

From the Desk of the PCRA President *Kathleen McHugh, RPR, CRR, CSR*



Even though I don't have children going back to school in the fall, I always think of this time of year as a new beginning, a real division between the summer and the balance of the year. I think deep down I enjoy a routine, so I welcome the structure of fall, as well as enjoying the change in weather, the fall foliage and fall foods.

As far as PCRA, fall brings new students in the three court reporting schools in Pennsylvania, which means new students to mentor.

PCRA continues to participate in the adoption of the new Rule 4000 and giving updates in that regard to our members.

PCRA Board members Sue Kiniry, Melissa Keating and myself recently attended the Pennsylvania Association of Courtroom Management convention as both vendors representing court reporters and Melissa serving as the PACM liason to PCRA.

We are making plans to celebrate Court Reporting Week with interviews of our members, and we are planning our 2016 annual convention to be held at the Penn Stater in State College, April 1-3.

What doesn't change for PCRA is the need for members to step up and volunteer, to cover a career day, to serve on a committee, to talk at one of Pennsylvania's court reporting schools, to mentor a student, to sponsor a student's attendance or donate an auction item for our convention, and to attend our annual convention.

I hope as you enjoy the fall weather, that you, too, turn over a new leaf and make a difference in your state association.

Sincerely,
Kathleen McHugh, RPR, CRR, CSR
PCRA President

Save the Date for PCRA's 2016 Annual Convention

PCRA's annual convention will be held at the Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel in State College, Pennsylvania, on April 1-3, 2016.

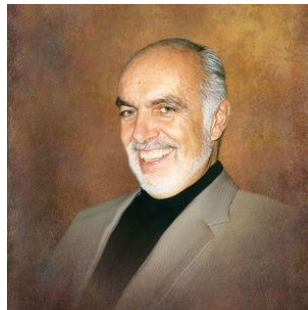
We are in the process of securing presenters and finalizing details, but we are planning a theme of realtime training at various levels. Several different software vendors have already committed to providing help with our training.

We will have an NCRA representative with us sharing what is going on across the country, and a new PCRA president will be sworn in.

Please make plans to join us in State College for a weekend full of education, networking and fun.



In Memoriam



Vincent "Vince" Varallo, Jr., RMR, and recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from PCRA upon his retirement, passed away on September 8, 2015. Vince's father, Vincent, Sr., was the first machine steno-typist in Philadelphia City Hall.

Vince started out in the Delaware County court system and then in 1961, after his father's passing, he left official service to build the successful freelance court reporting business founded by his father. Vince ran Varallo Court Reporting for 45 years, until 2006, when it was acquired and he officially retired.

Over those many years, Vince trained and mentored many court reporters. He was generous with his time and money. He was a founding member of GRACE, a charitable foundation supporting inner city children.

Vince is survived by his wife Denise, children Greg and his wife Catherine, Diane Varallo-Kushmir and her husband Rafi, Ken and his wife Margie, grandchildren Danielle, Peter, Michael, Jeffrey, David, and great-granddaughter Kaylee Varallo, stepsons Jason Smith and Evan Grammenos, and brothers Dale Varallo and Scott Ping. His first wife Connie predeceased him.

Some personal reflections:

Donna Cascio, RDR, CMRS, FAPR: Here is my memory of Vince: A handsome, handsome gentleman of Italian heritage who was kindhearted and especially helpful to young reporters. We looked up to him. He was equally comfortable with the reporting "elite" of his time as well as the neophyte reporter.

Tiva Wood, RDR, CMRS, FAPR: I met Vince Varallo at a PCRA convention when I was fairly new to the profession. He was extremely charming, gentle, kind and always such a gentleman.

When I was planning conventions for PCRA, Vince would always thank me for doing so and compliment our work in putting the seminars together. It meant the world to a young reporter to be appreciated by a respected member of the profession.

Jim Gallagher, RDR: I first met Vince in approximately 1984 when I became District 7 Director of PSRA. I scheduled a meeting to address the replacing of official reporters with tape recorders and transcriptionists in Delaware County. Vince attended that meeting and I was introduced to him. I will never forget the encouragement he gave me and the support that he offered. That encouragement coming from such a respected and well-known reporter from Philadelphia meant a great deal to me, and gave me the courage and confidence to continue our ongoing fight against electronic recording that still exists.

Vince and I became friends as I would see him often at various association activities. He was a great mentor to me, and to countless other young court reporters.

Jim DeCrescenzo, RDR, FAPR: Vince Varallo was the consummate professional in his business dealings, and a gentleman personally. I first met Vince in 1972. We worked closely in PSRA and GRA, the General Reporters Association. In the 1970s, GRA was the only organization of friendly competitors in the nation. Vince was a big reason competitors could sit together and not only discuss common issues, but enjoy each other's company.

Vince and Connie Varallo built and ran one of Philadelphia's premiere court reporting firms. Once you met a reporter at a PCRA function and learned they worked at Varallo, you knew they were well trained and an excellent reporter.

Vince was an active member of PCRA and served as District 8 Director. I am honored to have been his friend. His class, dignity and reporting skills will be missed.

Irv Starkman, RMR, CMRS: The first time I met Vince Varallo, I looked at him and said, "What a distinguished gentleman." That was in the late 60's, early 70's. I never changed my opinion in all the years I knew him. He was a class act. Back in the early days, I would go to the Varallo office at night to do practice sessions. I looked around the room and said what am I doing here with all these Varallos, Vince, Dale and Eddie.

Whenever I would go somewhere with Vince, I always felt proud. He was a man of distinction. He came from the heart and would give from the heart.

I remember chairing a convention and I brought in the Mummies. When I marched into the room with the Mummies, I looked over and Mr. Smooth was on the dance floor doing the Mummies Strut. It did my heart so good to see him out there on the dance floor. He had a ball that night.

We had many lunches and dinners together. It was always a treat for me to be in Vince's company. I could always voice my opinions. Vince was a very good listener. We very professionally bounced things off each other.

I miss you very much, my dear friend. Thank you for everything you did for me over these many years. You were a definite inspiration.

You raised a beautiful family. That will be your legacy.

I am very honored to have known you and to call you my friend. Rest in peace.

Neith D. Ecker, RDR, CRR, CCR: June 1973 was the second stop in my court reporting career, landing at the doorstep of Vince and Connie Varallo in Philadelphia.

By the time I departed in November 1975, I came away with an immense appreciation for Vince (and his enormously talented family) that continues to this day, 40 years later.

Vince's calm, reserved, and self-effacing nature, in addition to his talent, was the perfect environment for a young woman from Pottstown to blossom and grow. His office had lots of personality – and personalities – and bunches more of competitive spirit not only among reporters but typists/notereaders as well. Who didn't want to speed-practice every day with these mentors! Every reporter, every typist/notereader was an exceptional talent. Who else but the exceptional could handle those City Council hearings back in the day? And yes, we all became part of the Varallo family, encouraging one another to be at our professional best every day.

To Vince's family and friends: It was a real joy and honor to be part of such a prestigious and downright warm family-run firm, whose excellence was unmatched, which experience I will cherish for all time.

Thank you, Vince.

Kathy McHugh, RPR: I met Vince several times over the years and I remember the last time I saw him was about ten years ago. It was the Saturday before Christmas. Volunteers were delivering toys for the Support Center for Child Advocates. There was only one gift left to be delivered but it was in the King of Prussia Mall area and no one wanted to go there. Vince arrived, said he'd be happy to deliver the gift and he would finish his Christmas shopping at the same time. We were all so grateful to him.

And a few words from his daughter Dianne M. Varallo-Kushmir: Dad never pushed any of us into the business although all of us learned steno. My brothers found the business side to be more to their liking, but I was sitting at the machine one day and hit a few strokes. My mother looked at what I had written and exclaimed: "Look, Vince, no shadows. She's a natural." Not having any idea what that meant but doing something I could share with my father would be priceless.

Within one month I was in class at Peirce being taught by the best -- Rosemary Foster and Don Averso. The encouragement I got from them, but especially from Dad, about integrity and always striving to be the best reporter I could be allowed me to become a part of the legendary Vincent Varallo Associates. I reported for several years and went to every GRA and GRACE meeting with Dad in order to learn from the best in the field how to work with each other and keep integrity at our core.

Over the next 30 years I learned everything about the business and worked side by side with the man I adored. My brother Ken always found a business he would create that would interface nicely with Dad's, and my older brother Greg took care of all our legal needs.

It will certainly be a loss to the community at large but the best example of giving back to the community. We can honor him by taking what we remember of him and using his methods...generosity, mentoring, integrity in all things. The family thanks you for all the lovely memories and kind words. They are cherished.

Rule 4000 Committee – November Meeting Update

The Committee on Court Reporting and Transcripts met on November 17, 2015, to discuss continued refinements to Rule 4000.

In attendance were Judges Baratta and Skerda; the District Court Admins of Allegheny, Philadelphia, Columbia, and Delaware Counties; Chena Glenn-Hart, Esq., from McQuaide Blasko; Sam Milkes, Esq., Executive Director of PA Legal Aid Network; Joe Seletyn, Prothonotary of the Superior Court of PA; Joe Mittleman and Amy Kehner from AOPC; and Melissa Keating and Cheryl Hansberry from PCRA. Absent were both County Commissioners and the Prothonotary of the Commonwealth Court.

We progressed though the Rule section by section, making further revisions. I am pleased to report that all who have participated in this process have been fully engaged with every aspect of the undertaking. It would have been easy for any one of us to concentrate only on the section or sections which directly affect us, but the entire Committee has been focused on the result of a comprehensive Rule rewrite.

It is likely the Committee will not have another meeting in person. Judge Baratta's intention is to incorporate Wednesday's revisions into a final draft which will be circulated to the Committee for further comments, if any. Upon the Committee's approval of the final draft, the revised Rule will be submitted to Chief Justice Saylor. It is the Committee's expectation that the Rule will be put out for public comment before it is adopted; however, the decision on whether or not to accept public comment rests entirely with the Chief Justice.

Until the final draft has been submitted and either accepted by Justice Saylor or has been put out for public comment, no members of the Committee are at liberty to discuss the specifics of any portion of the Rule as it remains a work in progress. On the whole, we believe this Committee's final product will be better received than the original Rule 4000.

The Committee has moved swiftly through the revision process. Judge Baratta, Chair, has remained open to PCRA's concerns as we've vigorously argued our positions and offered alternative verbiage. We continue to advocate for ALL court reporters: members and non-members, officials and freelancers.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Hansberry and Melissa Keating

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NCRA's 2015 Annual Convention Kathleen McHugh, RPR, CRR, CSR

I had the opportunity to attend NCRA's annual convention in New York City in August, and as always, it was an educational, uplifting and fun time. While I am very proud of the job that PCRA does at our annual conventions, you just can't beat the quantity and quality of the seminars offered at a national convention, the networking opportunities you have, all in a great location.

I attended the Realtime Systems Administrator Workshop on Thursday and Friday for the second time! When I first attended the workshop several years ago I wasn't able to absorb all of the information presented over two days. But once you've paid to attend the workshop, you are able to monitor future presentations for free, so you have a second chance at understanding the subjects and see the new technology that's available.

On Saturday I attended the seminar Court Reporting - Creating a Successful Future, presented by Lisa Knight, who presented at PCRA's convention this past year.

I also attended Anissa Nierenberger's Terminate Transcript Turmoil seminar. Anissa also presented at PCRA's convention this past year.

I took advantage of NCRA's Legislative Consulting Services with Dave Wenhold and Adam Finkel, discussing issues facing Pennsylvania and ways to deal with them.

On Saturday night I attended the President's Party, celebrating the installation of NCRA's new president, Steve Zinone.

On Sunday morning I took in Hot Topics in Ethics presented by Marianne Cammarota of New Jersey and PCRA's District 6 Director, Linda Larson. This was an interactive seminar discussing situations addressed by NCRA's advisory opinions.

I also had the opportunity to visit with reporters from across the country that I've met over the years, check out the latest gadgets in the vendor area, and enjoy some wonderful meals in NYC, one of my favorite places.

So please, continue to support PCRA's conventions. We're in State College next year April 1-3. But also make plans to attend NCRA's 2016 convention in Chicago, August 4-7. I will see you there!

Promote Court Reporting and Win Valuable Prizes

NCRA is conducting a contest between the state associations to promote the profession of court reporting with the chance to win some great prizes. Each time you participate in a career day, a guidance counselor function or a VHP day, give a convention presentation, or participate during Court Reporting and Captioning Week or in other events, you can enter a drawing to win fabulous prizes. All of the details are outlined below.

The contest runs through February 20. So please, promote this wonderful profession of court reporting, help Pennsylvania make a good showing in the contest, and possibly attend next year's national convention in Chicago for free!

NCSA launches state Take Note competition for big prizes

November 17, 2015 by NCRA

The National Committee of State Associations has issued a friendly challenge among state associations and individuals to spread the word about the benefits of a career in court reporting or captioning for the chance to win complimentary registrations to NCRA events or vouchers for continuing education.

The challenge calls on all state associations to join forces with their members to participate in career fairs, provide realtime demonstrations at high schools and guidance counselor meetings, participate in the Veterans History Project, and help celebrate 2016 Court Reporting & Captioning Week being held Feb. 14-20.

"NCRA's Take Note campaign offers an exceptional array of resources designed to help raise awareness about the court reporting and captioning profession," said NCSA Chair Mary Burzynski, RPR, an official court reporter from Medford, Wis. "All states and members are encouraged to participate in this fun event and help showcase this wonderful profession."

The competition, which officially launched Oct. 1, runs through Feb. 20, 2016. Anyone participating in a qualifying event during that time period can receive credit for it by documenting their efforts at [the NCSA contest site](#). All entries will automatically be entered into the contest. There is no limit to the number of contest entries states can have.

"We encourage those participating in this effort to share with other states their ideas and activities that have worked well in helping to promote the profession," Burzynski said. "In addition, those wanting to participate who might have additional questions can contact their regional representative directly or reach out to leaders@ncralists.ncra.org for more information."

*Participants are also encouraged to post pictures of presentations on their state association's website and social media pages, as well as tweet using the hashtag [#crTakeNote](#). In addition, please contact NCRA's Assistant Director of Communications Annemarie Roketenetz at aroketenetz@ncra.org with information about activities for possible inclusion in the **JCR Weekly**.*

The prizes for the competition are tiered. Each entry into the raffle-type competition qualifies for the first, second, and third prizes. Each prize awarded is to be used at the state's discretion, i.e. registrations for the president/delegate, raffle items/fundraising for future conventions, student gifts, etc. In addition, there is a grand prize for an individual reporter or captioner.

First prize includes two complimentary registrations to the 2016 NCRA Convention & Expo, being held Aug. 4-7, in Chicago, Ill. Second prize includes two complimentary registrations to the 2016 NCRA Legislative Boot Camp being held March 20-23, in Washington, D.C. Participation prizes will also be awarded and will include two NCRA \$50 vouchers/credits.

In addition, the individual reporter or captioner who participates in the greatest number of school, career day, guidance counselor convention presentations, VHP Days, and/or 2016 Court Reporting & Captioning Week events will win a grand prize of a complimentary registration to the 2016 NCRA Convention & Expo.

"This is a win/win effort for both the profession and those who participate. The public is afforded a firsthand look at the importance of what we do while the winners of this competition will enjoy some really great prizes," Burzynski said.

[Learn more](#) about the NCSA Take Note state competition.

Donna Cascio Advocates for Court Reporting Profession

Diane Stafford: Liberal arts majors could become court reporters or medical scribes

November 17, 2015 by The Fresno Bee

Throughout the job market's slow recovery from the recession, nursing and other patient care jobs continued to be a bright spot in hiring. That was, of course, no help for people who had zero interest in hands-on health care.

Similarly, news that engineering companies begged for engineers, utility companies needed linemen, and high-tech manufacturers were desperate for good workers didn't help people who were never, ever going to be engineers, linemen or experts in cutting-edge shop floor mechanics.

Thousands of "fuzzy study" college graduates who felt more comfortable with words than scientific formulas took jobs as baristas, bartenders, retail clerks and child care workers. Here, though, are two job opportunities that should speak to "word people" — [medical scribe](#) or [court reporter](#). The first is a relatively new job description. The second is an old profession with new ways to do it.

If you gravitate toward "Grey's Anatomy" instead of "The Good Wife," you might be a medical scribe candidate. You could become a physician's assistant, taking on-the-spot notes while the doctor administers patient care. The job category is growing because of documentation demands in the world of electronic health records.

Competition for medical scribe jobs is fairly tough in some locations, partly because some medical school candidates are using the position as a steppingstone to augment their applications. But it's also a stand-alone career in itself.

If you're into courtroom drama, consider the timeless discipline of court reporting. The field continues to reinvent itself as technology creates new ways to take and transcribe what occurs in court proceedings as well as other instances in which verbatim records must be kept.

"Many out-of-work college graduates would do well to look into this field, as we have more openings nationwide than we can fill," said Donna Cascio, a court reporter in Pennsylvania, who wrote to me with an overview of that profession. "My profession has morphed from a typewriter/carbon paper career into a high-tech one, employing computer-aided transcription and real-time viewing, bringing the spoken word instantaneously into view on a computer screen or iPad in a courtroom, a lawyer's deposition suite or on a TV screen with closed captioning."

Take note of the last option. The job isn't just about legal work. It's also about improving communication for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Opportunities in these two jobs remind me of another field that's open to many "word" graduates — [translation and interpretation](#). For bilingual people or people who did a fine job majoring (or maybe even minoring) in a foreign language, there are multiple ways to earn money. Translation needs cross all professions, including education, health care, business services and the highest level of sciences.

Diane Stafford: [816-234-4359](tel:816-234-4359), stafford@kcstar.com, [@kcstarstafford](#)



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New NCRA Certifications

Congratulations to Pennsylvania Reporters with New Certifications from NCRA!

PCRA would like to congratulate President **Kathleen McHugh** of Audubon, NJ, who passed the RSA exam at NCRA's Annual Convention this summer, and members **Justine C. Kiechel** of Ephrata, who was newly certified as an RPR, and **Marie Strouse** of Stroudsburg, who was certified as an RMR after the May tests.

We also congratulate Pennsylvania reporter **Julie Anne Schoettle** of Lansdale, newly certified as an RPR.

Congratulations to all for your achievements!

A Reporter's Story

Jason M. Williamson, RPR

Official Court Reporter, Clinton County

After having been asked by Melissa Hoffman, District 1 Director for PCRA, to prepare an article for *The Outline*, I must say that I felt somewhat honored. It hadn't occurred to me, but apparently being a male in the court reporting profession makes me a "person of interest." Understandable, I guess. When people ask me what it is that I do, my response is usually: "Do you know the woman that sits in the courtroom and types? That's what I do." Names like "pretty hands" don't discourage me. Likewise, my brother's remarks such as "all you do is sit and type all day" don't discourage me, either. I simply grin and reply with some witty yet sarcastic remark.

Biographically, I'm married to my dear and ever-so-patient wife, Larisha. I have a 15-year old son, Zachary. I have three dogs, Jack, Pepe, and Eva. I like to hunt and fish. I've worked at the Clinton County Courthouse as an official reporter for the past 17 years. Currently, I primarily work for President Judge Craig P. Miller. Occasionally, I'll honor Judge Michael F. Salisbury with my presence in his courtroom. I live seven miles from the courthouse, share an office with nobody, and would love to have my own parking space. Probably won't happen, but a guy can dream.

It was a struggle. From the time I started school at Central Penn Business School in Summerdale until I achieved my RPR status from NCRA, I struggled. Fortunately, I didn't have to do it alone. Tom Snyder, my roommate for most of my college journey, was there to share my angst. But it got easier. I'm certainly older now, more mature (kind of), and more relaxed. Every day I learn something new, usually a brief form. You can never have too many brief forms. If you've ever seen my writing, you'd notice that I clearly don't have enough.

I have learned a lot from my mentor/co-reporter, Maureen Pritchard. She is very involved with realtime and captioning, which has, over the course of the last several years, piqued my interest. We both offer realtime in our courtrooms for our judges and anyone else that is interested in seeing it. Also, when schools come to our courthouse for tours, we demonstrate realtime for the kids. They're usually more interested in what we're doing than what everybody else is saying, which I think is fantastic. We're always trying to promote the profession.

My wife has said to me on numerous occasions, "I've never met anybody that likes their job as much as you." I love my job. Period. I get overwhelmed. I get behind. I get stressed. I get exhausted. But I NEVER get tired of my job. I enjoy what I do, and I'm glad I stuck with it for all of these years. I have a great relationship with all of the judges. I have a great rapport with all of the local attorneys and court staff. I'm a people person. I have fun at work, most of the time. I wouldn't be the person that I am if it wasn't for being a court reporter for the Court of Common Pleas of Clinton County. I'd like to think that the Court of Common Pleas of Clinton County wouldn't be the same without me.

“Why Didn’t I Catch That?”: What Proofreaders Provide

Recently, I proofread a deposition transcript from an experienced court reporter. One company referred to in the deposition used two words to spell its name, and the other company used the same exact words for its name but placed them together to form one word. As usual, the reporter had already edited his work. However, this careful professional sometimes used two words for the name of the one-word company--a spelling error that made it difficult to understand which company was being discussed. His use of proofreading services circumvented that possible confusion, maintaining the professional standard for which he had long been known.

It is often assumed that minor errors—punctuation, spelling, and capitalization—don’t affect the integrity of the transcript. In certain cases, however, these kinds of errors can lead to confusion or inaccuracy about the actual facts of the case. A proofreader’s extra set of eyes can ensure not only a clean transcript but also a precise verbatim account.

Yet it is not only a second set of eyes that proofreaders supply; they also attend to a wider range of possible error. While reporters tend to edit for drops, untranslates, or misstrokes, proofreaders are more likely to catch mistakes missed by reporters homing in on these other kinds of errors.

And proofreaders do far more. They provide light research, locating the correct name or location of a company, attorney, or product. Court reporters can move more quickly to the next job by using proofreaders (who only charge between 25 and 75 cents a page) to deal with those time-consuming research tasks.

Speaking of research, did you know that Dumpster is a brand name that can be spelled with either an upper- or lower-case “D”? Which would you prefer? Proofreaders will follow a reporter’s preference, offering suggestions and alternatives.

Finally, a variety of technologies are available—from hard-copy errata sheets to scans to in-text correction—to accommodate your situation.

Proofreaders, then, provide a variety of useful—and, some say, crucial—services that can save court reporters time, money and worry.

Proofreaders Shannon Russo (shannonrusso@aol.com), retired court reporter, and Lisa Schwartz (oglisa55@yahoo.com), university English instructor, are collaborating on a unique service that provides both traditional proofreading and customized grammar tutorials.

Job Announcement

Session Stenographer: PA House of Representatives

State agency seeking experienced stenographer to take verbatim record of all words spoken during legislative proceedings. Associate in Specialized Business Degree in Court Reporting; or possession of a valid Certificate as conferred by National Court Reporters Association, or an Associate Degree in Real-time Reporting; Or ability to record proceedings at 180 w.p.m. (literary) with 95% accuracy; education equivalent to completion of the twelfth grade; And two years of progressively responsible stenographic experience; Or any equivalent combination of acceptable experience and training.

Must have considerable knowledge of procedures and methods of recording verbatim proceedings under difficult conditions (floor debate, parliamentary procedures, etc.) with speed and accuracy. Must be able to work independently and prioritize work in an environment with shifting priorities, with mandatory attendance for possible extended compensatory hours during session. Salary negotiable and includes healthcare benefits and retirement. Please send a resume detailing education and prior employment history to:

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