Good morning, Commissioners. My name is Jennifer Olsen and I am an official court reporter in the Third Judicial District, Shawnee County, Kansas, division 15, and I thank you for this opportunity to speak with you about a profession I have the privilege to be a part of every day and that is court reporting.

This week marks the beginning of the 2019 National Court Reporters Association Court Reporting and Captioning Week across this country and in Kansas. To mark this special occasion, I would like to speak briefly on the profession of court reporting and captioning and its purpose, role, and future. Court reporting involves capturing and converting verbatim the spoken word and translating it into a written language. You may be familiar with stenographers who utilize computerized stenotype technology as well as voice writers who make a verbatim record in conjunction with their voice and technology. Both are court reporters and these are the methods they use in order to produce an accurate record of proceedings.

Let me share a few areas of the reporting field that you may or may not be familiar with. Most are aware of court reporters in courtrooms at the local, state, and federal level of our legal system; however, they are also found reporting hearings for state agencies, taking and transcribing medical records for doctors, reporting depositions for litigants, and captioning business meetings via teleconferencing. Captioners provide open-captioning of sporting events and breaking news. What you see scroll across your television screen as you watch your favorite sporting event is accomplished through the talents of a live court reporter providing instantaneous translation of the speakers. CART, or Computer Aided Real-time Translation, is a service that reporters provide for hard-of-hearing and deaf students at schools and universities across this nation. Certified Real-time Reporters “real-time” U.S. Congressional hearings as well as provide daily transcripts of those hearings. During preparation for trials of detainees at Guantanamo Bay, court reporters provided instantaneous translation and daily copy for the court, counsel, defendants, and their translators.

The National Court Reporters Association has a philanthropic foundation called the National Court Reporters Foundation. This foundation is responsible for gathering oral histories of our war veterans, Holocaust survivors, legal history, and our hard-of-hearing war veterans. These stories are translated by court reporters and their stories, once transcribed, are sent to the Library of Congress. This foundation is funded by court reporters and all translations are done pro bono. In this way, history may be protected and preserved.

These are some of the places you will find a reporter has been. Through technology and skill, we look forward to the future. This profession allows for the human element, cutting-edge technology, flexibility, benefits, entrepreneurship, and travel in two years or less. Kansas currently has three court reporting schools and we want to encourage anyone interested to take a second look at this exciting and fast-moving profession.

Thank you for your time and attention and for celebrating National Court Reporting and Captioning Week in Shawnee County, Kansas.