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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Local court reporter is forever thankful to her ‘steno angel’
Friend’s recommendation leads to incredible career after military service

RESTON, Va., Jan. 24, 2023 — Kimberly Xavier, RDR, CRR, CRC, CMRS, CRI, is a member of the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA), the country’s leading organization representing stenographic court reporters, captioners, and legal videographers. In celebration of the 2023 National Court Reporting & Captioning Week hosted by NCRA, Xavier, from Arlington, Texas, shared her story about how she transitioned from service in the U.S. Air Force to working as an official court reporter in Dallas.

The weeklong event, themed ‘STENO always in my heart’ brings court reporters, captioners, court reporting firms, schools, and others in the legal industry together to help highlight the many aspects that make court reporting and captioning a viable profession. Those aspects include a quicker entrance into the workforce since no four-year degree is required, good salaries, flexibility, interesting venues, and the increasing demand for more reporters and captioners to meet the growing number of employment opportunities available in the field.

The 2023 event marks the 11th year NCRA has hosted the celebration

NCRA 2023 Court Reporting & Captioning Week February 4-11

STENO ALWAYS in my heart

NCRA.org/Awareness | DiscoverSteno.org

Xavier, who holds the nationally recognized professional certifications of Registered Diplomat Reporter (RDR), Certified Realtime Reporter (CRR), Certified Realtime Captioner (CRC), Certified



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Manager of Reporting Services (CMRS), and Certified Reporting Instructor (CRI), served in the U.S. Air Force for more than six years, and was honorably discharged and separated from service as a Staff Sergeant, E-5.

“The year before I finally separated, my roommate from my very first duty station called me out of the blue. We hadn’t spoken for years. She was also contemplating separating, so we ended up chatting about potential job opportunities in the civilian world,” Xavier said.

“She casually mentioned that she might look into court reporting. I had never heard of it before she mentioned it. After that call, I grabbed the Yellow Pages and discovered there were two schools right there in Austin. My friend and I have a running joke because she remained in the Air Force and went on to retire as a Chief Master Sergeant, the top rank for enlisted personnel. I’ve always considered her to be my ‘steno angel’ because had she not said those two words, ‘court reporting,’ I don’t know that I would have ever heard the words,” she added.

Xavier began her journey into the court reporting profession learning theory in Austin but finished her education at the Brown Institute of Court Reporting in Longview, Texas. She graduated in 1994 and began freelancing immediately. She said she completed her education in 19 months, including a three-month break when she switched schools, but she noted, during that break she practiced every single day.

Today, she works on the criminal side of proceedings, adding that because there will always be crime, the work is pretty steady. Currently, she said, the court she works in is trying to manage a backlog of cases that could not be tried in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic.

“The thing I love the most about being a court reporter is that it is a unique profession that allows me to constantly improve my skills. It also offers a great variety as far as the career path I want to take. I don’t see myself ever being bored,” Xavier said. “Growing up and even while I was on active duty, I dreamed of having some type of administrative position, like secretary or assistant. That sounds so boring to me now, but something about ‘office work’ just always appealed to me. Being a court reporter, a business owner from day one, is more than I ever imagined,” she added.

As for words of encouragement to others considering a career in stenographic court reporting or captioning Xavier said set yourself up for success because both the training and the career is unlike anything you’ve ever experienced.

“You’ll find yourself accomplishing things that you never knew were even possible. If you sit and think about the importance of the services we provide, you’ll realize just how mind-blowing it is. It is humbling to know that very few people hang on long enough to master the skill of stenography. But when you do, you’ll never regret it. So set yourself up to become one of the few,” she said.



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As for the critics who claim digital recording can replace the skills and accuracy of a live stenographic court reporter when it comes to capturing the record, Xavier said this: “From my personal experience and based on my observations over the years, court reporting school is a lot like military boot camp; they break you down and build you up into the person you need to be in order to handle the job. Because of this “basic training” in court reporting school, we have literally been reprogrammed to automatically seek perfection on a level that is not required of any other profession other than maybe astronauts or some type of surgeon. A stenographic reporter is bothered by the tiniest of mistakes because our training demands that we perform in the spirit of excellence. We are the gold standard by default.”

Xavier also said that although she has explored some of other God-given gifts and discovered other talents over the years, she cannot imagine having done anything other than court reporting for nearly the last three decades.

“I came into the profession with a military mindset about life and career, so in my mind I was going to report for maybe 20 years and retire because, in my mind, 20 years is enough years to do any one thing. But that time has flown by so fast! And I feel like there’s still so much more I could accomplish, and not all of it even involves stenography; but being an accomplished reporter has certainly given me the confidence to try new things,” she said.

I’m extremely grateful for my experiences over the years because there have been countless opportunities to grow professionally and personally when I was willing to take advantage of them. I would encourage all of us to keep taking the next best step, to continue to explore and grow, and allow this profession to be the vehicle that takes you to destinations that you haven’t even dreamed of yet,” she added.

The court reporting and captioning professions offer viable career choices that do not require a four-year college degree and yet offer good salaries, flexible schedules, and interesting venues. There is currently an increasing demand for more reporters and captioners to meet the growing number of employment opportunities available nationwide and abroad. Court reporters and captioners rely on the latest in technology to use stenographic machines to capture the spoken word and translate it into written text in real time. These professionals work both in and out of the courtroom recording legal cases and depositions, providing live captioning of events, and assisting members of the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities with gaining access to information, entertainment, educational opportunities, and more.

To arrange an interview with a working court reporter or captioner, or to learn more about the lucrative and flexible court reporting or captioning professions and the many job opportunities currently available, contact pr@ncra.org.



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About NCRA

The National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) has been internationally recognized for promoting excellence among those who capture and convert the spoken word to text for more than 100 years. NCRA is committed to supporting its more than 12,000 members in achieving the highest level of professional expertise with educational opportunities and industry-recognized court reporting, educator, and videographer certification programs. NCRA impacts legislative issues and the global marketplace through its actively involved membership.

Forbes has named court reporting as one of the best career options that do not require a traditional four-year degree. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the court reporting field is expected to be one of the fastest areas of projected employment growth across all occupations. According to 247/WallSt.com, the court reporting profession ranks sixth out of 25 careers with the lowest unemployment rate, just 0.7 percent. Career information about the court reporting profession—one of the leading career options that do not require a traditional four-year degree—can be found at [NCRA DiscoverSteno.org](http://NCRA.DiscoverSteno.org).