

The power of a compliment



"This is a story about recognizing greatness," wrote Greg Weiland, RMR, CRR, of Chicago, Ill., on his Facebook page during Court Reporting & Captioning Week 2022, Feb. 5-12.

"I had a Zoom deposition yesterday in the comfort of my condo in the South Loop of Chicago. I had never been on the case before, didn't know any of the attorneys, and wasn't

familiar with the parties involved. After an hour on the record, I realized this was not going to be ending soon and got myself prepared to do a full seven hours on the record. As is usual, about 5:30 on a Friday night, when everybody is getting punchy, tempers flared, and after a little squabble on the record, the attorneys decided to take a break to regroup.

"While we were off the record, I was chatting with

the taking attorney, and we started talking about realtime. He started telling me about this phenomenal court reporter he had worked with in a trial five or so years ago. I asked him where; he

said Baltimore. I had pretty much already figured out who he was talking about. I asked him if his name was Doug. Or course it was. Without any prompting from me, he went on to tell me how incredible Doug's realtime was. He said Doug's realtime was so good it was 'uncanny.' They were in awe. He said he and his colleagues still talk about Doug's abilities to this day. It was probably just another trial for Doug, but his incredible talents made a huge impression, and we as an industry surely benefit.

"I just wanted to give a shout-out to my colleague Douglas J. Zweizig, [RDR, CRR, Wilmington, Del.] for representing this profession so well. For those not in the know, Doug has been the national realtime champion several times over and is the reigning realtime champion. I'm proud to call him a colleague."

What a compliment means

Zweizig and Weiland agree that they have been Facebook friends for a while and met in person during the 2019 Contests at the NCRA Conference & Expo. As the emails to coordinate this article get started, it becomes obvious that they are true friends, not just Facebook ones — a mutual admiration society. When Zweizig writes, "Greg is a super-awesome guy," Weiland replies, "Awwwww ... you're making me blush!"

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Both shared that they have been complimented before — although it's a rare occurrence. Even when your work is on display, as with captioning or realtime, it can seem that even your best efforts are seen as commonplace. So, it's always special when your hard work is remarkable enough to be remembered a few years later to someone else.

Weiland explains: "The attorney that complimented Doug had complimented me on my realtime feed, and that is what led into the conversation about a reporter he had worked with a few years back, which turned out to be Doug. It is very rare to hear an attorney compliment another reporter, and the coincidence of knowing the reporter the attorney was complimenting was even more rare."

As it became clear that the reporter the attorney remembered was his friend, Doug Zweizig, Weiland says: "I was proud to say yes, I know the reporter you are speaking of. I told the attorney that he had worked with the reigning Realtime Champion in the country. The attorney did not know we competed nationally for Speed and Realtime [Contest] titles."

"I just felt the connections and coincidences were such that I needed to share," Weiland continues. "At first, I was leery of sharing on Facebook because I know Doug to be a private person, but I decided I could deal with the consequences if Doug did not approve by taking the post down. I felt sharing this story with others might inspire somebody to work on their realtime game or maybe even compete in the national Contests."

When asked how he found out about the post, Zweizig said: "I had just awakened from a nap. (Yes, I'm at that age.) My good friend Jennifer Billstein-Miller [RMR, CRR] texted me and told me to get right on Facebook, that Greg posted about me. I was hesitant at first, but she assured me it was great news.

"It really meant the world to me that Greg took the time to post that. I even remember the case, and it was federal court in 2016. A patent

case about industrial air conditioning. Yeah, real exciting stuff!" continues Zweizig.

"I also remember I was not going to offer realtime because it looked so complicated, but my good friend Megan Soule, RMR, CRR, insisted that I offer it. Absolutely insisted. So, I did. I got an order from each side. One side, however, kept adding more connections and getting to court early so I could connect their iPads. They practi-

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cally rushed me as soon as I walked in.

"It was hard, but I spent hours prepping," says Zweizig. "People assume I don't get nervous providing realtime, but I do. However, I get into a groove after a while and enter my comfort zone."

"I was happy that Doug received the accolades he deserves. I forget how many people commented on the post, but it was obvious that Doug is well liked and respected in our industry. It made me happy and proud that I could share this story with our community," says Weiland.

On a final note, Zweizig shared: "Thanks, Greg. It really lifted my spirits at a time when I needed it!"

Sharing the compliment reinforced the importance of realtime to many in the community, and when one person shines, it reflects well on everyone. So, if you hear something positive, share it — with your local colleagues, your community online, or even share it with NCRA's Communications staff at jcrfeedback@ncra.org. We would love to keep the accolades going!