

# CCRA'S 2005 Distinguished Service Award

by Sylvia E. Noneff, RPR

The 2005 DSA Committee was composed of myself, Susan Becker and Lisa Knight, and I am pleased to report that this year's recipient won by unanimous vote!

To quote one of our committee guidelines, "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." That is a perfect one-sentence biography of this year's recipient, Barb Birger.

Barb is a native Coloradan. She grew up in Denver and graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School in December of her senior year, a half a year early, setting the trend for the high level of achievement that she would accomplish over the next three decades. While in high school, Barb decided that she wanted to become a court reporter. She may have gotten the idea from her mother, who also once attended court reporting school, but quit after finding out that she was "allergic to that darn machine," a condition I'm sure many of us are familiar with!

Barb attended Mile Hi College immediately after high school, graduating in about a year and a half, at the tender age of 19. She worked at Walgreens while she was in school. She started out her reporting career as an official reporter for several years in Grand Junction, working in Judge Buss's courtroom.

She then married, moved to New Mexico and then California in the late 1970s, and her son Matt was born in 1980. Then, as a new divorcee and single mom, Barb moved back to Denver in 1981 and began working as a freelancer for Ken Avery, where she worked for many years. Several years ago she moved to Hunter & Geist, where she is currently employed as a freelance reporter. Barb and Gary were married in the early '90s. Gary is a firefighter for Aurora.

One of the considerations for the DSA is service on the CCRA Board. Barb has actually served twice. She first served in the early '90s as a director for several years, but family commitments and work obligations precluded her from continuing on as an officer. She then came back as a director in 1999, but said at the very outset that she wasn't sure she wanted to go all the way through the presidency because she hated speaking in public. Fortunately for us all, she stuck with it and served as an officer of CCRA in the positions of Vice President, President, and Past President. And, of course, she turned out to be a very eloquent public speaker!

Another consideration for the DSA is service to CCRA. There simply isn't enough time today to tell you everything Barb has done for our association. She has been a constant presence at CCRA functions for more than past two decades. She has served, either as chairman or as a member, on just about every CCRA committee there is, including Students, Freelance, NCRA Testing, Fall Seminar, Spring Symposium, Fundraising and Legislative. Barb also served as the Assistant Chief Examiner for the NCRA testing for the past two years, which is a huge job that she did superbly well. Of course, she has helped with grading, registration and transcription proctoring for the NCRA testing for many, many years and is a constant fixture at every seminar, helping out wherever she is needed.

And the final consideration for the DSA is positively promoting our profession. Barb does that every day through her professionalism, skill and true love of reporting. She was one of the brave souls that started out realtimming when the technology first made that possible. She has taught student seminars and has spoken many times at the court reporting schools. Barb has also contributed many articles to our publication, Ramblings. In keeping with her desire to stay current on everything to do with our profession, Barb has attended NCRA seminars for many years, serving several times as the Colorado NCSA delegate.

We were very fortunate to have Barb serving as President of CCRA when she did. That was during the time all official jobs in Colorado were threatened to be replaced with digital recording. I have no doubt that her tireless efforts during her presidency and past presidency in meeting with the Joint Budget Committee, our lobbyist Betsy Clark, and the State Court Administrator's Office helped to save many officials' jobs.

To quote from a nomination received for Barb, "We all are aware of her dedication to our association when she served as



Barb Birger

President. Barb committed herself to saving the jobs of court reporters throughout our state. She put in countless hours fighting for our association and its members. It was a tough job, and I admire Barb for her strength and stamina to continue the battle when situations arose that were not in our favor. She was a true leader, and she is a strong woman."

Barb's brother Raymond, from Conifer, and sister Rochelle, from Dallas, along with her nieces and nephews, extend their warmest congratulations to their special sister and aunt. When I spoke with her delightful parents, Norman & Alice Paradis, they said, "We've always been so proud of Barb." Her son Matt said, "Yeah, my Mom's great." And her husband Gary said, "So, do I have to dress up on Saturday?" It's not hard to figure out how Barb turned out to be such a terrific person with a family like hers!

On behalf of the Colorado Court Reporters Association, it is my great honor and privilege to present the 2005 Distinguished Service Award to Barb Birger.

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## May 7, 2005 NCRA TESTING

### by Sylvia E. Noneff, RPR, Colorado Chief Examiner

The following is a breakdown of candidates for the various tests:

Skills Tests:	Written Knowledge Tests:
Certified Realtime Reporter: 12	Certified Broadcast Captioner: 4
Registered Merit Reporter: 4	Certified Legal Video Specialist: 2
Registered Professional Reporter: 43	Registered Professional Reporter: 14
Certified Broadcast Captioner: 2	Registered Diplomate Reporter: 2

As usual, the Written Knowledge Test was at 8:00 a.m. for all test categories. Many thanks to Cheryl Cooksey for administering the WKT!

I changed the order of the skills tests around a little bit, and I thought it worked out very well. First we had a group of RPR skills candidates, followed by the RMR candidates, and then the second round of RPR candidates. Last, the two realtime groups (CRR/CBC/CCP) were timed so that candidates could register and go immediately to the skills testing room to set up and practice, take their skills test, and then pack up and leave in time for the second group to set up to practice. This saved a lot of machine juggling up and down the halls, and I think it helped reduce stress (a little!) for the candidates.

I had to laugh at the candidates in one of the realtime tests, though. They gave me way too much credit for what I can accomplish. There was a huge clap of thunder right before their test, and immediately the eyes of every person in the room stared at me with a you're-going-to-control-that-during-the-test-aren't-you look. Luckily Mother Nature was cooperative, and the next clap of thunder was just about 30 seconds after the end of the skills test. Whew! But I was sweating it out for the entire test, because I just knew I'd be held personally responsible for a thunder interruption!

NCRA had a new policy affecting the RPR and RMR this year: Skills candidates may now have their laptops in the testing room with them and may realtime the tests, even though it is not required. The reason for the change is because some new writers are not only paperless, but they also have no memory storage, and those folks must be able to save their test to their laptops. We did have a few candidates bring their laptops in with them for the skills test, but the vast majority did not.

Finding enough volunteers to help with the testing on Mother's Day weekend was a challenge this year, and I thank you all so much! As always, thanks to our DACR facility coordinator, Sherri Becker, and thanks especially for the practice tapes you made up for us! And double thanks to Kathy Davis and Theresa Coffman for their double-duty roles as registrar/transcription proctor (Theresa) and registrar/grader (Kathy.) Our other two transcription proctors were CCRA President Anne Hansen and CCRA Webmaster Jeniffer Aloysius. A special thank you to our two student volunteers, Hollis Fasbender and Meg Wamsley, for acting as equipment monitors! And a HUGE thank you to Chief Grader Jane Pace and her fellow graders: Tom LaFera, Penny Leroue, Michelle Goodbee, Kate McNamara, Joyce Martin, Carol Bazzanella, Gina Meyer, Carolyn Mace and Shannon Henley. Without you, this day would not be possible.