



IL

CRA

SPRING

2024

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ad infinitum

ILLINOIS
COURT
REPORTERS
ASSOCIATION

*"Her absence
is like the sky,
spread over
everything."*

C.S. Lewis



Bernice E. Radavich | 1953 - 2023

CSR, RDR, CRR, CRC, CPE

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What ILCRA Does for Illinois Reporters

- **Works** to maintain your right to be certified.
- **Monitors, promotes, and lobbies** to pass legislation favorable to the interest of court reporters, captioners and CART providers.
- **Monitors** legislation affecting our professions on a statewide and national basis through both our Legislative Committee and our lobbyist.
- **Sponsors** an annual conference and one-day seminars including continuing education and the latest in reporting technology.
- **Publishes** *Ad Infinitum*, a quarterly online newsletter containing the newest up-to-the-minute reporting developments throughout the state, highlights of board meetings, advertisements of vendors and agency owners, and names and telephone numbers of ILCRA officers.
- **Serves** as an affiliated state unit of the [National Court Reporters Association](#).
- **Offers** members significantly reduced rates for the conventions and seminars.
- **Awards** Student Scholarships, a Distinguished Service Award, an Award of Excellence for an Outstanding Educator, and conducts [speed contests](#) each year.
- **Provides** resources on the ILCRA website, including the CSR Act, Court Reporters' Act, Rules and Regulations of the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, Transcript Act, and ILCRA Bylaws. It also includes officers' names and contact information as well as Committees and Committee Members. ILCRA Member Information is included on the website under "Find a Reporter."
- **Offers** an Online Student Mentor Program.
- **Promotes** student recruitment.
- **Organizes** letter-writing campaigns on issues affecting our professions.
- **Sends** representative members to legislative boot camps, leadership conferences, and the national convention for training and education.
- **Provides** reporters for demonstrations on request and attends career days throughout the state.
- **Provides** free CART brochures to its members.
- **Provides** a court reporters network through Constant Contact which allows ILCRA to immediately be in touch with members via email.
- **Serves** the membership with the phone number 703-729-4861 and a [website](#).
- **Provides** an association management company to assist members.

ILCRA MISSION STATEMENT

To maintain standards of excellence in verbatim shorthand reporting, to provide continuing educational opportunities and advocate technological advancements, and to promote a spirit of mutual assistance between the profession of verbatim shorthand reporting and its consumers.



President's Message

Bernie's Ad Infinitum Tribute Issue

■ If you never had the chance to meet Bernice E. Radavich, I am confident your experience would have been similar to my experience when I met her. I can't remember exactly when I met Bernie for the first time, but what I do remember about meeting her was the way I felt. Call it a familiar soul; call it a warm heart. Meeting her was like getting a warm hug from an old friend.

When we learned of Bernie's sudden passing, Immediate Past President Georgia Northway suggested we do a tribute issue of Ad Infinitum for Bernie, and the idea instantly felt right. We all felt this would be a great way to honor Bernie and her legacy in the steno community. ILCRA sent out some email alerts asking members to submit memories with Bernie and pictures if they had any, and I contacted some friends across the country who knew Bernie and asked them to put down a few words about her. The result of that is this issue of Ad Infinitum.

As I was reading through some of the responses that were sent in, it was clear to me that my experience in meeting Bernie was not uncommon. Everyone felt that warm hug from an old friend just like I did. As you read through this issue, you will feel that hug. You will gain an understanding of what she meant to the court reporting, captioning, and CART communities and how her colleagues respected her and loved her and how deep the impact of her loss is.

My heart breaks for Bernie's family - John, Becky, and Tim. Their loss is immeasurable. On behalf of ILCRA and all stenographers in the State of Illinois and across this country, I want to thank them for sharing a piece of Bernie with us. I could not even describe the impact she has had in our state through her service on the ILCRA board, the CSR board, and mentoring new reporters, and I could never describe the value that service has been to ILCRA members. I can assure John, Becky, and Tim that their beloved Bernie will never be forgotten by any of us.

We miss her terribly.

Rest in peace, Sweet Bernie.

Greg S. Weiland

Bernie is Honored by Friends and Colleagues



■ On December 8, 2023, through the contributions of reporter colleagues and friends across the country, The National Court Reporters Foundation announced their latest NCRF Angel in memoriam, Bernice (Bernie) Kramer Radavich RIP. Bernie was a member of the 100-day practice page and a longtime NCRA Speed and Realtime Contest participant, and her contributions to the field of stenography through advocacy and mentorship are immeasurable.

Thank you to all that contributed to Bernie's Angel campaign. Bernie will be missed by many in our field. RIP and Godspeed, Bernie.

Memories of Bernie

■ I was 21 when I began my court reporting career at Wolfe, Rosenberg in the early '80s, and I was beyond fortunate to have Bernie as my trainer there. She was patient, fun to talk with, always cheerful, and so very knowledgeable in all aspects of producing a high-quality transcript. No matter how many mistakes of mine she would pick up, she would always be complimentary and encouraging. Other than being Facebook friends, we didn't really keep in touch, but I would see her at conventions, and she would always greet me with that big, warm smile and a hug, and we would marvel at how fast the years are going by. There weren't near enough of them where she was concerned, and I will miss her dearly.

Chris MacIntyre



2017 NCRA Speed Contest



2014 NCRA Convention in San Francisco

■ I didn't know Bernie well, but I would like to share that she was such a nice person and an outstanding reporter and competitor. I was blessed to have known her, even if not very well.

Thanks so much!

Ronald L. Cook
CCR, CSR, RDR, CRR, CCRR, CRC

■ When I first received the news of Bernie's untimely passing, my first thought was, "I won't be seeing Bernie in Louisville"?!!

Gobsmacked and heartbroken.

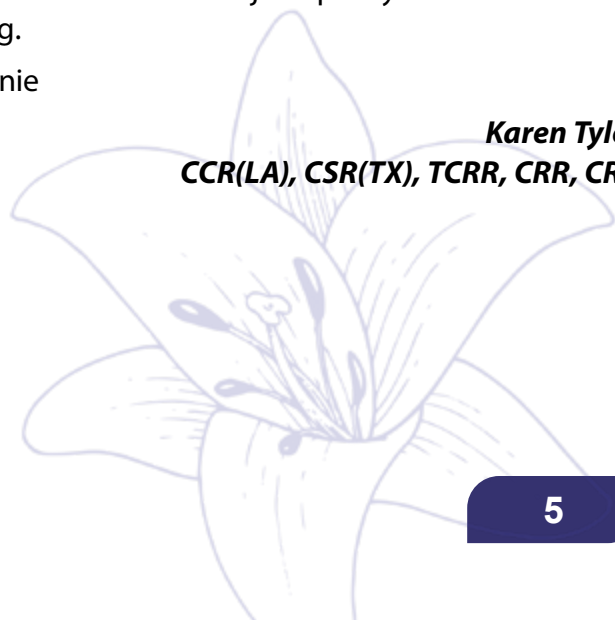
We would always talk about her children. The love and pride she had for them simply glowed from Bernie as she talked.

Her family was so important to her.

Bernice was so important to our court reporting family. She had such a talent. She just quietly went about being amazing.

#forBernie

Karen Tyler
CCR(LA), CSR(TX), TCRR, CRR, CRC





My Dear Friend Bernice “Bernie” Radavich, the “Quiet Giant”

By LeAnn M. Hibler, IL CSR; NCRA RMR, CRR

■ It's tough for me to sit down and pen something about a friend and colleague that was someone whom I've always loved seeing. Bernie and I are both from the Chicago area and we met back in the 2000s while working for Caption First. Once we met, we started seeing each other at conventions for both the Illinois Court Reporters Association (ILCRA) and the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA), as well as Caption First Christmas parties. Such a wonderful person.

When I was asked to put some thoughts together about my friend, I realized that she really was a “quiet giant” in our stenography industry. She gave her time to our

industry under the radar. She came onto the ILCRA Executive Board as Education Liaison while I was on the Board in the 2000s, and that was just a perfect fit. Here is this unassuming professional, always with a smile on her face, ready to share her love of the profession with court reporting students. She also handled the ILCRA Student Scholarship program with grace.

All the while, my dear friend was taking the steno speed competition by storm! Whether on the State or National level, Bernie would compete against, and often beat, some of the best in our profession. Just an amazing writer. And, yet, you would never know it. She just went about her business.

I was lucky enough over the years to get to know Bernie's family, husband John and children Becky and Tim. What an incredibly close family. And I am so grateful that I was involved with gathering Bernie's family together behind the scenes this past year in September of 2023 when ILCRA bestowed upon Bernie

Bernie Radavich Tribute

By Melanie Humphrey-Sonntag

the Distinguished Service award. Bernie so deserved it, my dear friend the “quiet giant” in our industry.

One thing I knew positively about Bernie is that she LOVED fireworks! Actually, the last time I saw her which was at the Oak Brook hotel, as I left the ILCRA convention there were fireworks randomly going off in the distance. I chuckled and wondered if Bernie had gotten a glimpse of them. And so tonight, New Year’s Eve 2023, I will once again watch fireworks and think of my dear friend, Bernice Radavich.

Rest in peace.



Bernie with LeAnn Hibler – 2023 ILCRA Convention

■ I don’t like this world without Bernie. Just the other day I heard “republic,” an outline she’d helped me refine, and I smiled as it tranned perfectly and thought “I’ll have to text Bernie to tell her” – and I stopped in mid-thought. I’m afraid my texts won’t reach her in heaven – though I DO believe she’s still watching over us, and I probably DID receive a little of her divine guidance to remember that outline.

I met Bernie shortly after I moved to Illinois in 1998 and got to know her better after her first NCRA speed contest in 2004. Consistently kind and supremely talented, it’s been a joy to be in her company over these years, whether proctoring RPR exams, enjoying Christmas lights at the Morton Arboretum, perfecting theory principles in our 100 Day Practice Group, or testing our mettle at ILCRA and NCRA contests. Always preferring a background role, she was steady-eddie when anyone needed a hand.

When Bonni Shuttleworth retired as ILCRA’s education liaison, she left very tall stilettos to fill. Bernie ably stepped up and operated at the helm of awarding student assistance and scholarships for several years. Her addition to the ILCRA board in that role added many years of experience, calm presence, tutelage, and immense knowledge. I was SO pleased she received ILCRA’s Distinguished Service Award this year with her loving family in attendance. (Thank you, LeAnn Hibler, for the wonderful video!)

One of my favorite chapters of sharing with Bernie was after Michelle Grimes, RPR, passed away in 2017. Michelle’s family donated her machines, books, and other equipment to ILCRA, and Bernie, LeAnn, and I helped coordinate their rehoming process, to the delight of several students in attendance. Thank you again to Stenograph and Todd Schludt for refurbishing her Diamante.



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ILCRA Speed Contest 2018

Many others have written about Bernie's years of guiding and mentoring new reporters as they entered our ranks – I didn't even KNOW about that, though I knew she was very devoted to her Wolfe & Rosenberg heritage, longtime connections, and friendships. I was thrilled that Muriel Wolfe and Fred Rosenberg watched her receive the DSA in September. In true background, toe-shuffling, no-spotlight Bernie fashion, she never mentioned the many reporters she'd trained and been a valuable resource for over the years.

I keep smiling as I read tribute after tribute on Facebook through moist eyes: "I'm the reporter I am today because of Bernie. Bernie was one of a kind. What an inspiration she was to court reporters everywhere. She touched positively every person she came upon. Our entire profession mourns the loss. There aren't enough words to tell you what a difference she made in people's lives. She was an amazing mentor, friend, mother, and wife. I was blessed with having been her friend. She was so good at training, so wonderful to talk to, and she was so very special to me. She was the best, one of the great

ones! She was a stellar court reporter but she was also just the kindest woman. She not only was a rock star in our field but a beautiful person, inside and out.

She was kind and sweet and loved by all of us. There will be long-term effects from all who knew her. What an honor to have known her. She was a "bright star" to our contest and practice group. She was a superstar back then and continued to be an advocate for our profession. I feel lucky to have spent time with her. I'll always remember that wild and crazy 22-year-old who taught me love and kindness and forgiveness. She was very vital to my success in graduating and getting my masters. Her intelligence was tempered with a heart of gold! Bernie was a lovely lady, wonderful mother, and a very skilled court reporter who shared her wisdom over the years. She loved this profession with all her heart. She was a beautiful soul inside and out. She was the education liaison on our ILCRA board, an incredible advocate and resource for all CR students in Illinois and throughout the country. She was well loved by everyone, a great writer and advocate for our industry

but also a beautiful person with a kind and loving heart. She did so much for our profession. Just a lovely human being all around. What a devastating loss for the reporting and captioning communities. She was a beautiful soul and a wonderful friend! Bernice was a humble champion. She always had a kind word and was encouraging." Yes, she created a LOT of ripples during her short time here on earth.

I introduced Bernie to the 100 Day Practice Group shortly after I'd joined in 2016. Everyone commits to a minimum of 15 minutes of daily practice. She started then and didn't stop. Just.Didn't.Stop. She practiced, in fact, the day she passed. She wasn't feeling well, thought practice would make her feel better, then asked John to call 911. She reigns as the third-longest practitioner in the group with 2,736 consecutive days, which is 7 years 5 months 4 weeks. Impressive, indeed! What a gal and what a role model!

The COVID pandemic hit Bernie hard with the sudden shift to remote reporting from her on-site CART work. Without reliable internet service at home, she was quite adrift, considered retirement, considered a career change, considered hanging up her steno keys in general – "What's the purpose of practicing?" Her family suffered through several bouts and losses with the nasty COVID virus despite quarantining, masking, and severely curtailing most social interaction during 2020 and 2021.

John Wayne said "Courage is being scared to death but saddling up anyway." Bernie saddled up and ventured back to national competition in 2022 in Orlando despite, indeed, being scared to death. She did well! Of course, Orlando was one of her happy places, her favorite daughter works at Disney – and NCRA was in town, all great reasons to saddle up!

She DID socialize, she DID rejuvenate by being with her

peers, and she DID come back again to Houston in 2023, my last time to visit in person with her. Our contest camaraderie and conventions will have big holes for quite some time.

I don't know if Bernie quoted John Wayne as she trained up those young reporters, but I do know she lived that way. She was always so kind, so concerned for others, and always willing to lend a hand, share sage wisdom, or laugh over old war stories. I'm pretty sure saddling up when you're scared IS a trait she encouraged for them.

Rest in peace, Sweet Bernie. Though you've certainly earned your heavenly rewards, we're gonna miss you down here for years to come. You made our world a better place. <3

Melanie Humphrey-Sonntag
Cheyenne, WY

■ I first met Bernie at an ILCRA convention. I had not attended many conventions, and what stood out for me was Bernie's welcoming spirit, kindness, and warmth.

At another ILCRA convention, Bernie was getting her steps in, and I joined her. I don't remember everything we said, Bernie, but I'll never forget how you made me feel!

I send my heartfelt condolences to your family.

Thanks for all you did in our steno community. We miss you in our practice group, and we are practicing an extra 15 minutes each day to celebrate you, Bernie! Thanks for your dedication and always inspiring us!

With gratitude, love, and...steno!

Kathy Moran
January 8, 2024
Day 39/100 #forBernie
Anissa's Hour of Steno Power
60 minutes

■ There's an empty chair on the ILCRA board and at the NCRA and ILCRA contests.

Bernie and I started on the ILCRA board at the same time, and she's been a dependable board member ever since. She was a steady voice, a voice of reason, a voice of prudence, a voice of calm when it feels like all around are anxious. Her loss is keenly felt by ILCRA, and I'm still trying to comprehend that she's not here anymore.

Contests will not be the same. She practiced at least 15 minutes a day for 2,734 days, or seven and a half years. Consecutively. Through COVID. Through the losses of some of her family members. Through everything.

We'll miss her so much. I miss her so much.

I leave you with Bernie's own words as she accepted the 2023 ILCRA Distinguished Service Award: Everything I do is because I love steno. I love court reporting, and I love you all. Thank you so much.

Kathryn A. Thomas
RDR, CRC (she/they)



2017 ILCRA Grimes' Diamante giveaway



Bernie was the embodiment of kindness

■ I always appreciated her counterpoint emails when this young and sometimes inexperienced ILCRA board was thinking of moving in one direction. She never hesitated to offer insight and valuable historic knowledge that always gave me reason to pause and reconsider. And she always did it in a way that was supportive and helpful, reminding me we are all in this together, aiming towards the same goal – guarding the record.

I deeply valued her as a board member, to say the least. Honestly, I revered her. She was such a supporting pillar of all things ILCRA, all things involving student advocacy, all things steno. I know she was beyond proud of her daughter and loved her family deeply.

Bernie was quiet yet exuded warmth. She was as compassionate as she was intelligent and talented. And it feels so wrong to be describing her in the past tense, because even though she is not physically with us anymore, all of her attributes, her impact in our little court reporting world, and the way she made us feel has not been diminished. If anything, it has been enhanced and shared to a degree she is most definitely worthy of.

May we all take a piece of Bernie's kindness, warmth, bravery, and love with us as we learn to move forward without her.

Georgia B. Northway, RPR, CSR-IL, CCR-MO

■ Bernice Radavich was a bright star in the court reporting profession, though she never did things for attention or accolades. She did things in her unassuming way, a lot of them quietly behind the scenes that people never even knew about. I met Bernie at ILCRA Convention many years ago, probably 20 or so.

Years later, she was appointed to the CSR Board while I was Chairperson. She was always willing to take on any task asked of her and did it with a smile on her face. I can honestly say that I never, ever heard Bernie complain about anything. CSR Board work was sometimes frustrating, and I'm sure being education liaison for ILCRA had to be challenging and frustrating, but I never once heard her complain about any people or obstacles she faced in those positions. I need to take a page from her book. The world could use more people like Bernie.

There is a big hole in our hearts and in the association itself from this loss, but, in the words of the song, "I'm so glad we had this time together..."

Amy Richardson





■ What do you say about someone that made the world a better place to live in? I have had the honor of working with an icon in the profession and a kind soul that only cared about making her profession, and the world of others better! I worked with Bernie for over a decade as a volunteer and she always had the mindset of “how can I help”. Her role on ILCRA’s Education Committee and on the ILCRA Board made it better for students, teachers, fellow reporters and captioners. Bernie had a way of looking at an issue and giving a

logical response that helped people refocus. She loved everyone and I never heard her say a cross word about any person. The world is dimmer without her light and I for one will miss her. I know she is in heaven with her machine, practicing every day, just in case there is a competition, and she would want to be prepared just in case anyone wanted to see how fast and accurate they could be.

She will be missed. RIP my friend.

Dave Wenhold, CAE, PLC
ILCRA’s Executive Director



2012 ILCRA Convention

■ The last time I saw Bernie was at the ILCRA convention in September in Oakbrook. She was concerned about her husband, who was in the hospital. I remember how surprised she was when she won the well-deserved Distinguished Service award, but she was even more surprised when she spotted her family, including her husband, at the luncheon. I can still see the expression on her face when she saw them.

I also remember on Friday night, we stepped outside of the hotel and spotted fireworks in the distance. Bernie loved fireworks. I told her she'll have to come over to my place on the Fourth of July because I live on a high floor in a North Side high rise, and I can see fireworks from all over the northern suburbs. Unfortunately, that's never going to happen.

Miss you, Bernie!

Jo Gayle

■ I think those of us that knew Bernie can agree that when you heard even the mention of her name, a sweet, calming presence immediately came to mind.

Over the years, I had the privilege of serving with Bernie on the CSR Board. It was obvious during our service that Bernie was a strong advocate for our profession.

Even outside of our Board meetings, Bernie expressed concern regarding some issues that needed to be addressed. She was always thinking of the profession.

Bernie also loved her family so much! She was always involved with her kids, and no feat was too great to visit or be with them. Recently, I also had the privilege of meeting her family as I presented Bernie with the 2023 Distinguished Service Award. Her family eagerly took part in our secret mission to surprise Bernie with their attendance at convention to watch her receive the award. To pull off such a covert mission was stressful, but exciting. As the luncheon ceremony was about to begin, we had to wait until Bernie finally took her seat so we could sneak her family in the back door to their reserved table in the back. I will never forget the look on Bernie's face the second she saw her beloved family members there. I will also be forever grateful to be a part of such a thrilling moment for Bernie and her family.

Melissa Clagg



Bernie with Melissa Clagg

■ I remember meeting Bernie Radavich at the 2013 NCRA Nashville convention. Bernie always had a welcoming smile on her face. I remember her being on stage that year receiving a medal. That was just my second full speed and realtime contest convention. Bernie was a regular at the NCRA Speed and Realtime Contests each summer. Like clockwork, Bernie was present and competed at each speed and realtime contest every July or August since then.

Bernie joined the steno 100-day practice page on Facebook in April of 2016. Little did we know or imagine that she would go on to practice each single day without missing one day of practice from April of 2016 all the way through November 26, 2023. That's seven and a half years of dedicated practice.

Bernie was third place all time in consecutive days practiced on the practice page. She logged her 2700th day on October 24, 2023, just the third member ever to accomplish 2700 days, and her last practice post was on Sunday, November 26, 2023. I'm confident that she practiced on Monday and just never posted her practice. That is an incredible display of dedication and the will to improve your skills. She was a model practitioner and poster on the practice page.

It was a thrill to watch Bernie slowly and steadily climb to 2700 days of consecutive practice. I remember somewhere around consecutive day 2000, she had a long post explaining that she kept her streak going for Michelle Grimes, a member that we lost back in 2017 and did a memorial practice challenge, and that she never dreamed, planned, or imagined that her practice streak would get up to this many consecutive days.

We lost Bernie on Tuesday, November 28, 2023. I was devastated to learn that she had unexpectedly passed on. She will be missed by many. I had no idea that Bernie had trained so many senior reporters as I've read



Bernie with Rich Germosen

recently on Facebook posts. Bernie was the education liaison for ILCRA and touched many reporters' lives by training them and teaching them how to be a stenographer.

We're doing a 100-day practice challenge in Bernie's honor on the practice page. We have 53 practitioners practicing an extra 15 minutes per day (for Bernie), 30 minutes total and we're all using the hash tag "#forBernie" to honor her memory and legacy. We're planning a Zoom on Day 100/100 so we can all do our Day 100/100 together and celebrate Bernie's life.

I'm so very happy that I was able to meet Bernie and be able to witness her dedication to improving her steno skills for such a long time, seven and a half years.

We will all miss her presence and her love for steno. God speed, Bernie Radavich xoxo.

Rich Germosen

www.ILCRA.org

■ I had the privilege of getting to know Bernie quite well over the years. She and I were both on the ILCRA board at the same time where she advocated for students. She was very dedicated to future court reporters. Who knows how many students were encouraged by Bernie. As chairman of the Speed and Realtime Contests, I got to know Bernie even better. She signed up for the contests every year. Her dedication to practicing for these contests helped her to win the Realtime Contest more than once. I can't imagine next year's contest without Bernie in it. The court reporting profession lost their biggest cheerleader.

Rita Corson



Bernie wins the ILCRA Realtime Contest in 2019



Left to right: LeAnn Hibler, Bernie, Tina Dillon, Cathy Rajcan, Jo Gayle

■ There are few people in life we meet that truly never say a bad word about another. I can count them on less than one hand. Bernie was one of them. She not only never criticized another, but she was also a constant cheerleader. We know her mostly as cheering for our profession, but I know she cheered for her family in a big way as well. In fact, I would often admire how selflessly she put her family before everything. She would glowingly speak of her children – not in a bragging way; you could just feel the love she had for them always.

When I think of Bernie, these words come to mind: kind, compassionate, sweet, faithful, intelligent and caring. I know we have a cheerleader in heaven, and once again, Bernie, you will be there to welcome us home when the time comes. Until then, I will miss seeing your sweet smile.

Tina Dillon



Becky and Bernie

**By Brad Benjamin, CSR, RPR
Vice President, ILCRA**

■ Although I'd only recently begun working with Bernice Radavich, I was familiar with how vital she was as a mentor and liaison for court reporting students everywhere. The sad news of her passing made me recall mentors I've been fortunate to have during my time as a court reporting student and as a professional. Three individuals in particular did not just guide me through court reporting school; they got me through court reporting school. Were it not for them, I certainly would not be serving on the ILCRA Board, nor would I even be a court reporter.

PART I: Tapa-Tapa-Tapa.

In an old Simpsons episode, "Last Tap Dance in Springfield," Lisa Simpson is practicing for a big tap dance show. Her tap dance instructor offers nothing in the way of guidance but to repeat the words "tapa-tapa-tapa"; however, Lisa keeps slipping and falling down in

Mentors: Lasting Legacies

her tap shoes. When Lisa asks the instructor what she's doing wrong, the instructor answers, "Well, you're falling a lot. Maybe you should work on that." Lisa replies, "Well, no offense, but maybe I need a little more instruction than just 'tapa-tapa-tapa.'" The instructor becomes irate and exclaims, "Back when I was your age, I would've killed for tapa-tapa-tapa!"

There's a parallel here to many professional court reporters I met as a student. The professionals all had the same advice: "practice, practice, practice." When pressed for further advice, some of them replied "brief everything." Really, we just wanted to know what is the secret sauce? I knew these reporters were generous giving their time to meet with us, but I was frustrated they all had the same advice.

For the record, the secret sauce is, of course, simply practice, practice, practice and brief stuff.

What I didn't know was I needed to be taken through the process of reporting. While I was in the lower speeds, I was fortunate enough to meet a veteran reporter, Tom Manno. Like me, Tom discovered court reporting a little later in life and made it his career. I believe this helped us relate to each other more than the reporters I had previously met.

Tom worked in criminal court at 26th and California the majority of his career. After retirement, he freelanced for 18 years before officially putting his machine away in 2020, although that remains to be seen. Tom humanized court reporting by taking me through the process. I would follow him from job to job and watch as he edited jobs he'd written earlier that day. We talked through various challenges that court reporters experience daily. He was always available to meet - or even lend me some of his equipment. Court reporting had become something tangible, not insurmountable, and that was thanks to Tom Manno.

PART II: Must be one of those underground briefs.

When I talk to other court reporters about the school where I trained, most of them have one question: "Is Peg Sokalski still there?" There isn't any reporter who attended Generations College (formerly MacCormac College) over the past 30-plus years who does not know Peg. She led the court reporting program and was a great mentor to me, and I'm sure to many others.

As I slowly built speed and struggled with many readbacks, Peg would ask me how I wrote certain words or phrases. My answers were generally

far removed from the numerous and efficient options Peg gave us, but she would just smirk and mutter “must be one of those underground briefs.” Peg was patient and dedicated to all reporting students. She allowed me to audit higher speed classes to challenge myself and sat with me while we went over sample questions for the written portion of the CSR.

I do not remember a day at school when Peg was not there. She would be there when I arrived, she would be there when I left. After becoming a reporter, I returned to MacCormac to teach the high-speed classes as well as the Case Catalyst software training class. I remember wandering around the teachers’ lounge, perhaps subconsciously searching for Peg’s living quarters because I honestly was not entirely convinced that she ever went home.

PART III: Students will rise to the level of expectation.

By the time I reached 225 words per minute, I was burnt out. I had little confidence that I would last 10 days as a court reporter, much less the almost 10 years that I’ve been a working reporter. I had dedicated years to training; yet a big part of me just wanted to complete the program, get out, and find a different career. This all changed when I met Margie Kruse-Lanier.



2023 ILCRA Board

Margie, a busy reporter and agency owner, was recruited to come in and teach our high-speed class. At the end of her first day as our instructor, she looked at those of us who had remained in the program and said there was no way any of us were going to graduate or pass the CSR or become reporters simply by showing up to school two times a week for a few hours. Margie offered to meet with us extra hours, extra days, nights, weekends - whenever we were available - to practice. When we didn’t have access to the school, Margie would open her office so we could continue to practice.

Every one of us who took Margie up on her offer and dropped what we were doing whenever an opportunity arose to meet with her to practice, all graduated from court reporting school.

The day I found out I passed the CSR

Margie is the first person I told. I was meeting my family in Downtown Chicago that evening for my birthday. My wife and I got to the restaurant first and were surprised to find a bottle of wine sitting on the table. It was from Margie. When the rest of my family arrived, I held the bottle of wine up and said it was from Margie... but it wasn’t for my birthday. I was going to be a court reporter. Everyone was delighted, and we celebrated. That was the ultimate birthday present.

So here’s a toast to the Toms, Pegs, Margies, and of course the Bernices. A toast to all who have dedicated their time, imparted their wisdom, and have tirelessly worked to ensure there will be new generations of reporters, captioners, CART providers, and others to carry on this great profession. Here’s to you!

Cheers,
Brad

Remembrances of Bernice Radavich

■ 1975 was a turning point year for Wolfe, Rosenberg & Associates. We opened for business in April of 1972 with me, Seymour Wolfe and one other court reporter and were fortunate enough to have developed relationships with some of the best freelance reporters in the Chicago area. Our business was growing and our need for competent in-house reporters was evident.

Somewhere in the early part of 1975, Gordon Borschardt, the headmaster, if you will, of MacCormac College in Chicago, contacted Seymour about becoming a member of the school's newly formed court reporting program advisory group. And we did. In conjunction with the MacCormac faculty, we began working with students in the high-speed steno classes who would spend a full day each week shadowing Seymour or myself on depositions and court trials to gain real life court reporting experiences. Time permitting, we would critique that day's proceedings, which might include the student reporters preparing a short transcript that we would review and discuss the following week.

It was during this time that I had the opportunity to meet an aspiring young court reporting student by the name of Bernice Kramer. Bernie was a gem and I knew that she was going to become an outstanding court reporter. After spending several interning sessions with Bernie and determining that she had the requisite technical skills as well as an extremely positive attitude, I encouraged her to consider joining the Wolfe, Rosenberg agency when she passed the Illinois CSR examination. And she did! And, somewhere after embarking on her chosen career, Bernie met and married John Radavich and gave birth to her son, Tim, and her daughter, Becky.

As time went on, with technology progressing as we have seen over the past 40+ years, Bernie Radavich became one of the first court reporters in Chicago to


make the transition from the conventional methodology of transcript production of either typing transcripts (ugh) or dictating for transcribers (double ugh) into the world of Computer Assisted Transcription (i.e., CAT). She loved the challenge of working with the early Baron Data CAT system that WRA had acquired and would constantly come to me with ideas of what could be done to improve the software as well as the hardware.

In addition to her daily court reporting experiences, Bernie volunteered to become a trainer/mentor for students enrolled in the high-speed steno classes from Triton College, Chicago College of Commerce as well as MacCormac College, with many of those student interns joining the WRA team.

In September of 2002, I left Esquire Deposition Services and sadly lost contact with Bernice Radavich. But fate must have been looking over my shoulder when, on September 23rd of 2023, 21 years later, we crossed paths again at the ILCRA seminar/convention in Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois. Bernie was serving as the ILCRA Education Liaison and I was attending along with members of Seymour Wolfe's family to present a student scholarship in memory of Seymour who had passed away in 2019.

I walked into the seminar room and immediately went retro as the session moderator, Pam Szczecinski, was presenting technology subject matter which was way, way over my head. I had retired in 2012, but had not actively reported since January of 1993. And, while I had been very active in the development of CAT software and hardware over the years, I was clueless about Pam's subject matter. But I listened intently and grabbed a few bits of information here and there that I did understand.

So, as the session began to wind down, I turned around to survey the room and hopefully find a friendly face. And, yes, as I turned to my left, there she was, my old



friend and colleague, Bernice Radavich. She, too, was surveying the room and when our eyes locked on one another, she smiled and acknowledged me.

The seminar session ended and Bernie and I relocated ourselves to the foyer area outside of the seminar room and immediately hugged and said, “Geez, how are you?” “How many years has it been?” “How is your family?” Et cetera, et cetera like two folks who hadn’t seen or spoken to one another for over 20+ years — and the fact of the matter was, we hadn’t seen or spoken to one another for that length of time. We reminisced in that foyer area for, it must have been, 20 minutes until the time came for the luncheon/awards presentation portion of the seminar. I insisted that Bernie sit with me and Seymour Wolfe’s family. And she did.

Now, parenthetically, Rita Corson was setting up the awards that were being presented at the luncheon and asked me if I would “insist” that Bernie sit with me — and to be certain that she had her back to the rest of the room because Bernie was the recipient of the ILCRA Distinguished Service Award — but didn’t know it. And, also because her family, husband John, son Tim and daughter Becky, were secretly seated at the far end of the room out of Bernie’s view. I complied. We had a lovely lunch. Great conversation between the two of us and the Wolfe family about “the old days” and what’s happening in everyone’s lives.

Lunch was served and the program then moved to the recognition of the speed contest participants. Then the moment came when the Distinguished Service Award was to be announced. The individual reciting the accolades of the prospective recipient of the award told us about this person who had devoted her career to the perfection of her skills as a professional court reporter and now as a closed caption provider and the numerous contributions this prospective recipient had made to the

education of her fellow colleagues as well as her years of service to the Illinois Court Reporters Association.

Who was this person? And, as the speaker began to home in on who the recipient was going to be, I reached over and grasped Bernie’s hand as it was announced that “This year’s Distinguished Service Award recipient is ‘Bernice Radavich.’” Needless to say, Bernie was totally surprised. Her face beamed with the “Bernie Radavich smile” as the audience applauded her and as she came forward to accept her prize. But that was not the totality of her joy inasmuch as her friends at ILCRA had arranged, as I mentioned earlier, for Bernie’s family to be secretly seated in the back of the luncheon room — her husband, John, just recovering from a heart incident, and her daughter, Becky, who flew in from her home in Orlando, Florida, as well as her son, Tim, all standing with everyone else applauding and recognizing Bernice for her well-deserved award.

And I was so glad that I was there to celebrate that joy with Bernie and her family. After the luncheon, I spent some time with Bernie, John, Tim and Becky talking about families, talking about life and reminiscing about the good old days.

Fast forward to November 29th when I received a message from Linda Snodgrass Sabor that Bernie had passed away the day before. I could not believe it. And I still can’t.

As I’ve said in several messages over these last days, she was “The Best of the Best.” Unfortunately, I was not able to attend either her wake or the funeral due to prior vacation plans. I will remember Bernie always, not just because we worked together, but also because she was a true friend.

Respectfully,

Fred R. Rosenberg, CSR #000084-0087 (Ret)

■ We walked back from Alan Brock's piano recital, past the Lincoln Center, and stopped at Ellen's Stardust Diner with a reporting student in tow. For a moment all the worries and cares of the world disappeared. But it was like that when you were with Bernie. I will always remember that magical afternoon with Bernie, Becky and me.

John Wissenbach

■ I first met Bernie when she was covering a civil case in DuPage County. It was lunchtime and I went to take something to one of the judges on the second floor and there she sat outside the courtroom

waiting for the doors to open for the 1:30 trial. I stopped and said hello, and immediately I noticed such a warmth and friendliness of this fellow court reporter.

I dropped my document off to the judge and asked the judge and deputies if it was okay if I brought the court reporter for the afternoon case around the secure hallway so she could set up and be ready for the trial. They said of course and off I went to find my new pal.

I mentioned to Bernie if she'd like to set up early I had checked and it was okay with the judge and deputies and off we went into the secure hallway and to the courtroom. We chatted as she sat up and got

her realtime all connected and then it was time for me to get to my courtroom for my afternoon assignment.

She thanked me profusely for thinking of letting her set up early, much less asking permission and I said we're all a big family in this court reporting world and she looked at me and smiled that sweet smile and said, "Yes...we are."

Any time I would run into Bernie we would hug and smile remembering our first encounter and catch up on what's been going on lately. She was a gem. She was someone who will be missed by all of us, her court reporting family.

Linda Miller



Mary Ann Casale, Donna Urlaub, Bernie, Lucy Bock, Kathryn Thomas, Melanie Humphrey-Sonntag, Kim Cottrell

■ I had the pleasure of meeting Bernice Radavich, "Bernie," in approximately 1988/1989 while working for Wolfe, Rosenberg & Associates as a new reporter. We were required to spend time typing and dictating transcripts before we were able to learn the Baron Data computer transcription system. Those were the days that our dictionaries were housed in a disk that was the size of the wheel of an automobile.

When that time finally came, I had the pleasure of being trained by Bernie. On a daily basis, in between jobs, Bernie and I sat together at a computer terminal as she trained me on the computer. I had no idea that I was sitting there with someone who was an icon in our industry, nor any idea that she was the tremendous writer that she was. She would give me tips and tricks on how to write things. I think about that now and laugh because I'm sure my notes were horrendous at times.

The thing I remember most about Bernie was just her sweet, calm, and patient disposition. I'm sure she repeated the same thing several times, but she never displayed any frustration and addressed every question that I had as if it was the first time asking it.

I will always remember Bernie and be thankful to her for setting me on a path to success with my first introduction to working and learning the computer software, which helped me to be a better and more productive reporter. Rest in peace, Bernie. You will be missed.

Lucy Block



Bernie receives her BA

■ I certainly want to include my remembrances of Bernie. When I was Executive Director of ILCRA, she was always ready and willing to do whatever was needed to help the association. Students always held a soft spot in her heart, and she would always stop whatever conversation she was having to include a student.

Bernie was ever present in the speed contest and always a help in whatever way she could be without jeopardizing her participation as a contestant. I remember particularly that she would always answer "fine" when you asked about how she

was, but then quickly turned the conversation to how you were and what you were doing, etc. She was very clever in that way. Her faith in her God was very strong, but she never made that an issue. She always just lived it.

I will miss seeing her lovely smile at ILCRA conventions. Of course, I can't conclude without saying that the love she had for her family was amazing. I loved watching her face when she talked about them. She was so proud.

A job well done, Bernie. You have earned your rest. We love you and will miss you forever.

Nancy Davis

■ I had the pleasure of meeting Bernice just a couple short years ago at my very first ILCRA conference. I was a student applying for a scholarship, and Bernice was coordinating that effort. I will never forget how kind and supportive she was to all the students. I had the pleasure of interacting with her in that capacity the next year as well.

This year (2023), I graduated from my court reporting program shortly before the conference took place, so I was no longer eligible to apply for a scholarship. Of course, there was no way for Bernice to know that, but she took notice when she didn't receive a scholarship application from me and sent me an email encouraging me to apply. Even though we had only had the opportunity to meet a couple of times, she remembered me. It was so kind of her to reach out and invite me to apply again when she didn't see my name in the submissions.

I definitely won't forget her either. In the short time I knew her, Bernice made a solid impression on me. She was truly one of the kindest people in the court reporting profession, and we will miss her terribly.

Sara M. Sapp, RSR, CCR-WA

■ Bernie was truly a rare gem among us. I am truly grateful for the time I did get to spend sitting with her at conventions and my short stint on the ILCRA board. She truly cared about those around her. I was lucky to be at the fall convention when she was awarded the DSA and saw the delight on her face as she realized her family was there at the reception to watch her receive the honor. She is an angel among us, and for that I feel peace knowing her spirit will live on.

Stephanie Zeder Battaglia



Illinois Speed Contest Contestants at NCRA in Orlando, 2022



Facebook Tributes

■ I first met Bernie at the NCRA convention and contest group, and I've spent a few years practicing alongside her in our practice club. My favorite memory was the time we played hookey at Illinois Court Reporters Association during one of the seminars (what?!) and spent the whole hour chatting, laughing, and eating good snacks a bit before they were supposed to be served. The news of your passing really pulled the rug out from under me. Prayers for all who loved you. I know how proud your family is of you. Thank you for being my friend, Bernice.

Amy Doman

■ I am so shocked and saddened to see this news. Sincere condolences to Bernice's family. I will miss seeing her at conventions.

Anissa R. Nierenberger

■ She was the education liaison on our ILCRA board, an incredible advocate and resource for all CR students in Illinois and throughout the country.

Brad Benjamin

■ So very sad. She did so much for our profession. Just a lovely human being all around. RIP, Bernie.

Brenda Varney

■ The court reporting profession lost a pillar Tuesday with the passing of our friend and colleague Bernice Kramer Radavich. A very fine person, mentor, and role model among court reporting students and Certified Shorthand Reporters (stenographers), Bernie will be sorely missed and long remembered. RIP our dear friend.

Cathy Rajcan

■ I went to court reporting school with your mom. She not only was a rock star in our field, but a beautiful person, inside and out. My deepest sympathy to you and your family. Your mom will be missed by all.

Cheryl Gagliano Barone

■ Becky, I started court reporting at WR in 1983, and your mom was my mentor there. She was so good at training, so wonderful to talk to, and she was so very special to me. I told her once early on after going over a transcript that she would make a great mom, and she said, "You think so?" And I said oh, yeah. And I obviously was very right. I'm so glad I got to see her not too long ago at a convention. I'm heartbroken that that will be the last time, and I'm so sorry for your and your family's loss.

Chris Brahar MacIntyre

■ Becky - I've worked with your mother starting back in 1978. She was always so kind. I always considered her my mentor and I have nothing but good memories with her. I really can't find the words to say, but I hope you know how much I loved and cared for your mom!!

Corey Genna Marut

■ Bernie was my first mentor/trainer in 1985. She read all my transcripts there for a while. I'm the reporter I am today because of Bernie. Her kids and John are the best. This is the saddest news.

Debbie Giusti Harnen

■ I just learned about Bernie, and it hurt my heart. I feel lucky to have spent time with her, and I'm so sorry for your loss.

Deborah Cohen-Rojas



■ Becky, you and your family have been on my mind all day. I am so, so, so incredibly sorry for your loss. Your mother was an INCREDIBLE woman. She was so proud of you and talked about you often. As someone who was fortunate enough to be a colleague of hers, please know our entire profession mourns the loss of your mother. She was such a positive, enthusiastic, accomplished stenographer, and a silver lining on this heartbreaking news has been seeing so many posts and memories shared about her today expressing that very same sentiment. You will most certainly be missed, Bernice Kramer Radavich

Isaiah Paul Roberts

■ Rest in Peace, Bernie. Heaven gained another angel for sure. The reporting and captioning communities have lost another great. My deepest condolences to John, Becky and Tim and all her relatives and friends.

Jackie Timmons

■ Hi Becky, I am so sad to hear about your mom's passing. I am sorry for yours and your family's loss.

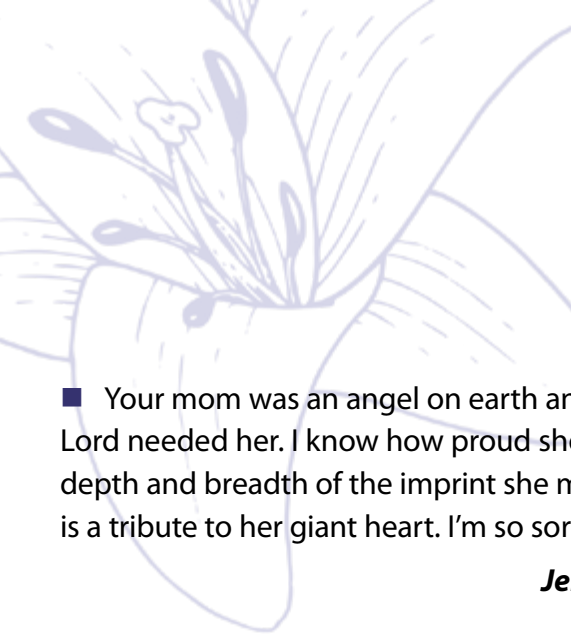
Your mom was my CART person for my graduate school classes at UIC. She did CART for a majority of my classes for two years. She was a very wonderful and kind person to me. And always encouraging to me when I was feeling stressed out from school. She was very vital to my success in graduating and getting my masters in public health.

I remember some of our conversations in between classes or before classes and she'd talk about you and your brother or visiting you at Disney World. I also recall her telling me she loved to drive on the California 1 highway along the coast and how it was a very beautiful sight. Another thing I remember is that we both enjoyed Aldi's iced tea and Parmesan crisps! I was so lucky to have her as my CART person and to have gotten to know her for two years. I regret not keeping in touch with her after I graduated. I would've loved to let her know I was able to land a full time job at a federal agency after several years of applying to jobs. The world lost an incredible person. She will be missed a lot. May she rest in peace.

Jase Gorny



Becky and Bernie



■ Your mom was an angel on earth and obviously the Lord needed her. I know how proud she was of you! The depth and breadth of the imprint she made on so many is a tribute to her giant heart. I'm so sorry for your loss.

Jennifer Coulthard

■ Life is so short. With the unexpected passing of our beloved steno friend, Bernice Kramer Radavich, this is a reminder to tell your loved ones you love them; do something nice for a stranger. Start today! Tomorrow isn't promised.

Jennifer Billstein-Miller

■ I met your mom through ILCRA. She was an amazing woman, an incredible court reporter, and a friend to all. I am so very sorry for your loss. I pray that your family and you find strength, courage, comfort and peace during this sad time.

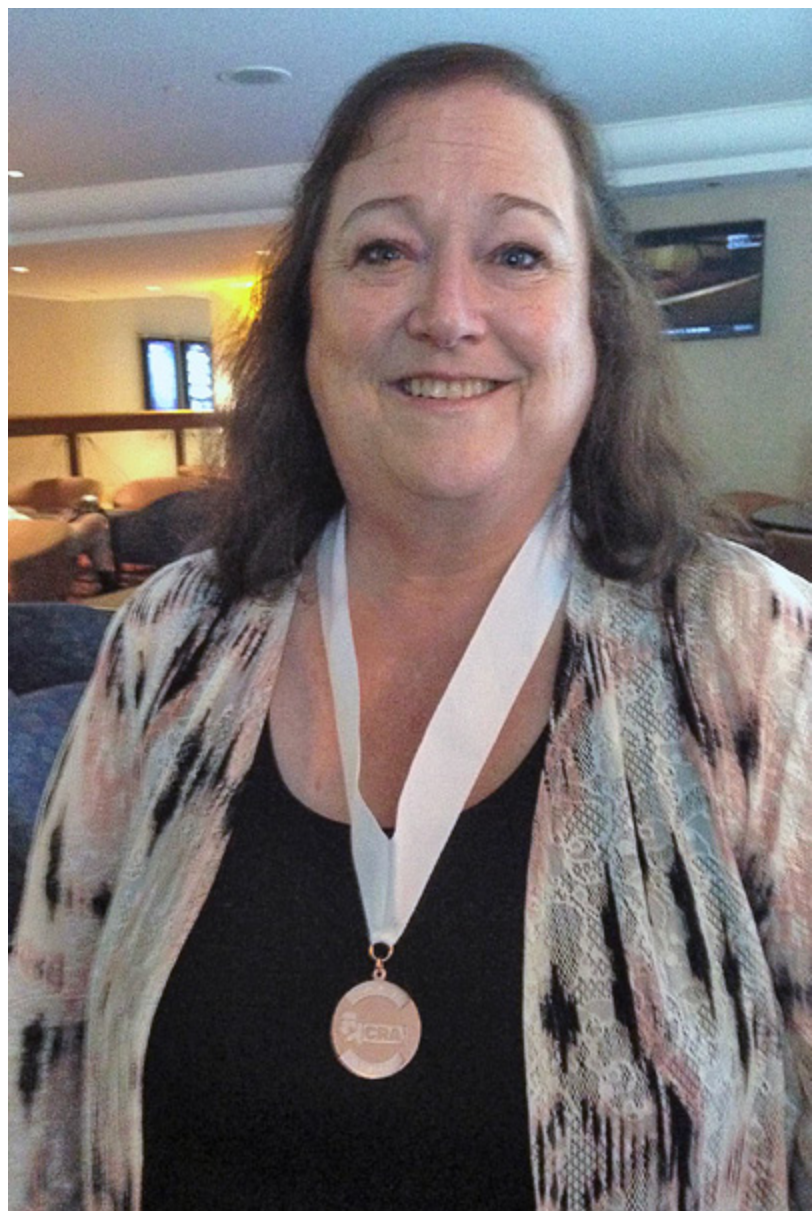
Jill Storm Layton

■ Becky, your mom was a beautiful soul and a wonderful friend. She was so proud of you and your brother, and I was so glad she introduced me to you and Tim and your dad at the ILCRA convention. I can still remember the look of surprise on her face when she saw the three of you after receiving the very well-deserved Distinguished Service Award. She will be sorely missed. My heart goes out to you and your family.

Jo Gayle

■ Heartbreaking. What an honor to have known her.

John Wissenbach



Bernie, 2016

■ Becky, our sincere condolences to you and Tim and your dad. I do know how proud she was of her children and how supportive she was. And I think you will be amazed through all of this at how many lives she affected through the years either through her service to court reporting or church or her many friendships over the years. She was an amazing woman and will be sorely missed!

Judy Kanapick



■ The profession of court reporting will not be the same without Bernie. She trained me when I first started working and, wow, was she a fantastic mentor. There are so many of us working reporters that are where we are because of the wonderful start she gave us. I will always hold a special place in my heart for Bernie.

Judy Walsh

■ Becky, your mom was a “bright star” to our contest and practice group. She will continue to be that bright star for us...

Karen Tyler

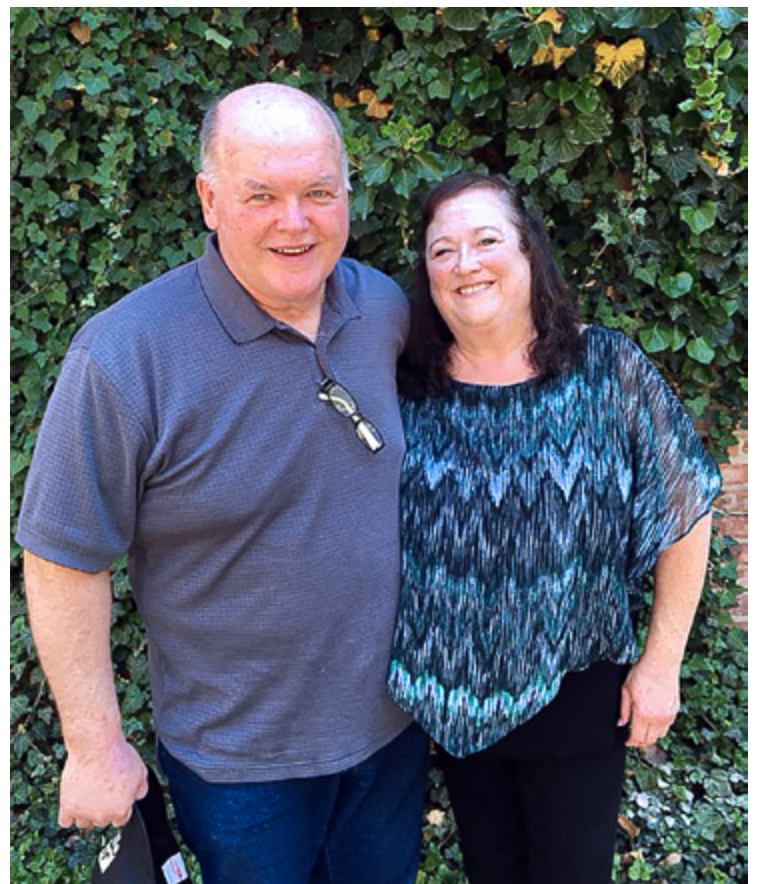
■ Very sad news. Bernie was one of our best, and one of the NICEST humans!

Lance Steinbeisser

■ Becky, your mom will be missed by so many. I know that’s not much solace but she was an amazing woman who loved her family deeply. My deepest condolences to you and your family.

Linda Walker Miller

■ Becky, I met you for only a second - at the ILCRA conference where your lovely and amazing Mother won the award. She had no idea that she would be called, and her family was present. She shared pictures of you and your amazing accomplishments - she was so proud





2015 ILCRA Speed Contest

- and then the surprise of you and your family there was amazing. My father, Seymour Wolfe, was one of her greatest admirers. Your Mother and I worked together for many years. She was truly an outstanding person. I am so sorry to hear of your loss. Please extend my condolences to your family from my Wolfe family.

Lise Wolfe-Adam

■ I remember meeting Bernie at a rooftop CR gathering in NYC about five years ago. It is heartbreaking to read this. She was such a lovely person. May she rest in peace.

Lori Lorber Mandriota

■ I'm so sorry for your loss, Becky and family! I met your mom when I first started at W&R way back in 1978. She was a superstar back then and continued to be an advocate for our profession.

May her memory be eternal and a blessing.

Lorraine Kaye Dunn



Becky, Bernie, Tim, and John



Donna Urlaub, Melanie Humphrey-Sonntag, Bernie

■ Becky, I am so very sorry for your loss. She will be missed by many. Praying for you and your family. She was so proud of you. May she rest in eternal peace.

Mary Ann Casale

■ Such a beautiful post to a beautiful soul. Sometimes we're blessed to live among greatness.

Your family is in my thoughts and prayers, Becky Radavich. She was so proud of you all.

Melanie Humphrey-Sonntag

■ Rest in peace beautiful lady. God blessed us all by having you in our lives. You helped me out as a neophyte reporter and inspired me to do my best. I will never forget your kindness. You are safe in the arms of Jesus. Prayers for your beautiful family.

Nancy Kasper Guidolin

■ Becky, I am so very sorry for your loss. Bernie was on the practice page for a long time and never missing a day of practice since 2016. I/we will miss her very much.

Rich Germosen

■ Becky, mere words cannot express my sincere condolences for you and your family. Your mom was a rockstar, and yes, she was so very proud of you and your brother. As Board members, Eclipse users, we usually caught up at the conventions, be it NCRA or ILCRA. Lately our conversations were more about family than court reporting. So yes, she was very proud of her family and would go to the ends of the earth for you, and now instead of her physically being there, she is forever in your head and your heart. Take some solace in that you had a GREAT mom who touched positively every person she came upon.

Pamela Taylor

■ I'm so very sorry to hear the sad news of Bernie's passing. She was such a good person and so dedicated to her ILCRA peeps. She was proud of her family and I'm glad I got to meet you all in September and that you were all there to see her receive the Distinguished Service Award. She will be sorely missed. I don't know how we will fill the void her passing leaves. I will lift you and your family up in prayer during this most difficult time.

Rita Ruth Corson

■ Becky, your mom was such an amazing woman. Always welcoming with that beautiful smile. May she rest in peace and you enjoy those memories until you see her again. Hugs


Sandy Rodrigue Narup



*Front left to right:
Unknown, Linda Sabor
Back left to right: Val
Oderio, Janet Robbins,
Bernie, Pat Lambros*



2017 ILCRA Board



■ Bernie was a lovely lady, wonderful mother, and a very skilled court reporter who shared her wisdom over the years. She will be truly missed!

Sheri Piontek

■ Your mom truly was a gem. I was at the ILCRA convention when she received the DSA award. She was definitely deserving of it. She was beaming when she saw her family there. Until you meet again in heaven, hugs to you. I'm truly sorry for your loss.

Stephanie Zeder Battaglia

■ I am so sorry to hear this sad news. What an inspiration she was to court reporters everywhere.

Tammy McGhee

■ Becky, your sweet mom Bernie was an awesome woman and court reporter. Knowing her was an honor and privilege. Her love for her family and God was first and foremost in her life. She will be missed by so many but there will be long term effects from all who knew her. Hugs, love and prayers to your whole family.

Therese Wasilewski

■ Becky, your mom was always so nice to everyone. There aren't enough words to tell you what a difference she made in people's lives. Losing your mom is sooooo hard. You have my deepest sympathy.

Traci Mertens

■ Becky my deepest, heartfelt condolences for the loss of your biggest cheerleader, mom, supporter of all that is you. May her memories bring you comfort in this difficult time.

Tracy Didier Abbott

■ Becky, we are all mourning the loss of your wonderful mother with you. She was a beautiful woman with such a kind heart. She loved her family with all her being. That always came first to her. She was so proud of you and your brother. Keeping you all in my prayers for strength and comfort.

Tim, I am sorry for the loss of your beautiful mom. She was so proud of you and Becky. She would never brag but would just share the events of your lives in such a way that you could feel the love. She was a wonderful mom to you and a dear friend to so many. She will be missed by all of us in the captioning community.

Shocked and saddened at Bernie's passing. One of the sweetest people and never a bad word spoken of another. She loved this profession with all her heart. I'm so glad she received the Distinguished Service Award this past fall from ILCRA. She so deserved it, and I'm so glad I got a chance to visit with her. Rest in peace, sweet Bernie.

Tina Colias Dillon

■ Becky, I worked with your mom years ago at Wolfe Rosenberg and she was a stellar court reporter but she was also just the kindest woman. I'm so sorry for your loss. Sending my condolences to you and your family.

Angela Montini



Death leaves a heartache no one can heal.

Love leaves a memory no one can steal.

Thank you, Bernie, for leaving us with so many treasured memories.



ad infinitum

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