

## OFFICIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

5/25/10

The committee was requested to review Section 11.3 – Outside Employment and Activities – of the Personnel Policies for Employees of the Iowa Judicial Branch 2009 to provide an opinion, in light of the reduction in hours of a number of official reporters, as to whether the language precludes either full-time reporters from taking depositions on nights and weekends or part-time reporters from taking depositions on their days off.

Paragraph 1 of Section 11.3 reads, in part, “Each employee's position with the Judicial Branch is the Employee's *primary* employment and deserves *primary* attention” (emphasis supplied). Outside employment is permissible only if it complies with all of the following criteria:

- a. The outside employment is not with an entity that regularly appears in court or conducts business with the court system.
- b. It does not require the employee to have frequent contact with attorneys who regularly appear in the court system.

The committee reported to the Board that it appears the language precludes full-time reporters from taking depositions on nights and weekends or part-time reporters from taking depositions on their days off or working as a secretary or legal assistant in a law firm.

At the request of the Supreme Court, a liaison committee, consisting of one court reporter from each of the respective judicial districts, was created to act as a liaison for the Supreme Court regarding transcript issues, such as a lengthy delay in the production of a transcript, failure to produce a transcript, failure to notify the Supreme Court about reasons for the delay in producing a transcript, loss of shorthand paper notes or electronic shorthand data, etc. The liaison reporters for the respective judicial districts are as follows:

District 1: Melanie Anundsen  
District 2A & 2B: Renaye Lindgren  
District 3A & 3B: Mark Sturgeon  
District 4: Ellen Ross  
District 5A, 5B & 5C: Jeff Laust  
District 6: Deb Shields  
District 7: Jenny Soenksen  
District 8A & 8B: Laura D. McFall

Upon being notified by the Deputy Clerk of the Supreme Court about a transcript issue, the liaison reporter shall contact the specific reporter involved to obtain information regarding the issue and to develop a solution to the issue. The liaison reporter shall then report his/her findings and solution/remedy to the Deputy Clerk of the Supreme Court. If the reporter at issue is the liaison reporter for that particular district, the Deputy Clerk shall contact a liaison reporter from one of the other districts to act in that capacity.

This committee also shall serve the dual purpose of acting as a contact for attorneys, clerks of court or members of the public who have an issue with a reporter, *be it a delay in producing a transcript, issues with transcripts or exhibits, contact problems or other minor concerns*. Rather than contacting the reporter directly or the reporter's judge or the Supreme Court, an attorney, clerk of court or member of the public shall have the option of contacting the liaison reporter to resolve any issues. The liaison reporter shall notify the specific reporter involved about any issues or concerns addressed by the attorney, clerk of court or member of the public and attempt to resolve those issues or concerns. If the reporter at issue is the liaison reporter for that particular district, the attorney, clerk of court or member of the public shall contact a liaison reporter from one of the other districts. This information will be provided to the clerks of court and will be published in *The Iowa Lawyer* to notify attorneys of the availability of these liaison reporters to resolve issues.

Matters involving transcript issues or other minor concerns called to the attention of the liaison reporter by the Supreme Court or by attorneys, clerks of court or members of the public shall be considered confidential and shall not be shared with any reporter other than the specific reporter involved.

The scope of this committee is very narrow. Any matters regarding professional ethics or rule violations should be directed to the Iowa Board of Shorthand Examiners. This committee will not involve itself with financial arrangements or disputes between attorneys and court reporters.

No additional business was conducted or goals set by or requests made by the Board of the committee this past year as the official reporters were speaking to their legislators about the current state of affairs.

Thank you to the reporters who served on the Officials Committee this year and for your input on various issues.

Respectfully submitted,

*Deb Shields*

Deb Shields, Officials Committee Chair