dip

10oz green olives with pimento
(1 jar drained. Either
sliced or whole olives)
8oz cream cheese, softened
1 cup mayonnaise
1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
1/2 cup sour cream
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
1 teaspoon onion powder
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
(or to taste)

Optional garnish: whole or
sliced olives, green onions,
parsley

Directions

Using a food processor,
blend olives, cream cheese,
mayonnaise, mozzarella, sour
cream, red wine vinegar,
Italian seasoning, onion
powder, pepper, and smoked
paprika. Process until
desired smoothness is
achieved. Scrape down sides
as needed. Consistency depends
on preference of chunkier or
smooth.

Transfer to container, cover,
and refrigerate at least 4
hours.

Serve with crackers, chips, or
fresh vegetables.

Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.

- Winston Churchill



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Alabama Court Reporters Association

Visit our website at: www.alcra.com



NCRA's 2024 Leadership and Legislative

BOOT CAMP

Court Reporters on Capitol Hill fighting for you

This event offers an immersive, hands-on opportunity to advocate for the court reporting, captioning, scoping, legal videography, and associated legal professions. ACRA sponsored Vicki Clark and Saralyn Hicks. Lori Warren, owner of Alabama Court Reporting, was also in attendance.

Thank you, ladies, for sacrificing your time to represent Alabama! We look forward to hearing about your experience as well as the things you learned from the top leaders in our industry.



New 2 You: District II

By Saralyn Britt, CCR • District II Director, ACRA

My name is Saralyn Hicks Britt, and I am honored to have been invited to serve as your new District 2 Director. Before we get into what I hope to accomplish in this role, you'll probably want to know a little more about who I am.

I am a dog-lover, Millennial, and a gardener. (My plants would disagree.)

I am a SCUBA diver, gamer, Whovian, Potterhead, Miffliner, Knopian, and all-around general nerd.

I am an Excel-user, tech geek, and an Aquaponist.

I am not a fan of talking about myself. (The irony of this article does not escape me.)

I was first introduced to the profession through my mother, who attended Tennessee Career College under Max Curry when I was a child. So before you ask: Yes! I have seen a machine that runs on paper! I also applaud anyone who had to press play on that recorder for their speed dictations.

Before attending court reporting school myself, I attempted to “forge my own path” into other avenues. I attended nursing school, got my Associate’s degree in Accounting, and even delved into some CIS courses for a while. Eventually, I was led back to court reporting, where I always was destined to be.

I enrolled at Gadsden State’s RTR Court Reporting program in August of 2018. COVID hit during my speed-building phase, and I fell into a slump. Thankfully, I was able to pull myself out of it just in time, through the help and encouraging words

of my delightful, uplifting student mentor, Ms. Margaret Turner. (Truly, I couldn’t have done any of this without you, Margaret. Any student would be so blessed to have you as their mentor, pen pal, and confidant. Thank you!)

In April of 2021, I took the CCR test for the first time. I passed all legs, as well as obtained my final pass for the school’s program.

I got started working as a freelancer both independently and with multiple different firms. In August of 2022, I was offered and accepted an Official position in Jackson County. In October of 2022, I moved over to an Officialship in Madison County, which is where I currently reside.

In order to really get to know someone, I believe that understanding their upbringing – their life’s foundation – plays a key role in understanding their mindset. I am the youngest in a family of four. My nearest sibling is 8 years older than me; the middle, 10 years; the eldest, 13 years. Yes, I exhibit many “youngest child” and “only child” traits.

So what was my role in a mostly-empty, loving, enriching household? Well, beyond “just being a kid,” I developed my first instance of being a Bridge.

My father is a very technically-minded, bull-headed engineer. My mother is an emotionally-spoken, kind-hearted peacekeeper. Though I never heard them fight, they would often speak past each other in their communication, which led to

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lighthearted, silly “disagreements.” Being in that environment, I learned to speak both languages. Eventually, I found out how to interpret one for the other. (Now, I’m also a linguistics nerd.) Oftentimes, I would find myself expressing, “You’re both saying the same thing and arguing about it.” I became a bridge of communication between my Mom and Dad, and I found that to be incredibly fun.

You should also know about the type of company I kept in my upbringing. In middle school, I had a choice to make. One of my classmates was about to have her 13th birthday party. It was going to be a big deal! Limos and sweets and presents galore. An absolute “must attend” for any self-respecting, pre-teen girl. Unfortunately, it was the same weekend that my parents and their church group were going on a camping trip. There was no way I could do both. I was given the choice: go to my friend’s super awesome birthday party and sleepover for the weekend, or go hang out with a bunch of 50-year-old people in the woods for two days and sleep on the ground in a tent. For me, the choice was easy. We made some fantastic s’mores over those campfires.

Some of my best friends growing up were my parents’ friends. I spent many a dinner at our favorite Mexican restaurant sitting and listening, learning everything that the older generation had to share with my still-developing young mind. I was able to bring some of that wisdom back to my peers at my own age range. In that, I became a bridge between generations.

There are many other instances I can point to, but I think you get the gist. This is my goal in being on the Board. I hope to be a Bridge.

A Bridge between Officials and Freelancers.

A Bridge between reporters and firm owners.

A Bridge between members and their association.

A Bridge between Boomers and Millennials.

A Bridge between our State representation and our National representation.

A Bridge between the wisdom of the experienced and the innovations of the new.

A Bridge between working reporters and student reporters.

Each group has so much to offer the other. It is only through acknowledging the achievements and value of the other that we all benefit in unity.

I hope to be your Bridge, but I can’t do it without you! I will be putting anonymous polls in each of my following FTR articles that I hope you’ll take the short time to complete. The data won’t go to anyone but me and my fellow Board members, and I’ll post visuals of the results in the subsequent FTR. These polls will be vital in guiding the course of your association, profession, and how best we can all interact with whoever is on the other end of that Bridge.

It’s a pleasure to meet you, and an honor to serve you.

“Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.”
– Eleanor Roosevelt

Now that we’re done talking about me (hopefully for the last time ever,) let’s start discussing ideas. I can’t wait to hear from you!

DISTRICT IV; REFLECTION AND REDIRECTION

By Travis Atkins, CCR • District IV Director, ACRA

For those of us in the “Deep South” of Alabama, Mardi Gras brings great fun, food, and laughter; but the end of Mardi Gras always signals a time for reflection and redirection of where your personal, spiritual, and professional life is headed. This year brings a great redirection for me professionally.

My involvement starting this year with ACRA is exactly the redirection I needed. Just from my short time on the Board since the conference, the folks I have met have been wonderful to work with. I was able to attend my first Board meeting as an observer and was amazed at all the work that goes on to continually advance our profession and ensure that professional, qualified reporters are working in Alabama and

being supplied the tools they need to do their job.

Let this year be the year that you find reflection and redirection help bring you exactly what you need. Decide to become involved in your association, volunteer to let a student shadow you, or reach out to a younger generation and let them know what a great profession reporting is. Making a difference in your professional life can be just the catalyst you’re looking for to grow, learn, and change that will overflow into other aspects of your life.

I’m sure you’ll find that a little reflection and redirection goes a long way!

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CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS

(Best known as CEUs)

Your earned CEUs from ACRA’s January 19 – 20, 2024, Steno in Steel City Conference have been uploaded to the ACRA and NCRA websites for your review and printing capability.

Thank you to your newly elected ACRA President, Mary Heinfeld, for putting on an amazing conference at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Birmingham, Alabama, this year. There was a host of wonderful and talented speakers during the two-day event. We also had an outstanding time at the open reception on Friday evening hosted by Lori Warren, owner of Alabama Court Reporting. Lori’s generosity and continued support to ACRA and the court reporting profession is inspirational. We all enjoyed socializing and sharing war stories. We also had several guests from out of state who attended ACRA’s conference this year. It is always great to have support outside of Alabama!! We sure did miss seeing our northern Alabama court reporters in person this year due to inclement weather. See you next year.

If you have any questions about your CEUs, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Karen Strickland Planz • Vice-President, ACRA



A NEW CHAPTER: *Congratulations, Mary King!*

By Tracye Blackwell, CCR, RPR • District III Director, ACRA

It is an honor and privilege to spotlight someone who has been a role model and true trailblazer to so many who have followed in her footsteps. Over her career spanning more than four decades, she has served on the board of ACRA, multiple committees, and was appointed to ABCR in February of 2022. Beyond her professional achievements, she is known for her compassion, wisdom, and the genuine desire to see others succeed. She is not just a source of information but a source of inspiration and has played a pivotal role in the development and success of numerous court reporters that she lovingly refers to as her “babies.” Congratulations to Mary King on her well-deserved retirement from the State of Alabama. We can’t wait to see what’s next!

How did you decide to get into court reporting? Where did you go to school? In 1977, as a senior in high school, one of my classmates said that court reporters make \$30,000 a year, so I went down to the newly formed Prince Institute of Professional Studies and interviewed with Sara Prince. Three days after graduating high school, I enrolled in the court reporting program. There were five people in my class. Everybody dropped out except me. I was the third graduate from Prince.

Tell me about the career path you chose as a court reporter, freelance and then official. How many years?

Immediately after graduation in the summer of 1979, I worked at Richard Wilson and Associates for three years until forming Dunn, King and Associates in 1982. I worked as a freelancer for 21 years. In 2000, I left the freelance world and began an officialship in Montgomery County with Judge William Shashy. He retired in 2016, and Judge James Anderson took his place. I worked with Judge Anderson for 7 years, so that totals 23 years with the State of Alabama.

What certifications do you hold and how do you feel they have helped you in your career? I am an RPR and RMR. In caveman days, you had to pass all three legs of the RPR at the same time. Because of that, I took that test 7 times! What a proud moment. Don’t ever



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give up. I passed the RMR in 1991. You could take the Merit in legs. No problem with the Literary and Jury Charge. It was that 260wpm Q&A that caused problems. I practiced an hour a day (with a new baby) to ensure I would pass. And that Q&A was a doozy, a slip-and-fall in a grocery store while looking for exotic spices. I had never written the word exotic in my life, and that word was in there a million times. It was a miracle that I passed.

Unfortunately, I must say that certifications during the time I've been a court reporter didn't matter much to the people I interacted with. But it meant something to me. It meant I cared enough about myself and my profession that I pursued those certifications.

Tell me about your time as a firm owner. One thing I was not taught in court reporting school is how to be a firm owner. Marketing, bookkeeping, human resources are all things I knew nothing about. I had a skill — court reporting — and that's about it. It was a great time of growth for me. I learned everything from the ground up about running a business. At 23, I had no idea what was involved. I would urge anyone thinking about starting a firm to become familiar with accounting and tax requirements, marketing, efficiency in your daily work life. I thoroughly enjoyed owning a firm, especially the marketing aspect, because, as you all know, I like to talk, so that was easy for me. Keeping employees happy is a challenge. Everybody has issues they're dealing with, and you need patience and empathy all the while keeping the clients and the bottom line in mind.

I know that mentoring/training new reporters is important to you. Why? I never thought of myself as a teacher, but I think when you learn something, it's incumbent upon you to pass that knowledge along. I have embraced the "teacher" aspect of my career. It gives you a sense of accomplishment and purpose to help others. It's also important to set a good example. Show up. Be dedicated. Do your best. I hope I've set a good example of how to be the best you can be.

What are the most significant highlights or achievements from your career that you look back on with pride that stand out? Highlights and achievements in the court reporting profession are the little things, like sitting in court during a jury trial and having an attorney display your transcript on the big screen and not seeing a mistake. That's big.

Another big accomplishment is having the confidence to speak up for yourself when things get tough. No one is going to look out for you but you. I'm sure you want to hear about jobs that stand out. In 1979, being the new man on the totem pole, I was sent to a deposition out in the country. The deponent turned out to be a true heir to the Howard Hughes estate (niece by adoption). Most of you probably don't even know who Howard Hughes is. Google him. It was a big deal.

I also took the depositions of Governor George C. Wallace and Governor Guy Hunt. Another big highlight of my career is the friendships I've made with all of you. Each one of you has enriched my life in a way I can't begin to express, friendships with people who

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understand you — speak your language, so to speak!

How has the transition to retirement been for you so far? I retired from the State of Alabama, not court reporting. I plan to continue to report here and there at my schedule. I will start traveling more, so my nose won't be to the grindstone quite as much. And the next time I see you, I will have lots of stories about all the sights I've seen (and probably pictures, too).

What activities or hobbies are you most looking forward to now that you have more free time? Well, as mentioned above, travel. I love it. I am looking forward to a more active lifestyle, longer walks, maybe some hiking. I've always loved cooking and baking, so I'll be trying some new recipes. Spending time with family and friends will be a priority. And there's gardening. And reading. And music. And photography. And I forgot, I've got lots of closets to clean out!

Are there new goals or aspirations you've set for yourself in this next chapter of life? Would you like to stay involved in the court reporting industry?

My goal is to stay healthy. How do you do that? Plenty of sleep, eating right, all the things. A new goal? Studying investing, maybe jewelry—making, learning to paint or pottery. I do plan to stay involved in court reporting. That's my life. I have been writing on a Steno machine since I was 17 and I'm 64! You know when you hear something, you think about how you would write it — mindwriting, right? It is so engrained into our brains, we can't turn it off, so to completely cut myself off from court reporting is not in the plan. I have really enjoyed serving on the Alabama Board of Court Reporting. That's one way to stay involved. And I am always happy to mentor the up-and-comers. Any of you reading this need guidance — maryking59@gmail.com. Email me.

Looking back, what advice would you give your younger self and others who are just beginning their journey in the court reporting profession? On the skill side, the best advice I could give is practice, even though you're covered up in work. Practice. Take the time to sit down after that tough job and solidify the new words, phrases, or briefs that you used. Write them over and over on the machine and then write them down on a notepad or sticky note so you will see them regularly.

On the social side, when interacting with lawyers, judges, witnesses, always show genuine interest and kindness. If you're not confident, act like it; in other words, fake it till you make it, right? Being nice pays big dividends. Smile.

On the personal side, make sure you take care of your body. Some form of exercise is essential. Stretch. Stretch a lot. Nobody told me that when I first started court reporting.





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