

Why I Chose Court Reporting

By: Teresa L. Benson, RMR, CRR

Having grown up East River in Harrisburg, I chose to attend the Stenotype Institute of SD in Sioux Falls from September 1980 to April of 1982. This school no longer exists, and times have changed so much. Now one can become a court reporter through online coursework.



I stumbled upon this career by happenstance, as I began the legal secretarial course with the stenograph machine for shorthand, and after reaching the required words per minute of 120, I loved the machine so much that I decided to complete the court reporting curriculum. I've not looked back since. This profession has been one of many great experiences. Each day is unique. Each court session is unique. Each case is unique. I'm still learning and being challenged, even after 39 years!

After interviewing in Virginia and Texas, this gal's heart wanted to stay in South Dakota. I started my career as a freelance reporter in Rapid City and the surrounding Hills area; first as an employee with Wheeler Reporting and then as a self-employed independent contractor. I accepted an official position with the 7th Judicial Circuit in 2011 and plan to remain in the state system until retirement calls my name.

I've met some extraordinary folks along my journey. I've had great mentors. I try to give back to the profession by serving on our state association board and boasting the court reporting field to anyone who will lend an ear. Back in the '80s we were facing the prospect of electronic recording devices. Although they are prevalent throughout our state at this time, mainly in magistrate courtrooms, the best and most accurate record is with a live court reporter. I am blessed and humbled to be one.