



COURT REPORTING – THE WIZARD OF OZ

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As a young girl, I found the Wizard of Oz to be a very scary movie with the flying monkeys and witches attacking Dorothy. Yet there was beauty and fun when Dorothy first landed in Oz and joy when she got back home.

Let's pretend Dorothy was a court reporter, the flying monkeys and witches to be firms/individuals/attorneys who take advantage of the working court reporter. Red slippers? Kansas? Is there a court reporting analogy?

Characters in our analogy: Dorothy (court reporter); Toto (steno machine/CAT software/laptop); a Scarecrow; Lion; and Tin Man.

Toto: Dorothy took care of and protected Toto. When the witches went after him, she found the courage to chase after him, grab him, and hold him tight. Our steno machines and CAT software needs to be protected, watched after, and respected. I just know Dorothy would keep her software up-to-date, pay maintenance fees, and know the technology. Toto is the court reporter's best friend.

The **Tin Man** wants a heart: I have met court reporters who want to love their profession, but have become discouraged, angry, and apathetic. Something happens on their journey wherein either no one wants to train/mentor them when they get out of school, or perhaps an attorney was particularly mean or disrespectful on a particular day. These scarecrow court reporters yearn to love the court reporting profession once again, but are lost. I believe they are searching for a fellow court reporter or friends found in a state association to help teach them the ropes, someone to commiserate with, and give advice on how to move forward with pride and excitement.

The **Lion** who wants courage: I personally know court reporters who are scared of new challenges and opportunities, scared to hook in even though they are CRRs. I wish in my heart of hearts they could just step out of their fear, respect who they are, and showcase the skill they were given.

The **Scarecrow** wants a brain. This character I would analogize as court reporters who are scared to think for themselves. I have met court reporters (young and old) who tell me, "It has been four months since I did a job for X firm. When do you think I will be paid?" I reply, "Have you asked the firm you worked with their payment policy? Before you took the job, did you ask what



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their pay rates were?” The answer usually is, “No.” Court reporters have to know they are business people and need to know they have a right to think for themselves and ask questions.

The **Wizard**: *I can't come up with a wizard analogy for our profession. Please leave me a comment if you can come up with something.*

Monkeys and Witches: In the Wizard of Oz, the witches controlled the monkeys. The monkeys were forced to do evil while under the control of witches. All of us know court reporting firms who represent the witches, firms who don't pay their reporters, don't respect a court reporter's hard work, and we know great people/court reporters who are under the witches' control.

Let's think about what ultimately sets everyone free: heart, courage, brains, and a simple wish with red slippers clicking together.

As a profession, we need everyone to have heart, courage, and brains, or we will not survive. Let's all click our heels and make a wish. Dorothy's mantra was, “There is no place like home.” What should be the court reporter's mantra?



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ROSALIE A. KRAMM, CRR *PRESIDENT CSR #5469 [MAILTO:ROSALIE@KRAMM.COM](mailto:ROSALIE@KRAMM.COM) 2224 THIRD AVENUE, SAN DIEGO,
CA 92101 T.800-939-0080 F.619-239-0206 WWW.KRAMM.COM
[HTTP://WWW.DISCOVERYCONFERENCECENTRE.COM](http://WWW.DISCOVERYCONFERENCECENTRE.COM)