

## WCRA Lifetime Achievement Award to Coley Griffin

Norbert J. Griffin, better known as Coley, was honored with the Wisconsin Court Reporters Associations Lifetime Achievement Award at their fall convention in Madison, Wisconsin in October of 2003.

Coley retired from court reporting after spending in excess of 48 years in the profession. Coley's interest in court reporting was piqued in about 1934 when he was hired by a local businessman who was interested in a murder trial being held in the Circuit Court in Jefferson. Knowing Coley had been an excellent short-hand writer, the businessman hired Coley to "report" as much of the trial as he could get down, produce "daily copy" and paid him a whopping \$18 for the nine-day trial.

Coley got his first break into the court reporting profession as a result of being the local judge's golf caddy. After much practice on improving his speed, Coley was hired to sit with the official reporter in court. Coley was hired to type the transcripts for which the other reporter received the transcript fees. Coley did receive a \$25 a month salary for this job. Coley was able to earn an additional \$50 a month by doing the judge's bidding, such as driving the judge around to wherever the judge needed to go, using the judge's car, of course, and other odd jobs, such as mowing the judge's lawn, shoveling his sidewalks and the like. In 1936 Coley was appointed as the official reporter for Jefferson, Rock and Green Counties and received a salary of \$250 per month. Coley later worked as a reporter for Dodge, Ozaukee, Washington and Waukesha Counties.

When Pearl Harbor was bombed, Coley enlisted in the U.S. Navy and continued his profession by reporting a court martial hearing on his second day of enlistment. He also reported a mutiny trial aboard a British merchant vessel.

After his four year stint in the service, Coley returned to his official court reporting position and worked for several judges throughout the years in several different counties. Coley finally "retired" in July of 1983 with plans to do some side court reporting jobs in the freelance arena.