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“Project Steno” Launches Tuition Assistance Program and Process to Address Urgent Shortage of Court Reporters

December 7, 2017, Worcester, MA — Media outlets and governmental authorities continually point to court reporting as a growth profession over the next decade. At the same time, the collective aging of the court reporting profession is creating a significant shortage of court reporters, just as demand is increasing. This creates both a challenge and an opportunity.

To address the challenge and seize the opportunity, four leaders from the court reporting profession have established “Project Steno,” a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, that is providing resources and a tuition assistance program for stenographic reporter training. This innovative program will develop a pipeline of pre-tested candidates for court reporting school and provide tuition assistance to students who agree to ongoing monitoring and meeting program milestones leading to graduation in two years. This bold initiative addresses head-on the urgent need to get students into reporting schools in numbers and graduate them into the field.

In 2013, the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) projected a nationwide shortage of 5,500 court reporters within five years based on the conclusions of the Ducker Associates report it commissioned. And it’s happening now! Project Steno is a bold plan to reverse that trend.

Today, stenographic reporters enjoy a variety of well-paid career options. The iconic machine writer in our nation’s courts, capturing every word of testimony, is perhaps the most recognized. However, most reporters do not work in court. The majority of today’s professionals are freelance reporters who work in law offices taking down and transcribing the sworn testimony of witnesses in pretrial discovery depositions. Many more work as captioners, providing the instant voice-to-text captions seen on live TV news shows and sporting events, for instance, as well as CART providers, whose skills benefit the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities.

Read more here: <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/careers/court-reporter-job-makes-six-figures-no-college-degree-n255426>.

“The benefits are substantial,” says Jim DeCrescenzo, President. “It’s a great time to become a stenographic court reporter. Young people can have a white-collar, six-figure career without taking on crippling student loan debt. Who else can promise such a rewarding career without a four-year college degree?”

Project Steno’s team includes luminaries from the court reporting profession: James DeCrescenzo, William Weber, Glyn Poage, and Nancy Varallo. “We have the most desirable career you never heard of! We’re professionals in a well-paid, flexible career, but no one knows about us,” says Poage, a former school owner. “We want to let young men and women know they can have a bright future in court reporting – equal pay for equal work, no glass ceiling,” says Varallo, Past President of NCRA (2013).

Project Steno’s ongoing tuition assistance is meant to subsidize a student’s cost of education. Throughout their two-year course of study, the Project Steno team will monitor each student. “Satisfactory progress through school, as evidenced by meeting program benchmarks, is required in order to maintain tuition assistance funding,” says Weber, Past President of NCRA (2001).

Find tuition assistance application, donor pledge form, and other information at www.ProjectSteno.org.