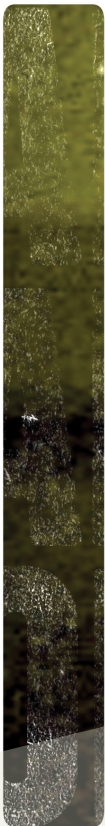


AN RPR'S APPRECIATION OF THE CLVS

BY JASON MEADORS



In 1979, under the leadership of President Sandra McFate and just four years after the modern RPR was introduced, our Association — then known as the National Shorthand Reporters Association (NSRA) — conducted a seminar for the National Judicial College in Reno, Nev., on an emerging technology in a growing environment: Videotaped depositions. That opened the door to the establishment of our Certified Legal Video Specialist (CLVS) designation, which continues to this day.

It's difficult to overemphasize the vision and forward-thinking that President McFate and the Board of Directors demonstrated at that time, along with the membership who then voted to change the Bylaws to allow this new certification and membership status. A technology was emerging that presented an alternative method of record making. Rather than step back and strategize a market battle, NSRA adopted and incorporated that technology, bringing this potential competition in-house and en-

suring that the practitioners could achieve professional levels of training and certification. Now, rather than seeing competing methods, depositions with both reporter and videographer are *de rigueur* in many venues.

I began my own interaction with CLVS practitioners in the mid- to late-1980s. I had the good fortune to work with Gary Blando, a firm owner, accomplished stenographer, and pioneer in the CLVS program. In the years to come, like almost every other freelancer, I would work with a wide variety of videographers.

Like reporters, like lawyers, like anyone, not every videographer has been a joy to work with. But one thing I did notice through that mass of experience was that those with the CLVS certification consistently — not always, but consistently — performed at a higher level of ethics and expertise than those who did not. And they certainly, on the whole, worked with elevated collegiality and cooperation with the

reporter.

In parallel with steno machines, laptops, and software, video technology has evolved. The huge, heavy cameras that recorded to a magnetic strip, featuring a curved brace for the device to rest on a shoulder, are long gone, replaced by smaller and truly portable units with internal computers that provide higher quality and clarity over their progenitors by a factor of multiples. Lighting sets, once essential to capture a usable image, have largely been replaced by camera sensors and chips that automatically display an illuminated witness (in terms of light, anyway).

What technology has done,

whether in reporting or videography, is to make the practitioner more productive and value-added. But it has also made our world more complex and costly. In my own lifetime, we have gone from a scenario of a \$125 steno machine and typewriter, able to work as a reporter, to an expensive and comprehensive machine, software, laptop, and tablets. Costly, yes. But we are also able to live-caption events for an audience from one to millions and to provide the realtime text of proceedings to others in the room or, indeed, around the world. These are capabilities undreamed of when I started my reporting career.

The same is true in the CLVS world.

Yes, video technology produces marvelous results, but the added capabilities, both in-person and remote, present a daunting array of expertise and budget challenges to the practitioner. (An excellent CLVS with whom I worked quit videography when video technology went digital, complaining that he could no longer afford the practice.)

The CLVS Council of NCRA, in assembling the elements needed for proper certification, works hard to maintain the knowledge and practices that are needed to work in concert with the reporter and provide superior service to our consumers. Unlike their reporting colleagues' in-home



and on-demand testing opportunities, those striving for CLVS certification must travel to a testing site at a given time. The efforts that one undergoes to achieve certification is a testament to their professional dedication.

To this day, when arriving at a video deposition, my appreciation for the videographer's presence at a deposition is cemented when I know that they have achieved the CLVS. It is a simple, basic assurance that my teammate in preserving the record possesses the skills, knowledge, and attitude to deliver the most appropriate environment and product for our mutual clients.

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