

A History of Court Reporting in Minnesota
and
A History of the Minnesota Association of Verbatim
Reporters and Captioners
and its Predecessors. *

by

Jackie Young **

Court reporting's humble beginnings in Minnesota can be traced to 1873, when two special laws were passed by the legislature: the first (chapter 86) applied to Ramsey County, the second (chapter 87) to Dakota County and the Seventh Judicial District. This first provided, in part:

The judges of the district court and court of common pleas of Ramsey county may appoint a phonographic reporter, who shall be a sworn officer of said courts and shall hold his office during the pleasure of said courts, and shall be paid a salary of fifteen hundred dollars (\$1,500.00). . . . The said phonographic reporter shall take full phonographic notes of all proceedings in every trial of fact before said courts under the direction of the presiding judge thereof, and he shall furnish a copy of such notes or any part thereof at the request of any party to an action in said courts, for which copy he shall be paid by the party requesting the same the sum of fifteen (15) cents per folio, or for every one hundred (100) words so written out and furnished to the party requesting the same...

Compensation of reporters in Dakota County and those in the Seventh Judicial District was "fixed by the court" but could not exceed \$10 per day "during the time while he shall be actually engaged in the performance of his duties in court, and 10 cents per folio of one hundred words (100) for transcribing his short-hand record into ordinary script and words."

*** Posted on the MLHP with permission of the author and MAVRC.**

**** Jackie Young served on the MAVRC Board of Directors from 2000 to 2008, was President 2005-2006, and is the editor of MAVRC's quarterly newsletter, *MINNE-strokes*. She is a Registered Professional Reporter and recipient of MAVRC's Distinguished Service Award.**

The first official court reporting in Minnesota was performed by an Englishman named Jackson. The following story has been told about Mr. Jackson: “One winter’s day, according to a prominent lawyer, the gentleman was placed on the witness stand to read his notes in a certain case. He testified that his notes were ‘cold’ and that he could not read them. Everybody about the courtroom supposed that he used the word ‘cold’ in the usual figurative sense to imply that they had been written so poorly that he did not feel able to give them an exact interpretation. Of course, this would mean that the reporter was incompetent, and he was therefore subjected to a fiery cross-examination. All the lawyers obtained for their exertions, however, was the fact that his notebook had fallen into a tub of water and had been frozen beyond recovery at just that juncture.” Mr. Jackson’s term of office was brief and he left his bailiwick for more lucrative fields.

The fallout from Mr. Jackson’s attempts at court reporting, unfortunately, did not end there. Due to his incompetency and unfriendly disposition, there was talk among members of the Bar and others of a repeal of the above-mentioned laws, and the future of court reporting in Minnesota was in jeopardy. In order to circumvent this situation, Mr. Silas D. Hillman, while acting as enrolling clerk of the House during the legislative session of 1874, secured the passage of the first general shorthand court reporters law in Minnesota by a small majority (Chapter 88). Nearly all the judicial districts were embraced in the law. The compensation allowed was \$10 per day and 15 cents per folio. The first reporters appointed under this law were George N. Hillman, Frank Gates, Silas D. Hillman, and Samuel T. Hillman. The first appointment under this law was by Honorable A. G. Chatfield, then judge of the Eighth District, at the Village of Henderson. This law was amended several times but in general helped court reporting become well established throughout the state of Minnesota.

The life of the early court reporter was not the easiest. In 1876, there was but one typewriting machine in the City of St. Paul – a No. 1 Remington, using only capitals, in use by the R. G. Dun Commercial Agency. According to C. H. Sherwood, he was actually forbidden to use a typewriter in his work as the “officials did not propose to have machine-written letters go out of the office - they looked too much like circulars.” Until the year 1882, all transcripts were made by pen and ink, and it was extremely rare if more than one copy was furnished. Mr. George Hillman introduced the use of the typewriter by court reporters in 1882.

A Special Law of 1883 (chapter 78) required reporters to hire “assistant phonographers” in Ramsey County and increased his salary from \$1,500 to \$3,500 per year. It provided, in part:

In addition to the duties now imposed on said reporter. . . the said reporter shall take full phonographic notes of all trials and proceedings in the district court ... in both court and jury cases; and it shall be the duty of said reporter, when more than one (1) of said judges shall be sitting at the same time, to provide such additional phonographic force, at his own expense, and with the approval of the court, as may be necessary to report any causes so being heard by said judges; and it shall be the duty of such reporter to always have an assistant phonographer to make any transcript of any of his minutes immediately when the same may be ordered. The transcript fee paid said reporter shall be at the rate of ten cents per folio and such transcript fee so paid, by any party to an action, shall be included in the taxable disbursements of the suit.

During the legislative session of 1895, a bill was introduced which was very detrimental to the interests of reporters. This bill, through the concerted efforts of individuals within the court system, was fortunately defeated.

In the interests of uniting their fellow court reporters and to fight off future attacks on the reporting profession, Messrs. Charles H. Sherwood and George W. Moody called a meeting in December, 1886, to be held at the Merchants Hotel in St. Paul. At this meeting a number of the reporters from the county districts assembled and an organization was formed at that time which was known as “The Minnesota District Court Reporters Association.” The object and purpose of this association was to secure the benefits of organized effort, to secure the maintenance of a proper standard of efficiency, and generally to advance the interests of the profession.

The following officers were elected:

**Charles. H. Sherwood of Willmar, President
George W. Moody of Brainerd, Vice-President
Harlan E. Leach of Owatonna, Secretary
Mrs. A. D. Denison of Austin, Treasurer**



Sherwood



Moody



Leach



Denison

The Executive Committee was composed of Mr. Owen H. George of Hastings, Mr. E. N. Goodhue of Winona, and possibly one other whose name is unknown.

There were only three annual meetings of the Minnesota District Court Reporters Association held. The first meeting was held in 1896 at the Merchants Hotel in St. Paul, the second meeting was held in 1897 at Mr. Owen George's office in Hastings, and the third meeting was held in 1898 at the Nicollet House in Minneapolis.

The membership of the Minnesota District Court Reporters Association, including the above-named members, was as follows:

**A. A. Farrington of Duluth
John P. Vandersluis of Fergus Falls
William M. Russell of St. Cloud
Howard Oerter of Shakopee
William T. Eckstein of New Ulm
George F. Wyvell of Breckenridge**

Although the Minnesota District Court Reporters Association was never wholly abandoned, it gradually lapsed into a dormant state and thus remained until August, 1907, at which time a meeting was again called by Mr. Sherwood, to be held on August 30, 1907, at the Merchants Hotel in St. Paul.

Fourteen of the reporters of the state responded to the call, and during the course of the meeting, the organization known as the Minnesota District Court Reporters Association, was reorganized and the name was changed to the Minnesota Shorthand Reporters Association ("MSRA").

The following persons were present:

Charles H. Sherwood of Willmar	William C. Ward of Minneapolis
A. W. Shaw of Minneapolis	O. H. George of Hastings
L. M. Powers of St. Paul	Robert S. Taylor of St. Paul
Philip M. Woodward of St. Cloud	W. O. Braggans of Warren
William M. Higgins of Minneapolis	J. J. Cameron of Bemidji
Walter S. Taylor of Duluth	Olaf W. Nordbye of Granite Falls
George B. Hillman of St. Paul	W. T. Eckstein of New Ulm

During the meeting, a motion was made, seconded and carried, electing Mr. William C. Ward as president of the newly reorganized association and W. T. Eckstein as secretary/treasurer. The Executive Committee consisted of Owen H. George, Robert S. Taylor, and Philip Woodward.

Mr. Sherwood, having been the prime mover for the formation of a statewide court reporters' association, was called upon to state the purpose of the meeting. Mr. Sherwood briefly outlined his idea with respect to having such an organization and stated, "Its object being for the purpose of holding at least annual meetings and exchanging views on matters of interest to court reporters and also succeed in remaining in touch with each other on social matters." It was the sense of all present that such an organization ought to have been formed long before this and should at this date be in a flourishing condition.

Those in attendance at the meeting came to the following conclusions:

- The object of this Association shall be to promote the mutual benefit of its members.**
- The membership fee for this Association shall be the sum of three dollars, payable in advance.**
- A Constitution and Bylaws was adopted governing certain activities of the Association.**

Mr. Robert S. Taylor then moved that all reporters present at this meeting be declared charter members of the Association. The motion carried.

Charter Members of MSRA



Charles Sherwood



William Ward



A.W. Shaw



Owen George



Robert S. Taylor



William Eckstein



Philip Woodward



W.O. Braggans



W.M. Higgins



J.J. Cameron



Walter Taylor



Olaf W. Nordbye



George Hillman

Over the next couple of years, the members of the MSRA met annually, typically in the offices of William Higgins at the Minneapolis Courthouse. The purpose of the organization was changed in 1908 to “Secure the benefits of organized effort, to secure the maintenance of a proper standard of efficiency, and generally to advance the interests of the profession.”

MSRA’s first successful legislative challenge occurred in 1909, when the reporters lobbied the Legislature for the passage of a law (Chapter 168) fixing the maximum annual salary of court reporters in district courts in Minnesota at \$2,000.

The MSRA’s efforts at advancing the interests of the profession included drafting a pamphlet that set forth for the general public the kind and character of work performed by a present-day court reporter and the necessary education and training for that class of labor.

The vision, wisdom and dedicated efforts of our founders in building the foundation of our state association, along with the commitment of its many members over the years, has enabled court reporters in Minnesota to become a united, strong force that has prevailed in spite of the many challenges we have faced.

The following is a chronology of major events that have impacted the court reporting profession over the past 100 years:

1911 – The fifth annual meeting was held at the Minneapolis Courthouse on September 7, 1911. Fifteen reporters were in attendance. All MSRA members were requested to provide a biographical sketch of themselves and a photo, which were then compiled into a group picture that is still in existence today.

MSRA again approached the Minnesota Legislature, this time introducing a bill requesting the reimbursement of travel expenses by the reporters. This bill was eventually approved. MSRA also became involved in selling supplies and paper to court reporters in order to make a profit.

1916 – The tenth annual meeting of MSRA was held on September 2, 1916, at the Minneapolis Courthouse. Twelve members were in attendance, and at that time the membership approved revising MSRA’s Constitution and Bylaws to comply with the Constitution and Bylaws of the National Shorthand Reporters Association (“NSRA”).

1926 – Membership dues were a total of \$5.50, with \$4.50 going to NSRA. MSRA went on record as opposing the proposed amendment to the Bylaws of the National Shorthand Reporters Association regarding the grading and classifying of members and to any increase in national dues. A spirited discussion was held regarding whether MSRA’s affiliation in NSRA should be continued. A motion to discontinue its association was made by Clifford Ward but subsequently tabled after further discussion. It was ultimately decided that if five state association members remained as members of NSRA and paid their national dues through the state secretary, they could do so and MSRA would continue the affiliation. The Executive Board then went on record in favor of the proposed amendment to the Bylaws of the National Association requiring that membership in NSRA from a state with an affiliated association come solely through said state association.

For the first time in the history of MSRA, a salary for its secretary was set at \$100 per year. On the legislative front, in addition to lobbying for an increase in transcript rates, a letter was sent from MSRA to all clerks of court of the various districts requesting that the designation “reporter” be used on the court calendars instead of stenographer.

1927 – NSRA, in connection with the American Bar Association and a number of state associations, including MSRA, has a bill introduced in the U. S. Congress providing for the appointment of official reporters in the Federal Courts. There are 55 official reporters in Minnesota, with 43 of them belonging to MSRA and 24 belonging to both MSRA and NSRA.

The MSRA Executive Board approves the creation of a Certified Shorthand Reporter (“CSR”) Committee and a committee to develop a schedule of rates for official and freelance reporters. At that time freelance reporters were receiving \$20 per diem for a day’s session and 75 cents a page for the original and 30 cents for each page of copy.

1928 – NSRA’s annual convention was held in Minneapolis on August 14-17 at the Nicollet Hotel. In attendance were 135 delegates and 98 guests. The total cost of the convention incurred by MSRA was \$1,537.25. An issue for discussion at the National convention was the delay in receiving transcripts in criminal cases.

At MSRA’s 22nd annual convention, an opinion from the Minnesota Attorney General was read, to the effect that the office of court reporter does not become vacant with the death of the judge who appointed him but that he

continues in office until his successor has been appointed or his term expires and that judge then appoints another reporter. The membership voted against the CSR bill that was drafted and it was referred back to the CSR Committee for revisions. MSRA had 51 members.

1936 – The members approve the CSR bill and it is subsequently presented to the Judges Association.

1939 – Following grassroots lobbying by the members of MSRA, the salary of an official reporter is increased to \$3,000. In addition, the state Legislature agrees to pay for railway, traveling and hotel expenses while working in a city or village where the reporter does not reside.

NSRA's certification program is started to recognize the competence of the individual reporter.

1941 – Due to World War II, paper has become in short supply and costs 95 cents a ream. Orders took anywhere from two to five months to fill.

1944 – MSRA has 60 members, 10 of whom are serving in the war. Due to the war, there is also a shortage of official reporters.

NSRA and state associations successfully lobby Congress for the passage of Public Law No. 222, providing that official court reporters be employed in Federal Courts.

1948 – A ream of paper now costs \$1.20. Electronic recording in the courts is starting to become an issue. A representative of the Webster Wire Recorder gives a demonstration of his mechanical reporting device to MSRA.

1954 – MSRA becomes involved in discussions regarding the taxable status of income of reporters other than salary. One issue was the differing opinions on this subject by the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

MSRA's second court reporter directory is published and distributed to various courts and attorneys.

1956 – MSRA again lobbies for an increase in pay for official reporters and is successful in securing \$7,200 a year for official reporters in Ramsey County.

The Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis approaches MSRA and requests that pro bono court reporter services for depositions be provided, if possible, two or three times a year. MSRA approves the pro bono request.

States that have enacted CSR legislation up to this point are California, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, New Jersey, New York, Utah, and Oklahoma. The Governor of Wisconsin vetoes WCRA's CSR bill. MSRA proposes an amendment to Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 326, to create a state board of shorthand reporting. Following a lengthy discussion, the proposed amendment was returned back to the CSR Committee for revision.

1957 – The 50th annual meeting of MSRA is held at Peter's Sunset Beach Hotel in Glenwood. A revised CSR bill is referred to MSRA's Legislative Committee, who then seeks the endorsement of the Minnesota Bar Association. The per diem rate for a five-hour day is now \$35.00.

1958 – MSRA obtains group health insurance through Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

MSRA monitors a bill that is scheduled to be introduced in the Minnesota Legislature making reporters state employees.

1961 – Electronic recording is being considered in Alaska by a special committee. The committee's finding is that electronic recording is not an adaptable or feasible substitute for a skilled individual court reporter. Freelance rates for an original is 60 cents per page, 25 cents a copy for the taking side, and 35 cents a page for the opposite party. Appearance fee is \$5.00 per hour and mileage is paid at 10 cents per mile.

1962 – A stenomask reporter is employed by the Probate Court in St. Louis County.

MSRA President Lyle Smith addresses the Industrial Commission on sound recording machines and is successful in defeating the installation of such equipment.

1963 – NSRA develops a handbook outlining the disadvantages of electrical recording. The MSRA Board of Directors approves the creation of a Standards Committee.

1964 – Numerous experiments with electronic recording equipment are being conducted across the United States by such companies as Dictaphone, Soundsciber and Ampex. MSRA continues to pursue CSR and proposes to issue certificates stating “Certified Minnesota Shorthand Reporter” to all present MSRA members, to all nonmembers of MSRA having successfully practiced reporting for two years, and to all persons passing certification examinations, to be given no oftener than every thirty days. This proposal is to go before the membership at its next annual meeting.

1965 – A bill sponsored by Soundsciber is introduced in the U. S. Congress requesting that electrical recording devices be installed in Federal Courts. Soundsciber ends up withdrawing its bill after facing opposition from NSRA. NSRA believes that the best defense against electrical reporting is the production of good, new reporters to fill all vacancies that occur around the country. MSRA advises reporters to be discreet in using tape recorders as backup. MSRA also adopts an amendment to their bylaws approving state certification of reporters.

1967 – The Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court writes a letter to MSRA citing issues having to do with the failure of reporters to furnish prompt delivery of transcripts. There are now 131 members in MSRA and the dues are raised to \$15.00 per year from \$10.00. The average hourly appearance fee for deposition work is \$7.50 and \$1.00 for an original and one copy. The second copy is 15 cents.

1969 – Ray Lerschen addresses the American Bar Association in Chicago and the National College of State Trial Judges in July regarding the advantages of court reporters versus electronic recording. Edison Reporting Equipment is being tried in St. Paul.

The Bylaws of MSRA are amended to prohibit membership of people utilizing stenomasks, tape recorders, or any other means of reporting except pen or machine.

1970 – The Attorney General opines that court reporters in their capacity at the Minnesota Public Service Commission are not entitled to compensation for transcripts they prepare. MSRA hires two attorneys to represent their interests and to negotiate with the Public Service Commission. MSRA is successful in their efforts to retain compensation on transcripts.

1971 – In spite of the efforts by MSRA, a county court municipal bill is passed which includes the language “electrical devices may be used.”

The first American network, ABC, broadcasts an experimental captioned program.

1974 – The National Court Reporters Association (“NCRA”) creates the new title of Registered Professional Reporter.

1975 – Computerized transcription is soon to become a reality in Minnesota. Computerized systems are already in use in Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and Seattle. The Minnesota Legislature begins to examine the use of videotape equipment in trial-oriented activities following the approval by the Minnesota Supreme Court to allow video recording to be entered into trials without written transcripts.

There are approximately 20,000 court reporters in the United States. There is a widespread shortage of reporters. In Minnesota, there are 26 reporters and 100 judges in the county court system, which has led to the use of tape recorders. The annual salary of an outstate reporter is \$19,000.

1976 – A bill is introduced in the Minnesota Legislature proposing to allow electrical recording without a live reporter in attendance as an optional method of making the official record in district court. The MSRA Board of Directors votes to oppose the bill at every level and hires the firm of Larkin, Hoffman, Daly & Lindgren to represent their interests at the state legislature.

1977 – Electronic recording and videotaping is becoming more prevalent in the district courts, with systems existing in Rochester and Blue Earth County. The Sony Corporation is actively promoting its electronic recording equipment to both legislators and court administration. Nationally a movement by the Legal Aid Societies is started to allow them to take electronic recorder or recording (“ER”) depositions, bypassing the use of live court reporters.

1978 – MSRA’s newsletter, *The Bulletin*, was renamed *Minnesota: On the Record*. MSRA authorizes the establishment of a Political Action Committee. Issues facing official reporters include vacation time, transcript delays, misuse of equipment and supplies, CAT, production standards, and electronic recording.

1979 – The National Captioning Institute is founded in response to the need for a unified approach to captioning.

1980 – The Constitution and Bylaws of MSRA are amended to include student membership, effective January 1, 1981, with dues of \$15.00.

MSRA’s Distinguished Service Award program is approved.

The state legislature approves a bill allowing electrical recording in any court in Minnesota (attorneys may object and have a live reporter present) except proceedings of felonies, gross misdemeanors, and Chapter 41 proceedings.

1981 – The U. S. Supreme Court issues a special order allowing electronic recording as an alternative method of making the record in court proceedings.

1982 – An issue arises where freelance reporters are charging a higher rate for court transcripts than what is allowed. MSRA educates its members on the appropriate statutes and rules to be followed.

1983 – MSRA implements the Student-of-the-Year Award in memory of Willard Braun.

1984 – The membership votes to change the name from MSRA to Minnesota Court Reporters Association (“MCRA”), effective January 1, 1985.

1985 – On January 26, 1985, eleven Minnesota freelance court reporters from around the state meet in St. Paul and formally organize the Minnesota Freelance Court Reporters Association (“MFCRA”).

The first computer-integrated courtroom in the nation began operating in February, 1985, in Detroit.

NCRA institutes its Certified Legal Video Specialist program.

1986 – MFCRA’s first annual fall convention was held on October 4, 1986, at the Marriott Hotel in Bloomington. Dues are \$25 for regular membership, which subsequently were raised to \$30 in 1987.

1987 – An issue involving court reporters charging sales tax comes before the state Legislature as well as another bill approving official reporters becoming state employees. Both state associations become involved in fighting the sales tax issue.

MCRA’s pro bono program is initiated in cooperation with the Minnesota Volunteer Attorney Program of the Minnesota State Bar Association.

1988 – NCRA’s annual convention is held in Minneapolis at the Hyatt. In conjunction with NCRA, a Public Relations Breakfast is arranged for legislators, judges, and others to inform them of our position on electronic recording and to showcase what court reporters can do. Six out of eight judicial districts are now using electronic recording to some extent and there are approximately 155 “electronic court reporters” already certified in Minnesota. The state Legislature approves an omnibus bill commissioning a comparison of electronic recording and court reporters and studies are conducted in the Third, Fifth, and Seventh Districts. To help fight the influx of electronic recording, MCRA begins discussions of setting up a Computer Integrated Courtroom. A committee is once again formed to study the possibility of implementing a Certified Shorthand Reporter (“CSR”) program in Minnesota.

MFCRA, in conjunction with the Minnesota Trial Lawyers Association, is successful in having Rule 28.03 of the Rules of Civil Procedure amended to read as follows: “No deposition shall be taken before or reported by any person who is a relative or employee or attorney or counsel of the parties, or is a relative or employee of such attorney or counsel, or is financially interested in the action, or who has a contract with the party, attorney, or person with an interest in the action that affects or has a substantial tendency to affect impartiality.”

1989 – Rules 30.06 and 28.03 of the Rules of Civil Procedure are revised relating to the relationship of a court reporter to anyone interested in the action involving the taking of a deposition.

The Board of MCRA proceeds forward with pursuing CSR, and discussion begins concerning the formation of a joint MCRA and MFCRA committee to address the issue of incentive gifts.

MCRA goes on record opposing the video pilot project being conducted in the Third, Fifth, and Seventh Judicial Districts.

1990 – A joint ad of MCRA and MFCRA is run in *Bench & Bar*, the journal of the Minnesota State Bar Association, opposing incentive gifts as the practice of gift giving begins to escalate into a marketing battle. The majority of MFCRA’s members vote to take a formal stand against the gift giving practice.

A Computer Integrated Courtroom Committee is established. MCRA and MFCRA begin talks regarding merger of the two associations. The joint MCRA/MFCRA committee on CSR presents their proposal to Chief Justice Popovich in September and the Conference of Chief Judges conceptually approve the proposal in November.

NCRA opposes an amendment to Rule 30(b)(4), which reads, in part “Any party may, at the party’s expense, with prior notice to the despondent and other parties designate an additional means of recording the testimony.” This amendment would basically allow any notary public to swear the witness, turn on a tape machine and leave. In addition, the transcription of the tape would be the responsibility of the individual parties, without any independent certification of the accuracy of the deposition transcripts. Despite the efforts of NCRA and many state associations, these changes proceed forward and efforts are then undertaken by NCRA to modify the newly enacted language. A study prepared by the National Center for State Courts generally supports the use of video in many court situations.

1991 – A joint MCRA/MFCRA CSR Committee is formed to pursue a CSR statute. Legislative issues facing court reporters include state funding of the court system, the transcript deficit in the Public Defender’s Office, the pilot projects on ER and videotaping of trials, and pooling of official reporters.

On August 16, the Minnesota Trial Lawyers Association adopts a resolution saying, in essence, that they interpret Rules 1.8(f) and 5.3 of the Rules of Civil Procedure to prohibit the acceptance of incentive gifts or perks by all persons involved in litigation, regardless of their position. The Minnesota Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board takes a similar position.

1992 – A budget bill is passed by the Minnesota Legislature with rider language in it that the Supreme Court, in consultation with freelance and official reporters, study the issue of certification. The Minnesota Supreme Court refers the matter of CSR to its Administrative Committee. An order is

issued on March 13, 1992, requiring all reporters who work in district court to hold the Registered Professional reporter (“RPR”) certification.

Official reporter salaries are no longer determined by the state Legislature and are instead placed under the jurisdiction of the district administrators and judges. MCRA’s Adopt-a-Student program is implemented.

1993 – The College of William & Mary and the National Center for State Courts unveil Courtroom 21, the most technologically advanced courtroom in the United States. Courtroom 21 is centered on using a realtime reporter.

On March 19, the Special Court Reporter Certification Fact-Finding Committee established by the Minnesota Supreme Court finds that there are relatively few disciplinary problems regarding court reporters and that these problems are adequately addressed by existing laws, court rules, and the norms of the business market and, in essence, concludes that its findings do not support the implementation of a certification program.

1994 – The Americans with Disabilities Act is enacted. Members of MCRA and MFCRA appear before the House Judiciary Finance Committee to give a realtime demonstration. NCRA changes their certification of Certificate of Merit to Registered Merit Reporter.

1995 – IBM and Microsoft introduce Digital Speech Recognition software. MCRA and MFCRA combine forces by forming a task force to address potential sales tax liability issues that are facing all court reporters. The Minnesota Department of Revenue has determined that transcripts produced and sold by court reporters in the state of Minnesota are subject to Minnesota sales tax. MCRA and MFCRA oppose this determination.

1996 – Cheetah Systems, Advantage Software and Advanced Translation introduce RTF/CRE technology. The technology allows for the exchange of transcripts, note files, dictionaries, and globals between different CAT systems.

The federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 mandates closed captioning of all new TV programming, creating a great demand for closed captioners.

Representatives from MCRA and MFCRA meet to formulate a plan to merge the two associations. The merger process becomes known as the Janus

Project, named after a Roman God who is standing in a doorway, with two faces, one looking back and one looking forward.

1997 – On January 9, 1997, the firm of Ballman, Richardson & Seward Court Reporting and Captioning Service record Minnesota’s entire legislative session for the first time in history. This was no small feat, as the legislature was in session from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily and sometimes as late as midnight.

The merger of MCRA and MFCRA is approved and the merger becomes effective January 1, 1998, with the new association being named the Minnesota Association of Verbatim Reporters & Captioners (MAVRC).

1998 – Reporter Amy Ruemelin makes a presentation to the Minnesota Supreme Court regarding the problems with verifying the accuracy of testimony given by audiotape, videotape, or other electronic means. The Supreme Court adopts the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the Rules of Civil Appellate Procedure, which requires that “The transcript should include transcription of any testimony given by audiotape, videotape, or other electronic means unless that testimony has previously been transcribed, in which case the transcript shall include the existing transcript of testimony...”

In July, Reporters Amy Ruemelin and Karen Lebens make an oral presentation to the Minnesota Supreme Court regarding the changes to the Rules of Criminal Procedure regarding videotapes or audiotapes that are offered as exhibits and played for the jury during trial. It was the position of MAVRC that attorneys should be required to have transcripts prepared prior to trial of any videotapes or audiotapes that will be played for the jury at the time of trial. MAVRC is successful in its efforts.

The first edition of *MINNE-strokes* is published in the summer of 1998.

1999 – Due to the lobbying efforts of MAVRC, the Minnesota Legislature approves a disclosure requirement in cases where a contract exists between the court reporter and/or the court reporting agency and the insurance company. This bill is signed into law by Governor Ventura on May 24, 1999, requiring both written and oral disclosure of any contract or agreement existing between a freelance court reporter or court reporting firm and an attorney, law firm, party to a legal proceeding, or any party

having a financial interest in a legal proceeding. The law becomes effective August 1, 2000.

MAVRC also lobbies for a change to the Omnibus Crime Bill allowing official reporters the right to collective bargain, which is subsequently approved.

NCRA celebrates its centennial.

2000 – Governor Jesse Ventura signs a bill establishing the right for state employed court reporters to organize. Minnesota official court reporters vote overwhelmingly in favor of joining Teamsters Local 320.

In August, MAVRC is successful in fighting legislation that would impose a sales tax on transcripts.

2001 – August 3, 2001, is designated by the U.S. Senate as National Court Reporting and Captioning Day.

2002 – The first union contract is approved by official reporters and later signed by state court administration, making official reporters in Minnesota a viable Teamsters bargaining unit. Minnesota official court reporters become the first state in the country to unionize.

2003 – Official Reporter Tricia Weinberg, on behalf of MAVRC, addresses the Minnesota Supreme Court regarding the elimination of mandatory sentencing transcripts. The Supreme Court later rules that court reporters no longer have to prepare mandatory transcripts except at the request of their judge or another party.

In August, Anoka Technical College opens its doors to 12 new court-reporting students.

2005 – A Court Record Project is developed in Hennepin County to explore digital recording.

2006 – Following graduation of their first student, Anoka Technical College receives program approval for their Judicial Reporting A.A.S. Degree and Captioning/CART Certificate from NCRA's Council on Approved Student Education.

2007 – Reporter Jill Garrison testifies before the Minnesota Legislature in favor of increased funding of transcripts for the Public Defenders Office.

MAVRC and Office Depot form a partnership to offer discounts to its members on certain products.

Governor Tim Pawlenty signs a proclamation declaring August 30, 2007, as Court Reporters & Captioners Day in the State of Minnesota.

MAVRC celebrates its heritage of having a state court reporting association for the past 100 years in Minnesota on October 5, 2007.

2008 – MAVRC participates with NCRA in their Outreach Project to help raise the level of awareness and participation of reporters in the profession, increase member value, and strengthen membership on the state and national level.

Court Reporters Jan Dickman, Tracy Dougherty, Mary Mitchell, Vikki Thompson, Liz Gangl, Sheri Flagg, Cindy Shultz, Pat Onken, Jackie Young, Jean Whalen, Monica Moriarty, and Sandy Burch provided pro bono services to the Advocates for Human Rights at the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings concerning the genocide that occurred during their civil war.

Jean Whalen is presented with MAVRC's Distinguished Service Award.

2009 – MAVRC was invited by Chief Justice Eric Magnuson to participate in the Coalition to Preserve Justice in Minnesota to help educate legislators and citizens of the impact of not properly funding the court system.

Reporters Jan Dickman, Tracy Dougherty, Claudette Ask, and Vicki Eastvold travel to Africa to report the Rwanda Genocide Trials for the United States International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

Terry Nagle, former MCRA Distinguished Service Award recipient, passes away on November 11.

2010 – MAVRC advocated on behalf of Minnesota court reporters with the Access to Services Delivery Committees established by the Minnesota Judicial Council to retain official stenographic reporters throughout the state.

2011 – Jennifer Sati, Program Director at Anoka Technical College, appeared before the Minnesota House and Senate Higher Education Committees to speak on behalf of the Minnesota State College Faculty Union. Sati spoke about the importance of higher education and the need for financial support.

MAVRC introduced H. F. No. 1575 seeking tougher language in Minnesota's current disclosure law.

2012 – Tracy Bennett and Jeanna Zunker attend NCRA's Legislative Boot Camp held in Reston, Virginia.

MAVRC joins NCRA in its Ethics First Campaign.

2013 – Governor Mark Dayton declares the week of February 17-23 Minnesota Court Reporting and Captioning Week. Court Reporters Lori Morrow, Karen Macaulay, and Dawn Workman-Bounds reported speeches given by Former U. S. President Bill Clinton during campaign stops for the re-election of President Barack Obama.

~~~~

## **Distinguished Service Award Recipients**

**The criteria for receiving the Distinguished Service Award are:**

**The Distinguished Service Award is bestowed upon those reporters who have performed uncommon service to the court reporting profession and to the Association. The purpose of the award, created in 1981 by the Minnesota Shorthand Reporters Association, is to encourage and recognize work amounting to distinguished service by individual members of the Association for the benefit of the reporting profession and is the highest honor given to an individual reporter.**

**The following individuals have received the Distinguished Service Award:**

**Ray Lerschen – 1981  
Rachel (Smith) Lerschen – 1981**

**Willard I. Braun – 1982**  
**Donald W. Blake – 1983**  
**Frank R. Scherman – 1986**  
**Harry “Buzz” Dynes – 1992**  
**Lana M. (Anderson) Fruke – 1992**  
**John Rice – 1993**  
**Terrance Nagle – 1995**  
**Brenda E. Anderson – 2000**  
**Mary P. Mitchell – 2001**  
**Karen Marie Lebens – 2002**  
**Jeanette (Jan) Denise Ballman – 2004**  
**Lisa Richardson – 2006**  
**Joanne Ertl – 2007**  
**Jean Whalen – 2008**  
**Jackie Young – 2009**  
**Jim Woitalla – 2010**  
**Jim Trapskin – 2011**  
**Jennifer Sati – 2012**  
**Mary Krawiecki – 2013**

~~~~

Parade of Presidents

Minnesota Shorthand Reporters Association

William Clyde Ward – 1907
Charles H. Sherwood – 1908
Robert S. Taylor – 1909-1911
Olaf Nordbye – 1912, 1913, 1921-1924, 1936
George Hillman – 1914, 1915, 1926
Elbert Newton Goodhue – 1916 (died during term)
Lee Labaw – 1916
Frank Bowler – 1917-1919
William M. Higgins – 1920, 1925
Edward Egan – 1927-1928
Clifford Ward – 1929

Walter Grantham – 1930-1931
Stanley Gilpin – 1932-1933
Roy Gordon – 1934-1935
Ray Lerschen – 1937, 1938, 1946
Philip Ahren – 1939-1940
Hugh Flynn – 1941, 1943
Joseph Dolan – 1942
Gordon Griffiths – 1944-1945
William (Bill) Lerschen – 1947-1948
Frank Massey – 1949
Paul Geer – 1950-1951
John Carney – 1952-1953
Stanley Jensen – 1954-1955
Keith Scheid – 1956-1957
Eugene Diercks – 1959-1959
Harold Griffiths – 1960-1961
Lyle Smith – 1962-1963
Louis Flom – 1964-1965
Henry “Hank” Stasik – 1966-1967
John Rice – 1969-1969
Paul Ness – 1970-1971
Orin Paulson – 1972
Steve Janicek, Jr. – 1973
Donald Blake – 1974
Ervin Gross – 1975
Roger Clark – 1976
William I. Braun – 1977-1978
Arlo Berg – 1979
John Kuschke – 1980
Terrance Nagle – 1981
Peggy Zender – 1982
Dave Carlson – 1983
Linda J. Trondson – 1984

~~~~

## **Parade of Presidents**

### **Minnesota Court Reporters Association**

**Richard Augustine – 1985-1986**  
**Mary Mitchell – 1986-1987**  
**Lana Fruke – 1988-1989**  
**Jane Bowman – 1989-1990**  
**Allen Schmidt – 1990-1991**  
**Janice Dickman – 1991-1992**  
**Janet Shaddix Elling – 1992-1993**  
**Brenda Anderson- 1994-1995, 1997**  
**Karen Skow – 1995-1996**  
**Greg Cosgrove – 1996-1997**

~~~~

Parade of Presidents

Minnesota Freelance Court Reporters Association

Dale Neumann, 1985-1986
James Voitalla – 1986-1987
Linda Oman – 1987-1988
Charles Lehman – 1989-1990
Jan Ballman – 1990-1991
Debra McCauley Pollard – 1991-1992
Mary Lou Sweet – 1992-1993
Nancy Meyer – 1994-1995
Jane Doby – 1995-1996
Denise Drill – 1996-1997

~~~~

## **Parade of Presidents**

### **Minnesota Association of Verbatim Reporters & Captioners**

**Joanne Ertl – 1997-1998**  
**Karen Lebens – 1998-1999**  
**Neil Johnson – 1999-2000**  
**Monica Christensen – 2001-2002, 2008-2009**  
**Maureen Rooney – 2001-2002**  
**Carla Bebault – 2002-2003**  
**Barbara Nelson – 2003-2004**  
**Debbie Peterson – 2004-2005**  
**Jackie Young – 2005-2006**  
**Sandra Burch – 2007-2008**  
**Jill Garrison – 2008-2009**  
**Janell Gruber – 2010-2011**  
**Jeanna Zunker – 2011-2012**  
**Tracy Bennett – 2012-2013**  
**Hart Erickson – 2013-2014**

~~~~ ~~~~

**For more information about the
Minnesota Association of Verbatim Reporters & Captioners,
go to: www.mavrc.org**

~~~~ ~~~~

~~~~

Posted MLHP: June 5, 2014.