

Distinguished Service Award 2014

Tambria Kelley

Today we honor an individual who has given so unselfishly for so many years to our court reporting profession. I am here today to present CCRA's Distinguished Service Award; but before I do that, I want to start by emphasizing that the Distinguished Service Award is the most prestigious award for which a CCRA member in good standing can be recognized.

The purpose of the CCRA Award for Distinguished Service to the profession is to recognize **exemplary service** given for the benefit of the reporting profession. A recipient of this award shall, among other things, "be involved in the reporting profession on an extensive level, during which involvement the candidate shall have rendered distinguished service to the profession which has contributed to its good reputation, general welfare, or worthy accomplishments. A DSA recipient also adheres to the Code of Ethics and serves as a role model in the reporting profession.

This year's Distinguished Service Award recipient has always displayed a high degree of integrity, responsibility, and ambition; but, more importantly, it is the passion toward the advancement of, not only the profession, but the reporters within it, that distinguish this person from others. The letters of recommendation spoke of this person as genuine and sincere, "a woman of integrity."

Despite obstacles and challenges that may come her way, her positive attitude and enthusiasm are unflinching. She exemplifies professional excellence while always maintaining a sense of humility. In fact, one person stated that, wherever she goes, she leaves a trail of good behind her and provides a light of inspiration for whatever may lie ahead. 😊

Our recipient started at Mile High Reporting College in 1979 at the age of 17 and graduated in 14 months. After graduation, she got her feet wet in traffic court, before moving back to Kansas. There, she started her family and dedicated her life to them for the next seven years. While she wasn't reporting during that time, she continued to contribute to the profession by note reading and proofreading for reporters.

Several years later, a woman who was considered her mentor, encouraged her to get back into reporting. She loaned her a machine and some tapes to practice to. However, after note reading for so many years, she wasn't sure she remembered her own theory. So she broke out her old theory books and started going through the lessons. She practiced diligently, passed the Kansas CSR in three months, and worked as an official in the Kansas Tenth Judicial District from 1986 to 1989.

Then, fortunately for Colorado, in 1990, Tammy Kelley returned and was hired as an official in Fort Collins, where she worked for Judge Newton, who greatly respected her abilities. She provided realtime to Judge Newton and his courtroom before it was the rage to do so. Tammy has never been afraid to take on a challenge. She recognized the value of realtime when realtime technology was fairly new to the court reporting profession, and she embraced it early on. In fact, she was the champion of Colorado's first realtime contest administered by CCRA. She also served as the District Rep for the 8th Judicial District, which where Tammy and my paths first crossed.

While I was acting president of CCRA, the appellate transcript backlog was a huge concern. Tammy chaired our Court of Appeals (COA) Transcript Backlog Committee where she worked diligently to reduce the number of outstanding appellate transcripts. Transcript timeliness, without compromising accuracy, is and has been of great importance to Tammy. Monitoring the extremely busy court reporters throughout our state with their backlogs was, at times, a daunting task; but Tammy, like on so many other occasions, managed to be the voice of reason in an unreasonable world. The clerk of the Court of Appeals at that time, Patrick Stanford, many times expressed to me his appreciation for her work and for her outstanding leadership abilities.

Tammy was also one of our visionaries for the utilization of managing court reporters within our judicial branch. In 1997, she authored the "Managing Court Reporter Position, A Team Approach," and presented this to our judiciary and our administration as a means to effectively and efficiently utilize the work of a court reporter within our judicial branch. This was very well received by Chief Justice Vollack, Appellate Chief Judge Sternberg, and Appellate Judge Plank and has proven over the years to be, not only an effective method, but also a cost-effective approach. It allowed the cooperation among reporters to more fairly distribute the work load, reducing transcript delays, alleviating the work of court

administrators in the management of court reporters, and drastically reducing the expense of substitute court reporters for courtroom coverage.

During this time in 1997-98 she also was serving as director on the CCRA board. At that time, due to some unforeseen circumstances, CCRA found itself without upcoming officers at the top of the CCRA ladder. As I said before, Tammy has always displayed a high degree of integrity, responsibility, and ambition. It is those traits that allowed her to, in a short time, very capably and competently move into the vice president's position in 1998-99. She served as vice president for, at the time, our three-person presidency, consisting of Julie Matt, Mary George, & Jason Meadors. Jason said, "She did an awesome job. I can't think of a nicer, more hard-working, caring person." In 2000, she reached the top of the CCRA ladder and very capably took on the role of president. Throughout the years, Tammy has also chaired and been a member of various other committees, including the officials, membership, nominating, seminar, CART/Captioning, and, most recently, the page-rate committee.

Now, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the portion of Tammy's career, which in her own words "has been the most challenging, but the most rewarding." In 1999 Tammy decided it was time to venture out and start her own business. Stoneberger Professional Reporting was born. She provided CART services for students at CSU and did some deposition work as well.

She provided CART, specifically, for a veterinary student; and this is a quote taken from the student, Chandra Werner, in an interview that's on the NCRA Web site: "Some CART providers and I stay very professional, but usually because services are few and far between. My relationship with my steady/primary provider is likely equivalent to a couple of marines in a foxhole. The Veterinary Medicine program has been so intense with emotions due to the nature of the program itself. Sometimes the days are so long. Then there are patients that sometimes get better, sometimes suffer greatly, and sometimes go to heaven. And there is also the diversity of clients, professors, residents and interns who are running on empty. My CART provider is stuck to me like white on rice; we can't help but go through the same joys and sorrows together. When I've made my share of mistakes, Tammy has provided a very comfortable shoulder to cry on. Hopefully she can find the same comfort from me."

During this challenging period, Tammy also attended CSU and graduated Magna Cum Laude, receiving a Bachelor of Arts. She majored in history and minored in English; and while there, received an “Award of Excellence” from CSU’s College of Liberal Arts. In addition, she worked for Jackson County Social Services, working with and tutoring at-risk teens in all subjects.

Today, Tammy works as managing court reporter for the 2d Judicial District in Denver. Her District Administrator, Kelly Boe, said, “I think the world of Tammy. She is sincerely an incredibly nice person. She is kind and fair. She cares so much about the reporters and the profession. She has been instrumental in making sure that the Chief Justice CJD regarding reporters is fair to the reporters. We are so very lucky to have her in Denver.”

Just recently, Tammy took on the responsibility of hiring a brand-new graduate from court reporting school and taking her under her wing in district court. Tammy came to the realization that many reporters will soon be retiring and wanted to ensure a plan was in place to prepare and train new reporters to fill that demand in the profession.

In the past, there was traffic court and county court for new reporters to “get their feet wet” and gain experience. That’s just not an option anymore. Tammy has created a training/mentoring program for her new reporter, and it has been very successful. Wendy Lind stated, “I cannot begin to express the appreciation I have for everything Tammy has done for me. She didn’t make this decision to hire me arbitrarily. She put a lot of time and thought into it. She made sure the reporters in the district were supportive, because it’s definitely a team effort. I have lots of questions, and it’s a learning experience every day. She is incredibly encouraging and supportive and never fails to tell me what a great job I’m doing and how proud of me she is. She has set the course of my court reporting career to be a successful and rewarding one.”

Congratulations to our 2014 Distinguished Service Award recipient, Tammy Kelley!!!