

Student & Alumni News



Court Reporting Institute

Issue I; Vol. III | September 2010

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Graduate Spotlight: Jennifer Jacobs, CSR - CRID

Jennifer Jacobs' passion for court reporting began early in her life. As a 16-year-old typing 90 wpm in Keyboarding, a teacher recommended she look into court reporting. After doing a little research, she made up her mind that's what she was going to do. "I feel court reporting is made for me," said Jacobs. "The way my brain naturally works vibes perfect with everything you need to do as a court reporter."

Jacobs began attending CRID in 2007 after previously finishing theory in Oklahoma two years prior. A career opportunity in Dallas led her to move here in 2005. She took the job in Dallas and fell in love with the city. After a particularly rough patch at work, a light bulb went off and she thought, "What am I doing here? All I've ever wanted to do was be a court reporter!"

After enrolling at CRID, she began school with more fire and passion than ever. She set goals for herself and wrote them on her machine every day. Her goals were to promote into a new speed every quarter, to practice every day, and to pass a test every week. But unmet goals never got her down. She quickly realized that not meeting your goals isn't something to be disappointed about. "By setting goals, you're pushing yourself and will achieve so much more than if you hadn't set them at all," said Jacobs. "You have to set goals and truly believe that you can achieve them. You have to work like they're really going to happen. Focus on your goals with laser determination. You have to get passionate about this."

School had its challenges, though; including car troubles, personal distractions and of course, test anxiety. Test anxiety for Jacobs was a confidence issue, one she could only overcome by finally passing a test. She coped by being thorough about studying briefs, always listening and practicing to faster material and writing "in her head" all the time. "It's something I can't turn off!"

Jacobs passed the Texas CSR in May of 2009 and interned at Civil District Court before finding full-time work as a freelance court reporter. She now works for a large firm in Dallas. One of her favorite things is how technologically up-to-date her firm is in the world of court reporting.

Jacobs is also Apprentice Historian for the Dallas Court Reporters Association and recently spoke at the TCRA convention to students on what her first year of court reporting has been like.

"My first year has been an incredible roller coaster," said Jacobs. "I've learned a lot and cried a lot, but I've finally reached a point where I feel great about what I do. To know you're realizing a dream you've held onto and strived for is an amazing feeling. I love it more and more all the time. I can think of a hundred reasons why court reporting is the perfect career for me."



Have a story on a graduate, staff or instructor you would like featured? Send in your story to alumni@vatterott-college.edu.

Career Tips, Trends and Highlights

A Message from Gwen Hawkins,

Career Services Coordinator – CRID 214-350-9722 ext. 224

Let me take this time to introduce myself. My name is Gwen Hawkins, and my employment experience particularly suits my new position as your Career Services Coordinator. I have worked as a Career Services Placement Specialist with another school, and I have functioned as an HR Generalist/Recruiter & Corporate Trainer in the area of HR Career Training/Development for a major U.S. company. As a longtime Texas resident, I have been able to maintain and establish many long-term business relationships in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

I was raised in Detroit, Michigan, attended Howard University in Washington, D.C., and majored in English Literature at the University of North Texas in Denton. My English skills come in handy as I help you prepare your resumes and cover letters.

I look forward to assisting you in finding placement in the Court Reporting and Paralegal career fields, as well as while you're in school. Stop by my office or call me and let me know how I can help you. I will do my best to assist you in finding the job that is right for you.

A Message from Ryan Phillips,

Career Services Coordinator – CRIH 713-996-8300

Imagine for a moment that you were a recent graduate and diligently seeking employment in the field of your dreams. What would be some of the steps or actions you would tackle to have an effective and productive job search?

Well let's explore a few characteristics that have proven to be valuable information for you to have as a job seeker.

Marketability = Making yourself as qualified as possible.

Networking = Getting in front of as many employers as possible; networking with other professionals.

Follow Up = FOLLOW UP, FOLLOW UP, FOLLOW UP-You should be following up until you are hired!

Attitude = Motivated, Positive and Professional.

When you know what an employer in your field of interest is looking for then your job is to market yourself to them to show that you are the person they should hire.

An employer is looking for applicants with great personalities and professional demeanor as well as an excellent formal education with a degree or certification. But all these aspects would be unidentifiable unless the applicant can be perceived as having a professional appearance, is punctual and has that "can do attitude."

Those aspects will help you to be taken seriously, but to get hired you must have solid academics, consistent attendance and a professional and positive attitude. I think you get the picture now. Maintain all four of these characteristics as a job seeker because you cannot be successful in meeting an employer's expectations with just one of them.

We are proud to highlight that CRIH held its first Career Fair on August 4, 2010! What a huge SUCCESS this event was for the school, the students and the employers! Here are a few key aspects that were obtained at our Career Fair:

- * Nine high profile employers attended the Career Fair to mentor, advise and potentially hire the most qualified candidates!
- * Glenn Phillips, a senior executive, attended as a guest speaker giving necessary mentoring regarding employer's requirements, resume tips and successful ways to get a job and keep a job!

* 100+ CRIH graduates and students attended this career fair in hopes of networking and landing interviews with the employers!

* Bringing focus and awareness to the industry of what CRIH students, graduates and curriculum has to offer.

This Career Fair is the first of many more to come and was a delight for the campus to partake in! There were many employers conducting on the spot interviews as well as scheduling interviews for later dates! Thanks to all the students, staff and employers who helped make this day a true success!

My name is Ryan Phillips and I am the Career Services Coordinator for CRIH in Houston, Texas. I proudly serve our paralegals and court reporters with job placement assistance, soft skills, resume tips and mentoring/advising on networking and job search success. I have been providing job lead assistance, search techniques and qualified interviews for the graduates and students that have led to a phenomenal success of new hires! In addition, I host Career Development CSTAR both day and evening. These workshops are made available to you in order to prepare you for the interviews and you are able to participate in a practice mock interview as well as to show you how to be more effective in your job search, help you establish your networking contacts with employers in the community and also provide you assistance in creating your portfolio.

Take a moment and come by and introduce yourself to me when you can! As the Career Services Coordinator for CRIH, it is my passion to help current students and graduates excel in their career searches. I am available to assist with mock interviews, designing personalized job search strategies, reworking resumes and more. I spend a lot of time networking to build professional relationships for the students and graduates of CRIH. Not only do I make the connections for students to contact employers, I also make the connections for employers to contact students. I am at your service. Please let me know what you need and I will do my best to help you in any way possible! My goal is to assist you with achieving your success!

How Being Well Read Can Help You Become a Better Court Reporter

By Brooke Williamson – www.associatedcontent.com; Published February 22, 2007

So you've decided you want to enter the exciting world of court reporting, and join the ranks of the eccentric group of us who make our living taking down verbatim, word for word, what people say, at speeds of up to 260 words a minute.

You've enrolled in court reporting school and are studying not only machine shorthand, but also law, grammar, punctuation, transcript preparation and the like. It may feel like it's going to be a long haul, but the rewards are absolutely worth it, when you finally have become certified and are able to report depositions, trials, hearings, arbitrations, and earn excellent income doing so.

In this article I want to recommend certain things I feel every court reporting student should study on top of the school curriculum.

I know, I hear you sigh, who has the time to do that?! We all have extremely busy lives and you wonder how in the world you can fit one more thing in.

But when you enter the world of court reporting, you are considered a professional, and you'd better know your business (the business of the English language) extremely well in order to stand out and shine in your chosen field.

There is so much that can come at you when you're reporting, unexpected things such as witnesses who have only a poor grasp of the English language, who speak with an accent, or people who're extremely versed in their expertise, such as, say, pneumatic rig safety control, just to pick something out of the hat, which you probably know nothing about, and yet you are required as the reporter to not only keep up with every single word being said in this "foreign language," but also, when you're preparing the transcript, to know proper spellings and terms.

So being a reporter requires more than just general knowledge of the English language and where to insert a comma or a semicolon. The best reporters I know have a broad general knowledge of many different things, including literature, geography, history, world affairs, etc.

Above all else, the best reporters READ, and have read in a wide range of topics. In order to get a broad-based background necessary for being an informed world citizen (which is what you need to be in order to report well, in my opinion) I would suggest going to the American Library Association web site: <http://www.ala.org>, and do a search for "College Bound Reading."

There will be many suggested sites that come up with lists of books for college-bound students. These are great because if you read even only a quarter of these books, you're going to have excellent background knowledge that will help you immensely in your career (and also will enhance your life in general).

So being well-read is extremely valuable for the reporter. Besides giving you background knowledge for excellent transcript preparation, being knowledgeable enables you

to comfortably be around and converse with your client: the lawyer.

I know there's a lot of material to read and it may seem daunting. But the point is just START. Start with the classics and then keep reading, best sellers, general knowledge books on the sciences, history, etc.

Also, keep up to date on current affairs. Read "Time" or "Newsweek," paying attention to the spelling of names of people in the news.

Another thing which I recommend to the court reporting student is to get a how-to book on memory-enhancement, such as Memory Power - You Can Develop A Great Memory, and start memorizing names of things, such as the United States and their capitols, American presidents in order, the amendments to the Constitution, etc.

Why? Well, it's fun, for one thing. For another, it's something to show off to your friends. How impressive, rattling off a list of presidents and vice-presidents in order! Third, it keeps your brain sharp. Fourth, general knowledge like this is very handy to have in your brain, in my opinion.

And, fifth, knowing memory tricks may just come in handy when you have 35 lawyers in a deposition and have five minutes to memorize everybody's name before the deposition starts! Yes, it happened to me when I reported the Exxon Valdez oil spill case and there were 35 lawyers, and more some days, sprawled across a large room.

So those are my tips to court reporting students: be well read, stay current on politics and other world affairs, and develop a good memory. These, along with, of course, excellent machine shorthand skills, will help you become an excellent reporter, which will of course translate into more money in your pocket.



Student & Alumni News

Faculty Spotlight

Mrs. Glendine Lipford, CSR, CRI.

Mrs. Lipford is currently an online instructor who holds a Bachelor's degree from Howard Payne University, Brownwood, Texas; an Associate's of Applied Science degree from CRID; certification through NCRA as a Certified Reporting Instructor; and has held a license as a Certified Shorthand Reporter by the Supreme Court of Texas since 1983.

We're extremely fortunate to have Mrs. Lipford as one of our instructors and are excited to take this opportunity to showcase her contributions to our campus. Her love for the profession of court reporting and teaching is well known by CRID's faculty and staff, but more importantly by her many students. Below, in Mrs. Lipford's own words, is a short bio, along with her views on teaching and her fondness for CRID.

The Court Reporting Institute of Dallas and I have had a long relationship. I am a graduate of CRID. While in school, I taught night class to help offset my tuition. I think it was probably then that the love of teaching began. After I received my Texas CSR, I worked for Collins & Miller in Dallas until my daughter was born. I then took a short leave of absence and was asked to teach at CRID again! I started teaching on ground at CRID in 1986 and have worked for CRID on and off ever since! I took some time off to have my second child in 1990.

After my children became school age, I taught night school and home schooled during the day. After a bout with breast cancer, which included chemotherapy and radiation, I returned to day school in 2001. The CRID family was there for me all the way! I have taught all levels of speed building and court reporting procedures on ground. During this time, I also received my Certified Reporting Instructor certification from NCRA.

In December 2003, my family moved to Virginia, as my husband accepted the pastorate of a small church just south of Richmond. I have a 25 year-old daughter who graduated with a degree in German from the University of North Texas and a 20 year-old son who is a college student and member of the National Guard. I now stay busy teaching online with CRID, while also teaching a ladies Bible study and sing in our small church choir and in a community chorus called One Voice. We have sung all over Richmond and the surrounding areas.

I never thought when I first accepted a teaching position at CRID that I would have loved teaching this much! I love seeing students succeed and reaching the goals they've set for themselves! Even though it's been a while, I remember being that nervous student in Theory I class, wondering what the future would hold.

2,010 BY MEMORIAL DAY 2010

The National Court Reporters Foundation and the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) have partnered with the United States Library of Congress in an effort to protect and preserve the rich and extensive history of U.S. Veterans. Through a project sponsored by the Library of Congress, men and women who have served the United States in a time of war have committed their amazing personal histories to recording.

This past Memorial Day, the Court Reporting Institute of Dallas teamed up with the National Court Reporters Association to participate in the Veterans History Project. NCRA is proud of the work that members have done for the Veterans History Project and challenged the membership with a brand-new initiative. NCRA has submitted more than 1,900 transcriptions to the

Library of Congress, and they met their goal to make it 2,010 by Memorial Day 2010.

Every day we lose many of our aging war veterans and their incredible stories are silenced forever. The Court Reporting Institute of Dallas helped to preserve these personal oral histories by inviting over 30 veterans on May 28 to the Dallas campus for our students to record their histories. CRID staff and students in the upper speedbuilding classes volunteered to record the histories, conduct interviews and more importantly, share in the experience of witnessing history being retold by our veteran heroes.

Our thanks go out to all who participated in this very important event!