

## The Importance of Court Reporting Certification

First of all, to know the importance of a certification we must know what it means to be certified. Certify, according to the American Heritage College Dictionary, is to confirm formally as true, accurate, or genuine or to guarantee as meeting a standard.

Now, why the emphasis of the certification? Well, the definition is pretty self explanatory, “guarantees” meeting a standard.

In this fast-paced world of litigation there must be, without exception, a guarantee that the work produced by court reporters is one that meets the expectations of the public and the judicial system. For in this way we, “court reporters” maintain the integrity and decorum of our profession.

It is imperative that court reporters demonstrate that they have earned that right and honor to have the title of CSR, behind their names. Especially with today’s technological advancement that is advancing by leaps and bounds. When we hear about these digital recorders that can replace a live person, these voice recognition programs that are more cost effective, according to these opponents of the court reporting profession, I say bring it on.

As advanced as technology has become and will become, it is still an inanimate object that has to be programmed. And guess what, only a live person can do this. But regardless of this, the end product would be a nightmare for a court reporter to produce a clean transcript because there is no “guarantee” that the digital recorder did not inadvertently stop or pause in the middle of crucial testimony; there is no “guarantee” that the voice recognition software did not malfunction and all you hear is garble.

Court Reporters take pride in their work. They have promised to adhere to the Code of Ethics. They have dedicated themselves to producing a true and accurate transcript and if this is compromised by this “advanced technology” you would be hard pressed to get a Certified Shorthand Reporter to put their signature at the bottom of that transcript.

For those who insist that this new technology will be less expensive than paying a court reporter, I ask who will produce the hard copy of the recording. Would it be the secretary, the clerk, the bailiff? Who? Are they familiar with the Uniform Format Manual for Court Reporters? Do they know how to produce a saleable transcript? Or has this vital part of any trial or deposition been overlooked.

As with any profession, be it a medical doctor, lawyer, engineer, professor, scientist, etc., all of these have their different licenses, accreditations, accomplishments and the public makes sure that, indeed they meet the standards of their respective profession. The same holds true for the Court Reporter. We worked hard to earn this certification and we will defend it with the same vigor and persistence that it took us to get through school and earn the right to sit for the CSR exam.

We cannot allow those who have never been to an accredited school much less participated in the CSR exam be reporting and calling themselves court reporters. Through their actions they will defame and shame this wonderful profession when the time comes to produce the transcript. For the attorneys will not single out that one person but will define the whole profession based on this one person.

If I am writing as if I am a Court Reporter already, it is because I am very passionate about the profession I am already involved in.

As Americans we take great pride in our work. We especially take pride in the fact that if we have anything it is because God gave us this great nation of life, liberty and freedom for all and because of those liberties, that did not come about easy; these liberties came at a price. Through sweat, determination and yes, their very lives, they forged on for a cause that was immersed to their very soul, that the Court Reporting Profession has chosen to understand, comprehend and live by the standards that we as Americans come to expect; that is, work hard for what you have, don't expect anything to be handed to you on a silver platter but strive, push forward, even in extenuating circumstances, persist and together, united, we can hold fast to the integrity of the Court Reporting Profession, as Certified Shorthand Reporters.

Some may say that it is just a piece of paper with your name and some signatures on it, well, the Declaration of Independence, is also "just a piece of paper" with some signatures on it. Yet it has withstood the test of time and has held fast to the integrity of those making this declaration.

In this great big world, the Court Reporting Profession has found its place amidst the judicial system. This is not new. We haven't been around for just two or three hundred years; we have been around for centuries, since biblical times. We also have withstood the dangers of being replaced.

There is an analogy that I read about the importance of a spider's web. How this insignificant and almost invisible thing could actually be so amazingly strong and useful. In constructing its web, most spiders will use three or four different types of silk—some used to catch prey, others to support the web during construction. The spider's silk is

also incredibly strong and lightweight and is the inspiration behind the synthetic fibers used in bullet proof vests; who knew.

We all feel small and insignificant sometimes; we feel like we can't face the next challenge but we have faced many a challenge in the past but the TCRA team is awesome. With the active support of TCRA and the participation of each court reporter, each student and each instructor, the importance of the Court Reporting Certification will be crystal clear and iron clad. We look forward to the time when all states will require certification and thus give the importance of the certification the respect and honor it deserves. There will be confidence that the Court Reporter's production will be a "guarantee of meeting a standard."

Someone once said, "80% of success in life is just showing up." Well, as we all know showing up with plenty of time to our job is a huge part of how the day will go, but for the court reporter it's not just showing up but it is also the confidence that we are qualified to be the keeper of the record and that there are standards that we adhere to because of this Certification that binds us to the Code of Ethics. Plus it is in awe that keeps me admiring this profession over and over again to think that we are partakers of keeping the record that often becomes part of history, and this piece of history has our signature with the CSR behind our name.