

**2022–2023****NCRA CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE***Due date: February 17, 2023*

Please type your responses after each question. Your completed questionnaire should be emailed to Laura Butler at [lbutler@ncra.org](mailto:lbutler@ncra.org) by **February 17, 2023**. Please include your name on each page of the questionnaire.

NCRA's Nominating Committee may use your answers within this questionnaire and information provided in your curriculum vitae to reduce the number of candidates under consideration for an interview with the committee. Please provide as much detail as possible when responding. The answers to your questionnaire are confidential and are for the Nominating Committee's eyes only. However, if there is more than one candidate for an open position, all responses pertaining to that position will be published to the NCRA website. The questionnaires will be removed immediately after the election.

Please attach a comprehensive résumé and/or CV with your questionnaire, along with three letters of reference from within or outside of the profession. Please note that Board policy states that, even though individual Board members are encouraged to submit names of highly qualified persons for consideration as possible candidates for the Board of Directors, Board members shall limit submissions to the name of the potential candidate only. As such, letters of endorsement or reference letters from Board members cannot be accepted.

**Questionnaires and supplemental information such as letters of reference received after the deadline will not be accepted. Please note that reference letters are to be sent by the candidates with their questionnaire. Reference letters may be from non-members.**

**I. SELF-ASSESSMENT**

1. What do you seek to contribute to NCRA by way of your Board service, both personally and professionally?

I feel my personal contributions to NCRA and this Board are numerous. My ability to listen to all sides and make knowledgeable and strategic decisions based upon data presented, and my strong communication skills have been a great benefit to NCRA throughout the last five years. I am easy-going and enjoy building relationships with not only the Board, but with staff, committee members, state leaders, and the entire membership. I appreciate knowing that people are comfortable with me and can come to me with an issue and know that I will listen and respect their opinions. It doesn't mean that I will agree, but we can have respectful dialogue.

Professionally I think the position of Vice President will enhance my knowledge of NCRA, as well as other committees and the work they do so that I can be a better leader in the future. I appreciate any opportunity that, when presented to me, will increase my knowledge and understanding of the association which will provide the members with a more informed leader. If you are given an opportunity to grow, you should always take it. Be a part of the greater plan. Serving on the Board of NCRA is not easy, but it's the best contribution I can give. For me, it's the best way to give back.

1. What motivated you to pursue this position? Why do you want to be on this Board?

I have been on the Board since 2018, and I have felt a change in the culture from where it was a few years ago. I believe that there's more work to do and I know I can help be a part of the positive change. When I was interviewed for a director position in 2018, I was asked my intentions to move up. At the time I said I wanted to get a feel for board service and then I would make up my mind. I have served as Secretary/Treasurer for two years and I know that now is the time to move up. I have learned so much from those who have moved up the ranks ahead of me and I value their service and the information they have shared. No matter what position I am in, I will give it 110 percent. I will work hard, be respectful to my colleagues and their ideas, and I will continue to be engaged and informed.

a. What is your understanding of the time and financial commitment of the position for which you are applying?

As a continuing Board member, I am extremely aware of the time and financial commitment that is required of all board members. I have spent countless hours on phone conferences, Zoom meetings, reading and responding to e-mails, and preparing for all board meetings and committee meetings. The longer I have been on the Board, the more time I am able to spend diving deeper into the innerworkings of the association.

The financial commitment is just that – a commitment to not only NCRA, but the various states I am an NCRA rep for. I rarely submitted bills for food and travel that I could have been reimbursed for but understand that this too is part of giving back. The money in the coffers is for the membership, and I look at every dollar as an investment in the association to further its goals. It gives me great joy to buy raffle tickets and contribute to the various state associations when I am the NCRA representative at their conventions. That was an expense that I hadn't necessarily thought about when seeking Board service, but I am happy to give back to each state as I can. I know we are not in a great position financially, but I know that I personally am doing what I can to help not only the association but the foundation.

b. How do you feel NCRA board service will be different from state service? (Governance/Implementation)

NCRA board service differs from state service in many ways. State service provides a great steppingstone to national board service, as it gives you the knowledge needed to run a meeting, correspond with others, cooperate with your board, and being respectful and listening to your entire board. National service has many more elements and legal ramifications to it, and the duties and responsibilities are bigger and carry a lot of weight with them. There are many facets to the association and the need to be aware of all of them and learn the history of them is an important responsibility.

c. Why is now the best time for you?

I am an extremely organized person and am able to manage my time between work, family, and NCRA quite well. I have an incredible support system that extends to my judge, managing reporter, court administrator, chief judge, and husband. They are all very proud and appreciate my commitment to NCRA and our profession. I have dedicated the last five years to NCRA and the four years before that to my state association, and I did that with a house full of children. My time and ability to give to NCRA is wide open and I embrace this opportunity.

2. How does NCRA Board service play a role in shaping your professional aspirations within the next five years? Ten years?

When I was a director, I was just dipping my toes into the time and responsibility needed to serve on the NCRA Board of Directors. After a couple of years as a director, and with a number of really great mentors, I felt I would be a great asset to the executive committee. Before taking my role as the Secretary-Treasurer, I invested time and resources in getting more in-depth knowledge of the role of a Secretary-Treasurer of a national association. I engaged with John Dripps to learn more about our financial situation, where our strengths and weaknesses were, and what our financial goals were. I wanted to be informed so I could hit the ground running. Both Kristin Anderson and Debbie Dibble were very helpful in answering any questions I had. My goals for the next five years will be focused on continuing the work that was started five years ago and build upon the great programs and successes we have accomplished. I am a state employee by day and an advocate for the profession by night and in my spare time. I love my job at the courthouse and work in several different types of courts, and I intend on staying in that position.

Professionally, I am where I want to be. I'm purely serving because I love this profession that has given so much to me, and I think that I'm in a position where I can help make it better. It fills my heart and soul to be able to contribute my 34+ years of knowledge and experience and pour it into serving this association. Serving alongside some of the most talented people in this profession has given me immense pride, and I am looking forward to many more years of giving back to my colleagues.

In ten years, I still see myself being extremely involved in NCRA, through committee work, networking, promoting, encouraging, and doing the work that is required to keep our association growing. I can never stop giving back to an association and profession that has given so much to me throughout my entire working career. I wish I had known in 1988 the importance of association membership. Joining NCRA was not encouraged when I was in school, and my goal is to increase our membership starting at the school level. I want them to know what I have learned and show our future members the value in contributing to our association.

3. What are your interests and activities outside of the court reporting/captioning environment? Do you see any of these interests and/or activities as an asset to NCRA?

I love the art of communicating – listening and talking, hearing everyone's story. Mike and I love to travel and meet new people, and this provides lots of opportunities for me to interact with people of various backgrounds. I find my ability to easily communicate and connect with people is beneficial in any setting. It is certainly beneficial when serving as an NCRA representative at state conventions, Boot Camp, and especially at events such as eCourts and NACM.

I also enjoy planning events and parties. This can be daunting at times, but I enjoy seeing a project through from start to finish. I have planned several conventions for my own state association. This includes everything from the location, the speakers, the food, negotiating contracts - minutia that most people despise. I am extremely organized so doing those things come easy to me. I enjoy this so much that I am currently planning the 2023 convention for the Kansas Court Reporters Association.

As a side note, I believe my high energy is partially due to my commitment to my physical health and strength. I attend a boot camp for women four to five times a week before my workday, which has been a tremendous help to me considering our work is generally sedentary. It not only helps me physically but gives me a strong heart and mind to face the challenges of the day ahead.

I never tire of learning and improving myself. Last August I signed up for the 8 to Great Coaches Class and became a certified trainer in the 8 to Great process. I also presented this at the Kentucky Court Reporters Association convention for a few of their members. This has helped me focus on things to be grateful for and having a positive attitude every day.

4. Are there any proven strategies you employ to confront challenges in your personal and/or professional life? Do you have other potential strategies on which you are working?

I am a good communicator, which is beneficial in my personal and professional life. When you have five children, you better be. I listen to all sides before making an informed decision. I know that everyone has a position for a reason. We all have a history. If a personal challenge comes my way, I think about my response, try not to be reactionary, and stay calm. I tend to give a lot of grace to everyone around me. I also try not to take things personally. I think most of our problems in life are due to a lack of communication. Communication is key. If I see a problem, or a perceived problem, I will suggest a time to talk either in person or on the phone to find solutions that benefit the greater good. I also realize that I too am human and make mistakes, but those mistakes are the building blocks for better decision-making in the future.

Learning the 8 to Great process has also assisted me in my personal and professional life. It has given me the skills needed to interact with people on a higher and more engaged level.

5. Do you have a personal or professional relationship with any existing NCRA Board member that could contribute to a positive working environment or create a potential conflict? If so, please explain.

I have a personal relationship with all the Board members, and each one is different in its own right but I also have deep respect for everyone who will step up and contribute as much as this group of professionals have. It has not always been perfect. People come to the table with differing personalities and backgrounds. There have been issues in the past and I anticipate that there will be going forward. I also firmly believe that there is not one situation that we can't move past if you are willing to communicate and have mutual respect for each other.

6. How do you use social media and how often do you use social media?

I use social media to catch up on what's going on, professionally and personally. It's a good way to keep your thumb on the pulse of events. I am extremely cautious when responding to anybody. If I see negative court reporting posts, I take them for what they are worth. If it's something that staff needs to know about, I pass that information along. The quickest way to get yourself in a bind is to instantly react and take the bait when people throw out negative information about our association or our profession on social media. I may have

opinions, political or professional, but, ultimately, I am the face of NCRA – by choice – and I would never want anything misconstrued. I actually think my social media presence has greatly diminished in the last five years. If it's not about my dog, my kids, my grandkids, or court reporting, I don't usually post. I love getting the word out about my incredible profession. It's definitely a great way to get people talking about court reporting and captioning.

a. With which social media platforms are you engaged? Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn

7. What is your familiarity with the NCRA Constitution and Bylaws?

It's a living, breathing document that forms the tenets of our association. It's what you might call the association's bible. You will find the Constitution and Bylaws and the Policies and Procedures documents on my phone. I may not have it all committed to memory, but I know where to go to find the information that I am looking for.

## II. ACHIEVEMENT IN LEADERSHIP

1. What comes to mind when you think of the ideal NCRA Officer and Director?

A person who is willing to listen and learn and ask questions and a person who wants to know why things are done the way they are. It's imperative that everyone do their homework and come to the meetings prepared. If there are questions or if they are unsure, I want them to feel comfortable reaching out to more experienced board members and inquiring. No board member should ever be made to feel that their questions are stupid, especially if they have read the board book and appropriately researched ahead of time. I would like to have someone who can think outside the box, be creative, and look for solutions.

2. What strengths would you bring (or continue to bring) to the NCRA Board?

My passion for our profession, enthusiasm, optimism, organizational skills, kindness, respect for others, and humor. I love sharing what I do with anyone who will listen. I ask questions and seek clarification. I want to know the history behind past decisions so I can make informed decisions going forward. One thing I believe is a true asset is that I am a kind and giving person. Not to be confused with being weak or a pushover, but someone who truly wants the best for everyone I encounter. We are all dealing with multiple things in our life and having empathy for someone going through a tough time builds deeper relationships and creates strong allies down the line.

3. What specific leadership skills do you possess that qualify you for the position you seek?

Knowing and accepting that you don't know everything but surrounding yourself with a variety of people who have vast knowledge and abilities is a skill that is important especially in association management work. I also participated in an intense mediator training several years ago. I believe this has provided me with a better understanding of working through issues with others. I believe this is a great skill that I bring to the table that most people haven't participated in. It's good to see all sides, talk about the issues at hand, and bring people together for the good of the association. In addition, I am optimistic, a team-builder, motivated, and work hard to build good relationships. One of my favorite things to do is network

during Boot Camp. Attendees are looking at our leadership for guidance and encouragement.

4. Indicate your most significant contributions to NCRA, your state, or other professional organizations. What led to the program or initiative being successful or unsuccessful?

My path to leadership started in 2014 with the Kansas Court Reporters Association. They had a need for a secretary, and I stepped up and took the position mid-year. I quickly went up the ladder and served as KCRA's president for two years. In 2016, after much work with Court Reporting and Captioning Week, which included attending as many career fairs as my full-time court job would allow, as well as my position as the court reporting instructor at a program that I assisted in building from the ground up, I was presented with the Distinguished Member Award for my commitment to our association and our profession.

In 2020, every aspect of our worlds changed, and we had to pivot along with the rest of society. As a Board we determined that we would not be able to have an in-person annual convention, and we decided it was imperative that we organize an online platform for CEUs for the entire scope of our membership. Debbie Dibble felt that I would be a great co-chair with her on the Stenopalooza committee. Within short order, we were able to pull this virtual seminar together, which included speakers for court reporters, captioners, CLVS and scopists. This had an incredible effect on the membership and the financial benefit was huge. Around 760 people registered for the event for a net profit of over \$43,000.

In the fall of 2020, I presented the Board with the idea of having a Zoom holiday party with staff and the Board in attendance. The year was an extremely difficult one, and we wanted the Board to have the opportunity to thank staff for all their hard work and their ability to switch gears. Yolanda Walton and I pulled it together and even sent a gift to everyone – Board and staff – to thank them for their dedication to the association. I believe that having that comradery with the staff is something we should strive for because we all work better as a team when we mutually care about the success of our association.

I have served as NCRA's secretary/treasurer for the past two years, working closely with John Dripps and the finance committee. During this time, I have kept the committee informed of upcoming meetings, where the financial documents can be found on the Teams site and sending reminder emails with the link to the monthly meetings. At the beginning of my term, considering the new members of the committee, I scheduled an introductory orientation for the entire committee as well as any interested Board members. As part of my duties and responsibilities, I assist Mr. Dripps with anything he needs, which included attending an introductory Zoom call with the lead auditor from Rogers & Company. John and I have also collaborated on financial webinar ideas specific to new reporters and financial information that would be beneficial to them, whether independent contractors or officials.

Additionally, I see value in reaching out to board members when they are ill, or there are difficulties in their lives, or it's their birthday, or to just say "Have a great day." I feel that having a relationship with the people who are diligently working with me to make our profession and association a better one is imperative. I want them to know that I am here for them, and that's easier when you have closer relationships. Oftentimes I see people just posting "me too" on social media sites, but I find that a personal email or text or call makes a bigger impact.

### III. THE FUTURE OF THE PROFESSION AND NCRA

1. In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing:

- a. the profession and why?
- b. NCRA and why?

What would you like to see NCRA do to address those challenges?

The profession of court reporting has always had its challenges. For as long as I have been a reporter, we have fought the idea that digital recording/tape recording and AI can do our job better and cheaper. This is a conversation that has been repeated and, I anticipate, will continue. We all have a duty to educate and explain to attorneys, judges and all consumers of our skill the benefit of having a certified stenographer producing your product. It's imperative that we provide the valuable information that's been gathered to our membership so they are empowered to confidently engage with consumers.

In my opinion, the greatest challenge to NCRA is the lack of participation and the apathy that comes from so many in the profession. I see many posts on social media about what NCRA isn't doing or what they are doing wrong. What I don't see are any solutions offered from the complainers. It's easy for people to sit behind a computer and throw out complaints, but the same people will refuse to offer any assistance. We have just gone through an exhaustive strategic planning process and now we have a roadmap of what the different segments of our membership need and want. This process encouraged members to provide the solutions that will best help themselves and their segment of the industry. More engagement like this will help break through the apathy that exists.

NCRA has done an incredible job getting not only more people involved but the right people. Between the STRONG committee, Brand Ambassadors, the Foundation, and the membership in general, I have seen more positive posts supporting NCRA and our profession in the last year. The key is to find the people who have a great social media presence, are positive and encouraging, and who bring out the best in our membership.

Having said that, at times it feels like we are on a slow-moving train to get things completed. I know that as an association we are liable for what happens so we have to be careful, and we only have so much staff to do the work; however, I think communicating the things we are accomplishing with the membership would help them understand that we are not just sitting back wringing our hands. I believe the Town Hall segments have been well received and the membership can see and hear what's going on within NCRA.

Of the programs or services in which NCRA is currently engaged, which do you think are most important to the profession's future? What are your suggestions for new programs, enhancing current programs, or discontinuing current programs?

I have always been so proud of the work that NCRA has done with the A – Z Program, and I believe this last year we have really moved the needle. I know it takes a village to make this specific program successful. I have personally driven hours to Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, and Kansas to deliver machines, and have facilitated drop-offs and pick-ups in Kansas for several

participants. I know how important this is because I was a facilitator and instructor for an A – Z program several years ago, and I had about 15 machines that I made sure were cleaned and in working order.

The Career Launcher is a program that has finally come to fruition, and I am excited for it to become more widespread and available to high-speed students and new professionals. I do think it's important for this program to be expanded to cover officials and the intricacies of judicial reporting. There are so many positions available in many courthouse, and courtroom procedures are different than freelance. I know many official reporters who would be willing to bring their knowledge to the table to effectuate the Career Launcher's officialship segment.

It was a long time coming, but PROLink has now replaced the resource book and it's an incredible stratagem for all segments of our profession. It's so easy when you see a post about needing a court reporter/captioner to send them straight to the NCRA website. It also encourages membership, whether they are an individual or a larger firm. It was an amazing idea and will be of great benefit when people realize what it provides to firms and reporters across the nation. I personally am not a user of PROLink, but I do encourage people to utilize this valuable resource.

The STRONG Committee has been a driving force for a lot of people. They have accumulated so much information to equip reporters with the tools they need to educate lawyers, judges, and the general public about what we do and the importance of live reporters. That being said, we have to make the information easily accessible for our members. NCRA is taking STRONG's information and getting it out to the state affiliates for their use, and it would be beneficial to all members to have the documents and information on the landing page of our website.

CRCW is a fun week that has become one of my favorite times of the year. It's our opportunity to show off what we do and hit as many career days as possible. Since working through a pandemic, I find that everyone has become creative in their approach to this week and how we can promote our profession. TikTok has been an entertaining and educational tool, as well as various Zoom events. Every year this event grows in strength and creativity.

Board and staff have done a great job of looking under every rock to see if things are working or not and see the benefits that they each provide. Staff has also done an excellent job at researching old programs and redeveloping when necessary. We cannot stay stagnant. It is not prudent to take on the "We've always done it this way" mentality. I respect the work of staff relating to searching every dollar spent every month, and how it quickly adds up. This mentality will help make us more financially secure now and in the future. The funnel approach has been a great tool used by staff to demonstrate what programs work and the cost/benefit ratio. I do believe it would be beneficial to perfect the programs that we have going before starting any new projects. I find it difficult for membership to keep up with the latest and greatest, which makes promoting things challenging.

2. What thoughts do you have, if any, on the current Board makeup and whether it adequately represents the career options that comprise NCRA membership? Are there ways that NCRA can improve upon addressing the needs of each group?

If we are talking about membership, I don't believe we have any representation from CLVS, which has been a growing segment of our membership. I recognize they are not voting members, but they bring different perspectives to the table.

I would like to see a member of NCSA be a part of the Board so you have a representative who knows what has happened at the Board table and can be a conduit for communication with the Congress. This makes sense because we ultimately may have to reassess a policy or decision we have made after NCSA brings it back up. By having that representation, we would be able to streamline some of the back and forth, which is a waste of valuable time and energy.

I have always felt that captioners must be a part of the Board. At this point I do find that captioners have a great voice at the Board table, and each one has varying backgrounds and strengths.

Court reporting schools have diminished, as well as student enrollment, so having a representative from a school on the Board is a great resource.

3. What would be your response if a member asked you if NCRA should consider opening its membership and why?

I have heard this question asked a lot, but then I hear this in my head – “You can't serve two masters.” As a person who puts together conventions, it's extremely difficult to cover all the bases when you're trying to make a lot of people happy and give them the educational programs they need to fulfill their continuing education requirements. We already have rumblings that we're not doing enough for every segment of our membership. Can you even imagine what would happen if we opened the doors even wider? Nobody would be happy. I know that we're looking for different avenues for revenue, but I don't feel this is an optimal way to accomplish our goals. I do believe that we can collaborate with other like associations but combining methods would muddy the waters and create bigger issues.

4. NCRA bought a lottery ticket and won. What would you allocate the winnings to?

Marketing – a full-time young person who understands what stenographers do and the unlimited options when it comes to employment and financial security.

Membership – someone to contact our non-renewed members and give them the personal touch and find out why they let their membership lapse, and figure out what we can do to convince them to come back to NCRA.

Recruitment – this also would fall under marketing, but I think this takes it a step further. Someone who would be diving deeper into opportunistic avenues, such as schools, counselor conventions, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, homeschool programs. This would be great places to start our recruitment efforts, and it would be influencing young people when they are thinking about what they want to do when they grow up.

Testing – We have people in schools but not graduating and becoming certified. We need to assess what we're doing and investigate why we're not being successful. Why was there an overabundance of reporters back in the '80s and now we're in a deficit? What has changed? Let's spend some money analyzing AND making changes to the way we are doing things so we can get students out the door and into the ranks.

5. There are 13 Board Core Values. The following three values have been selected for your comments and input. Please express what each means to you, its importance to Board service, and how you have put these values into play in your professional life.

- a. Transparency/Trust - We are the Board of Directors. Our membership looks to us for open and honest communication. They need to know that we are representing them. For us to adequately represent our membership, they need to see and know what we are doing and believe that we will always be doing the right thing. I have always told my kids, Be honest with me and I will stand by your side and help you get through the rough times. If you are not truthful with me, or you try to hide what's going on in your life, I cannot assist you during the rough patches. Our membership expects the same. In good times or bad, we have to be forthright and honest with what's going on, whether it's our finances or our visions for the future. Don't hide what you're doing. If you do, it's only a matter of time before the truth will come out and by then you've completely lost all trust. It's not always easy, but I know that trust leads to respect.
- b. Mutual respect - This is probably the most important and sometimes the most difficult value to have when serving on a Board. Feelings and emotions at times can get the best of people. We often hear we can agree to disagree, but at least we have listened to each other. Having no discussion at all is worse than arguing. I am a huge proponent of communicating but you first need to have spent the time building relationships.

I have deep respect for every person on our board and staff. We have all worked very hard to get where we are and for that everyone deserves mutual respect. There are many different personalities, but we all bring unique perspectives to the Board table. I believe we all have a deep passion for our profession and the desire for our association to continue to be successful. Many issues can be overcome by the simple virtue of mutual respect. We should be making our ultimate decisions based upon the good of the association and its members.

- c. Member-driven - This specific core value comes with many challenges. If you have 50 members, you have 50 people telling you what means the most to them. Balancing all of that can be a huge challenge to the Board and staff. Overall, I think people want to be heard. They want to know they have a voice. But it can't end there. If there is a consistent issue that membership is bringing up, we must act on it, and then let the membership know that we took care of the issue. There is a lot of apathy in any association, so we can't be pulled into negative holes - those only go deeper and deeper. In a world that is so computer dependent, I think it's important that we reach out personally to our membership, either to answer questions, be a listening ear, or let them know that they have been heard and we will do what we can to assist them.

The judicial system has taught me that people want their day in court. It's up to us to step outside our comfort zone and reach out and listen to, at times, hostile and angry people. Don't make promises you won't keep. Give people the time of day and ask how they see a problem or situation being solved. Sometimes the answer is "I don't know" but at least you asked. Personal interactions with people speak volumes. Being visible

and available takes little effort but it's deeply impactful to our membership.

6. What elements of the NCRA Strategic Plan do you view as most important to the profession's future? This is a three-year plan, and I know there are timelines associated with every element. I believe that when you work within your priority list, adhere to the items listed and stay focused, many of the items listed will be accomplished. When you look at the entire plan as a whole, it looks daunting. However, the three things that are mentioned throughout are: EDUCATE, ADVOCATE, AND PROMOTE stenography -- educating our end users, advocating for stenographic reporters instead of using digital recordings, and promoting all the incredible aspects of stenography.

We must hold our committees and staff accountable for their assigned responsibilities. The staff and committees are designed to implement the will of the Board and this strategic plan is the will of the Board and the stakeholder groups, so we must be successful at implementation.

How important is it to adhere to the strategic plan as created?

This specific strategic plan was created with the assistance of stakeholders from every segment of our association. Everyone had a voice during the planning process. I believe this process gave the entire association, through their specific committees, an opportunity to be part of this important process which will ultimately lead to a successful future for NCRA.

The process that was utilized to create the strategic plan goes back to one of our core values -- being member driven. We have asked for their help, their input, their goals, and we as staff and Board must make sure that we adhere to the strategic plan as it was created by our stakeholders.

7. What is your vision of the profession five years from now, and what role do you see NCRA playing in that vision?

My vision has always been to see more students progressing into and out of schools in a shorter length of time and into the work force. We've seen the number of A – Z participants rise since this program was rolled out. I am excited about the current iteration of A – Z, as we have a fantastic chair and staff to accomplish what we've been needing for a long time. The choice to put this program on the LMS has certainly simplified the process.

As a next step, I would like to see the Board and staff and the TAC committee look at the testing process that we currently have and update how and why we test the way we do. We can't keep doing the same thing and expect a different result. If it's not working, we have to make major changes. We have been and are currently at crisis mode with our schools and getting students in and out of school in a timely manner and ready to pass certification tests. If we are not aggressively working on this issue, we won't have an association in five years.

I believe it's imperative to spend more time educating students and new professionals on the benefits of becoming a member of their state and national association. There are so many benefits to association membership, and we need to encourage schools, firms, and judicial districts to support membership in our national and state associations. Without membership, there is no association.

A big part of our three-year strategic plan is promoting, advocating, and educating. It will be important in the future to give reporters the tools they need to accomplish the elements in the strategic plan. I believe we need to spend time and money marketing this profession more than ever. There are a huge number of volunteers who are attending career fairs at middle and high schools, and it is important to keep the information fresh and new so as to highlight the many aspects of reporting and the different opportunities that are available.

The Board has identified the need for diversity, inclusivity, and equity to be a big part of who we are and what we do. It's imperative that we step outside our comfort zone and work to include everyone and let every segment of society know that there are people just like them in our profession. I am excited to get more information and knowledge about this sensitive issue to help us be conscientious and careful about what we say, how we say it, and think twice about the implications of our words. I would like to see a cross-section of our membership step up and take a seat at the table to discuss how we can be more inclusive and diverse in the court reporting and captioning profession. Inclusivity and diversity is not only about color, race, gender, and sexuality. It spans farther and deeper than those surface words. I will also note that this is not a one-sided problem. One of our very own core values is mutual respect. I believe practicing that is a great starting point.

**Name/Signature:**

Cindy Isaacsen

**Date:** 2/15/23

**SUBMIT TO NCRA**

Please save and send via email to Laura Butler at [lbutler@ncra.org](mailto:lbutler@ncra.org).