

Joe Strickland
Chief Reporter, Office of Official Reporters

Objects: La Salle Stenotype Machine

Leadership Change

Joe Strickland describes the administrative changes among the reporting offices under new House Leadership in the 104th Congress (1995–1997).

Interview recorded November 14, 2018

In 1995, the leadership of the House changed. And with the new Speaker and new leadership in the House, there was a new Clerk. And there were a lot of changes administratively in the way the House had been run. They created the Office of the CAO that year. And one of the things they did is they merged the two reporting offices. So the committee office and the floor office—I call it the floor office or the chamber office, debates office—merged into one division. And now for the first time, we're all working as one big organization. And, the fellow who was chief of the committee office became the chief of the combined office. And his first sort of edict was that the floor now was going to get under the same platform so that we're all trained on the same equipment. And we're—and so that was, there was a little pushback to that because the reporting on the floor is unlike the reporting in the committees in that it's not strictly word-for-word verbatim. There's a lot of parliamentary procedure involved. There's a lot of inserted titles, and inserted sections, and we called it parliamentary language. And so they created "include files" for a lot of those kinds of things that used to have to be typed in so that the reporter could write a stroke, and it would pull in that "include file," and put in the parts where, that people didn't actually say, you know, you know. I'm trying to think of an example. I can't think of an example. But there was a, there was a, big training process there. Plus, you had some of the floor reporters who had, had not worked with a computerized machine. So they had to learn just the mechanics of working with the software and working with that. It's not really about the machine. It's about the software and what the software does. So, yeah. There was a little, there was a steep learning curve in I would say '95.