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Ohio Court Reporters Association 2026-2027 President

President's Address
Saturday, March 21, 2026

What an honor to be here today. It's been quite the journey and I'm going to share a little bit of it with you. Let's travel back in time to 1986. As a student in Bliss College's Court Reporting program, I had my first association experience when I attended a Student Seminar put on by what was then the Ohio Shorthand Reporters Association. The highlight of the seminar was a live deposition demonstration. We were in awe as we watched the "real reporter" taking down the fast Q and A and even interrupting for clarification. "Did you say 'tree lawn'?" But the most impressive thing was the number of volunteers that gave their time and shared their knowledge because they believed in those students who were the next generation of court reporters. This was "**Powering the Future.**" I walked away more excited than ever about this career I was about to embark on, and I hope today's students find this weekend just as exciting.

I started my reporting career in January of 1987, with the McGinnis & Associates agency in Columbus. As I look out today, I see several fellow reporters who were there when I started and some I met along the way. Coworkers. Mentors. Friends. Thank you for always being there for me. As a new reporter, the first thing we realize is there is so much more to learn than what we were taught in school. From students to seasoned professionals, court reporters and captioners are lifelong learners. One way we do this is by attending our yearly state association conferences. We maintain our "**Strong Minds**" by sitting in on informative sessions and also through networking with colleagues. What a great weekend to look forward to each year. It takes an entire village of volunteers (and one very hard-working Executive Director) devoting countless hours to put on a conference like this.

I want to thank those who have nudged (or pushed) me along the leadership path. I'll start with Donna Karosick, who unfortunately wasn't able to attend this year. But many years ago, Donna asked (several times) if I would be a District Director. I declined, thinking that my work/family schedule wouldn't permit me the necessary time. But it was always in the back of my mind. I guess I needed baby steps. Years later, at the point my daughter was off to college and I had begun working as an independent freelancer, I was ready to devote some of my spare time to volunteering. So when I got the message that if I would be willing to serve as a District Director, that would allow Sue Coots the opportunity to move up the Board leadership ladder (Sue, one of those reporters I met on day one of my first job), I couldn't say no. This began my time on the OCRA Board.

In the following years, OCRA provided the opportunity to attend NCRA Boot Camp, where we learned leadership and advocacy skills from our NCRA Board members. I joined the StenoMasters group as Joshua Edwards coached us to be more confident speakers. Even though I'm still shaking in my shoes as I speak. In 2023, I dove further into my volunteer role when I was retired from both the Realtime and Speed contests and became committee chair. I gained a real appreciation of all the behind-the-scenes work that goes into contests every year. Now I have the pleasure of witnessing the extremely talented group of professionals who compete in our contests. But "**Strong Skills**" go beyond speed and accuracy. We each will take something away from the sessions this weekend that applies to our everyday lives and strengthens us as a reporter, captioner, teacher, or student.

But let's circle back to "**Powering the Future.**" 40 years have passed since my first OCRA experience, and this same great association is still holding yearly conferences, providing resources for its members, and advocating for the human element in court reporting and captioning. Human power is what makes this happen. We always like to see our membership grow. But what I'd like to see in the coming year is our volunteer base grow as well. We need you. The profession needs you.

"What can I do?" you ask? Share your knowledge and write an article for the Buckeye Record. Attend a career day event or help with the A to Z Program. Mentor a student. Look around you this weekend and see all the pieces that come together for a conference – registrations, silent auction, contests, presenters – and offer to give an hour or two of your time next year. Join a committee and lend your talents and knowledge. Think about serving as a State Director. That's all I was going to do, just serve as my district director for a few years, yet here I am. You'll get pulled in – or, as my husband says, sucked in like a giant vacuum – but I guarantee, you will never regret time well spent contributing to keeping OCRA a strong and viable state association. Ohio has a great reputation for growing leaders, and many have gone on to serve and chair NCRA committees, serve on the NCRA or NCRF Board, and Ohio is proud to be home to many NCRA past presidents. We thank them for their leadership and being great role models and mentors.

I saved the best for last (and the part where I'm most likely to cry) but I have to thank my family here today. My mom, Pat, who has always encouraged me along the way and shown her pride in my accomplishments; my ever-supportive and very understanding husband, Tim. And speaking of **Strong Minds**, my brilliant daughter, Kelsey, and her also brilliant husband (not just because he married my daughter), Peter. Thank you for being here.

In closing, I'll simply say I look forward to serving as your OCRA president for the next year. Let's see what we can do together.