

MARK BRICKMAN—A MAN IN THE KNOW

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2006

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, the transparency that makes our legal system the best in the world requires that the public have access to its proceedings, and a chance to view the record. Although often overlooked, the court reporter is an integral component of this system as he or she sits quietly in the courtroom diligently producing a transcript of the trial. In addition to their work in the courtroom, freelance court reporters are hired to work at depositions and to transcribe conversations between parties. I recently read about the extraordinary work of one court reporter named Mark Brickman, a constituent of mine from San Mateo, CA, and wanted to share his story with my colleagues.

Mark was born in San Francisco, but moved to Millbrae, CA as a teenager. A talented musician, he graduated from Mills High School and went on to San Francisco State University intent on pursuing his interest in music. At his parent's request he agreed to consider a more "typical" career and like many college students he explored multiple options before finding his calling as a court reporter.

Mr. Speaker, after passing the California State Court Reporters exam, Mark worked for a couple of different firms before his entrepreneurial spirit lead him to start his own firm Brickman Deposition Reporting in 1986. Like so many successful enterprises this company was started out of his house, before growing and now operating out of San Francisco. Mark's success has taken him across the country and around the globe. However, even more impressive is the fact that Mark is still able to make sure he is always around for his wife Cynthia, herself a court reporter, and their children. Although able to type over 100 words a minute, Mark is taking the time to write a book with advice for step-fathers.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Mark Brickman, a professional court reporter and a terrific guy and to read more about him in the following article from the San Mateo Daily Journal.

A MAN IN THE KNOW

(By Heather Murtagh)

Mark Brickman isn't an ordinary reporter, but the man is in the know.

He can type fast. He knows a lot about many topics and he can keep a secret.

Brickman, 49, is one of thousands of court reporters paving their own way tailoring a job that fits their lifestyle. It wasn't the path Brickman believed he would end up on—music was his passion.

Brickman moved from San Francisco with his family to Millbrae when he was 13. He graduated from Mills High School in the early 1970s. Before leaving the school, Brickman made his mark in the music department. By playing the clarinet and saxophone, Brickman was able to partake in all things music around the campus. The musical love even brought him over to Europe for a class trip.

He began San Francisco State University wholeheartedly committed to studying music. At his parent's request he looked into studying a more lucrative area—like business. It was the first of many changes before

a neighbor introduced him to court reporting.

"It was right up my alley. I was always into words and I love politics and being social," he said.

Once he found the right career the motivation just hit Brickman. Since private school allowed him to focus on the court reporting rather than general education, Brickman was able to finish in two years—graduating in 1978. While in school Brickman worked as a typist for a court reporting firm. It took him two tries to pass the court reporting exam, but once he did his hard work paid off as he was offered a job.

There are two types of court reporters—actual court reporters and freelance reporters. Court reporters sit in the courtroom transcribing what is being said. Freelance reporters complete depositions, transcribe conversations and complete any paperwork outside of the courtroom. Brickman is primarily a freelance reporter but he dabbles in courtrooms from time to time—only for topics that interest him.

He produces hundreds of pages in a day, and it's not because of his typing skills. Brickman can type over 100 words per minute but court reporters use a different method of typing. The language is a special kind of shorthand, which sometimes consists of typing two letters simultaneously. To type the, for example, Brickman just presses "t," and the word if is the letters t and p pressed at the same time. It's a difficult language to master, said Brickman, but the work is worthwhile.

Brickman worked for a couple of firms before opening Brickman Deposition Reporting in 1986, the firm is currently in San Francisco but started in his bedroom in Foster City. It's the kind of job, which can be as consuming or low maintenance as a worker could want. Reporters are paid between \$4 to \$10 per page. Brickman's work has taken him to multiple states and as far as Tokyo. He's listened in on the personal information of Debbi Fields, the woman behind Mrs. Fields, and self-help guru Deepak Chopra.

Brickman loves being in the know of personal and political situations going on around the nation. The career, he said, is great for anyone needing flexibility in a work schedule. It's also something that requires lots of work, accuracy and studying to get right. Brickman had one professor who would read names and numbers out of the phone book for hours as they transcribed it—a task he hated at the time.

"I could kiss his forehead. Twenty-six years later and I still use those skills," he said.

Despite his busy schedule, Brickman still makes time to have a life. He lives in San Mateo with his wife of four years, Cynthia, and her 18-year-old daughter Erika. Cynthia has four children, two girls and two boys. Brickman adopted Beverlee, the older daughter, just a few months before he married Cynthia.

Brickman met Beverlee at a convention for court reporters, which they both are, when Brickman first started dating his wife. He instantly felt protective of her. When the idea to adopt her was brought up, Brickman never looked back.

Even with success in business Brickman said it's important to have a balance with family and an outside life. He spends much time with his wife and children. He'd love to help with a national election one day. When he has the chance he loves to write. In fact, he's currently working on a book detailing his experiences with mixing families and tips for stepfathers.

TRIBUTE TO GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF ARMENIA ON THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR INDEPENDENCE FROM THE SOVIET UNION

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2006

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Republic of Armenia on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of their independence from the Soviet Union.

Since September 21, 1991, Armenia has faced the daunting challenge of building a modern free market economy on the crumbling foundations of Communism. In spite of the situation as they inherited it, Armenia's story has been one of increasing success against long odds. As a member of the World Trade Organization, and a country committed to privatizing their economy, Armenia has seen positive economic growth rates since 1995. While there remains much work to be done, I am confident that the people of Armenia, with their long history of triumph over adversity, will succeed again in making their country a beacon of hope in its troubled part of the world.

Throughout their history, the Armenian people have proven both their desire and determination to be free. I am proud to join my colleagues in acknowledging the anniversary of independence for the free government of the Armenian people who have been ruled by the Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Persian, Ottoman empires as well as the Soviet Union.

On this important occasion, I extend my congratulations to the people and government of Armenia.

ARMENIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY
REMARKS

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2006

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today marks the 15th anniversary of the independence of Armenia. On this day in 1991, Armenia was finally given the opportunity for self-rule for the first time in centuries. After suffering under harsh rule of the Turks, who attempted to slaughter them, and then the Soviets, who imprisoned them and persecuted them for their Christian beliefs, Armenia is now heading for a bright future filled with liberty and economic growth.

After decades of stagnation under the failed communist economic system, Armenia now ranks as the 27th most economically free nation in the world. A member of the World Trade Organization, Armenia is working through the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to grow its economy. I have strong faith that Armenia will continue to grow despite the harsh embargoes of its neighbors in Georgia and Turkey.

Armenia is justifiably proud of its deep cultural roots that go back to the dawn of recorded civilization. Ninety-nine percent of Armenians are literate and they have preserved both a distinct language and alphabet. Located in the shadow of the famed Mt. Ararat,