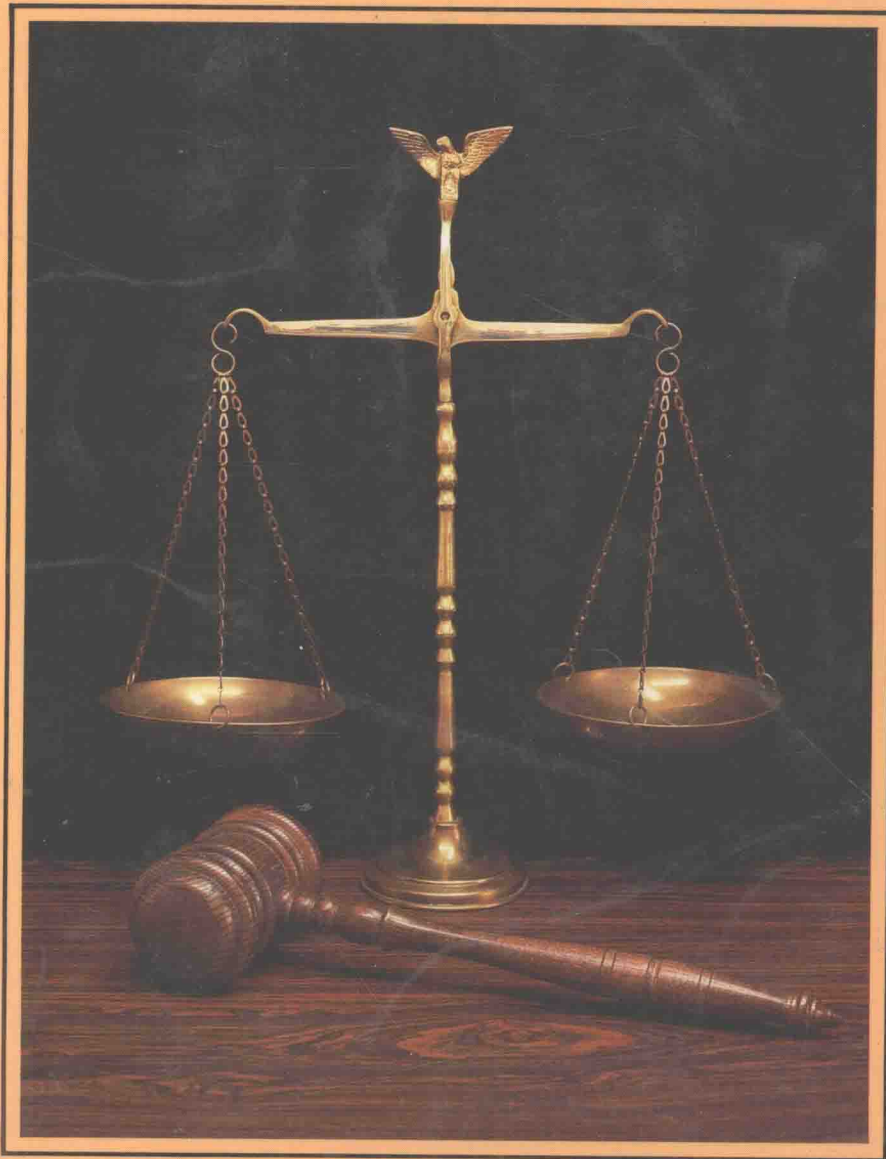


*The Complete*  
**Court Reporter's**  
*Handbook*

*Second Edition*



*Mary H. Knapp*

# ***THE COMPLETE COURT REPORTER'S HANDBOOK***

***Second Edition***

**MARY H. KNAPP**



**PRENTICE HALL CAREER & TECHNOLOGY  
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# ***Preface***

A popular expression of the day, “You’ve come a long way, baby,” can certainly be applied to the court reporting profession. Following World War II, teachers blithely said “When in doubt, write it out.” They then unleashed the unwary, petrified students upon the working world when they reached 200 words a minute, needing to learn on the job everything but speed in writing. A shortage of reporters existed then as now, and judges and law firm owners taught newcomers (then 90 percent men) all they needed to know to survive.

After I spent two years of reporting military statements, courts martial, and investigations, a fellow instructor taught me to use the shorthand machine while I directed the Office Practice Department of Rider College in Trenton, New Jersey. After three years of teaching and training at the Minnesota School of Business in Minneapolis, Minnesota, my husband and I entered court reporting as a career.

Knowing my background, judges and attorneys talked to me a great deal about the training of reporters. They discussed strengths and weaknesses of reporters they had known and worked with. One recurring comment was that the court reporters frequently had reasonable speed in writing shorthand when they left school, but they seemed to have little else. In many cases, judges and lawyers seemed to think beginning court reporters had to be taught everything (demeanor, procedures, transcript setups, manners, and even grammar and punctuation) on the job.

I determined that should I ever have an opportunity to train court reporters again, such comments would not apply to my graduates. Therefore, upon my return to the teaching field after my husband’s death, I set up classes in courtroom procedure and office practice as separate subjects.

During the past 25 years of training court reporters I have had graduates return to visit and talk with my students countless times. Most of them have said during these sessions (or by letter) “The most important things we got in school were gleaned during courtroom procedures, office practice, and classtime when you would talk with us, bring in forms, check our transcripts and projects, and teach us how things are done out there.”

Recent innovations have been many, and in the past ten years CAT (Computer-Aided Transcription), videotaping, closed captioning, realtime reporting, and study of voice activation have developed at a rapid rate. The reporter of today must be geared to change for we live in a technological world. We must always remember that the live reporter offers three things no alternative can: greater accuracy and savings of time and money. As long as we can provide these, our profession is secure.

This book is offered to help students bridge the gap from classroom to reporting work. It is not a learned treatise, nor does it cover everything a reporter needs to know. Forms and procedures

vary according to locale, so there will still be much to learn out on the job. However, I hope this book will start you out with a clearer understanding of your part in the scheme of the reporting world.

Who knows? Perhaps this volume may even help some experienced reporters!

### ***Acknowledgments***

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# ***Introduction: A Career as a Reporter***

The person seeking to become a reporter must be intelligent, highly literate, dedicated, and physically fit. This person must set reporting as a firm career objective and then work diligently to achieve a high degree of expertise and shorthand speed to qualify for this position.

In the span of the last 20 years, many new positions have opened up in addition to the traditional ones of courtroom official, freelance reporter, convention reporter, and legislative reporter. Today, thanks to the perfection of stand-alone CAT (Computer-Aided Transcription), machine writers present closed-captioned bylines for TV news and other programs, do realtime translations on CRT's for deaf students in classroom and other situations, provide immediate translations in courtrooms on monitors for judges and attorneys and judges of ongoing proceedings, accomplish entire daily copy assignments in courtrooms through CAT translation, using scopists to make corrections, and prepare exact transcripts of videotaped materials to accompany viewings of these.

Industry and government agencies are at last waking up to the fact that information can be put in at least four times as rapidly by using shorthand machine writers as an alternative to keyboarding by typewriter or word processor. Thus, new uses of the latest technology are creating diversified professional opportunities daily.

As you study reporting, keep in mind that you are learning a skill that will enable you to find a valued position in our technological society. During your training you will acquire a background diverse enough to enable you to enter many different professional areas.

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