

In Memoriam

Samuel D. Cheris

November 14, 1945–December 13, 2023



Longtime Denver resident and attorney Samuel Cheris passed away on December 13, 2023, at the age of 78. A former USA Fencing president, Sam's contributions to the sport

over more than 60 years are unparalleled. Said his family upon his passing, "The outpouring of grief at Sam's loss, on both the domestic and international levels of the sport of fencing, is a testament to his 60-plus years of service to the sport. During that time, he held many positions, traveled throughout the world to further the sport of fencing, and steadfastly enhanced the US fencing position in the world arena."

Sam was born on November 14, 1945, in Brooklyn, New York, to parents Hyman and Gertrude Cheris. He was introduced to the sport of fencing at Brooklyn Technical High School, where he fenced foil, and went on to fence at Brooklyn College for three years. He later served as an assistant fencing coach at Stanford University, where he received both his MBA and JD degrees in 1971.

After a two-year stint at the US Federal Circuit Court of Appeals in Washington, DC, Sam joined the local Denver law firm of Hall and Evans, specializing in mergers and acquisitions for closely held businesses. He spent 28 years at Hall and Evans, became a partner, and received many accolades for his work. In addition, he served as general counsel for companies through his boutique law firm, Cheris Law, and taught accounting and finance classes at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law.

Sam's love of fencing, however, never diminished. When Sam was inducted into the USA Fencing Hall of Fame last summer, past USA Fencing President Donald Alperstein said,

"Sam's influence shows up in almost every aspect of the sport at home and abroad. He has been a towering presence in American and international fencing for decades. Everywhere one looks in this sport, one sees and feels his contributions."

Indeed, as president of the USA Fencing Board of Directors, Sam oversaw the introduction of age-group fencing and the junior/cadet national circuit, and he instituted point systems for team selection and tournament seeding, direct athlete funding, and diversity in cadre appointments. As treasurer, he twice directed successful efforts to restore USA Fencing from near insolvency to a firm financial footing with strong credit and the reserve fund that allowed the organization to survive the COVID-19 disruption. His budget reforms continue to guide the organization. Three times he served as vice president. Sam also organized the 1989 Senior World Championships and the 1993 Junior/Cadet World Championships, both on an emergency basis.

On the international scene, Sam served the Federation International d'Escrime (FIE) in many capacities. He was a member of the executive committee, served as president of its Legal Commission for many years, and was a member of its Publicity Commission. He was inducted into the FIE Hall of Fame and received the organization's highest designation, "Member of Honor." Among his accomplishments were securing full US team representation at the Atlanta Olympics; restructuring of World Cup championship and Olympic qualifying systems; expanding referee gender and nationality representation at World Cups, championships, and Olympic games; promoting Americans in all aspects of FIE competitions and operations; and persuading the FIE to allow uniforms with the fencer's name and national colors. Under his leadership, the Legal Commission modernized FIE's bylaws and administrative regulations and

opened previously unavailable opportunities to persons of all genders, nationalities, and ethnicities.

Sam's ability to juggle his law practice and fencing addiction is even more remarkable considering his extensive service to the local community. Sam served in leadership roles for International Hearing Dog (founding board member 1978–2021); the Board of Directors of the Colorado Society of CPAs (which recently bestowed upon him a Distinguished Service Award); the Aurora and Colorado Bar Associations; the Colorado Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel; and the Littleton Town Hall Arts Center.

Moreover, Sam was known for his unwavering integrity, his demand for excellence in organizational structure and behavior, and his never-ending love of guiding, teaching, problem-solving, and making any organization he touched stronger and more fully sustainable.

Sam is survived by his wife, Susan; children, Aaron (Karla) Cheris, Zachariah (Tiana) Cheris, Stacie (Aaron) Perlman, and Giordin (Steven) Perlman; and grandchildren, Athena, Sonya, Krystal, Miya, Martin, Madilyn, and Caleb.

Contributions in his memory may be made to USA Fencing, Littleton Town Hall Arts Center, Public Broadcasting of Colorado, Temple Emanuel Denver, and the Anti-Defamation League.

John Nelson Dahle

June 7, 1925–November 1, 2023



John "Jack" Dahle was born in Duluth, Minnesota, to Minnesota State Senator Clarence Arthur and Helen Jenswold Dahle. Upon his high school graduation in

1943, he enlisted in the US Marine Corps. As a combat rifleman in the 26th Regiment of the 5th Division, he made the initial landing on Iwo Jima in the afternoon of February 19, 1945. He earned a Purple Heart on February 23 for bullet and shrapnel wounds received under heavy shellfire while fighting for Airfield 2. Bandaged up, he returned to his unit and the fight on the same day. He was the only Marine

of his 42-man unit to see all 36 days of combat required to take the island. Following Japanese surrender, he made the long-feared landing on the beaches of Sasebo under peaceful terms, was part of the occupying forces, saw further action clearing out enemy holdouts on Babelthuap, and was honorably discharged in December 1945.

John entered Dartmouth College, in Hanover, New Hampshire, as part of a special freshman class for veterans, served as president of both the Delta Tau Delta fraternity and Paeleopitus, and graduated with a BA in 1949. He did subsequent graduate studies at University College, Oxford, and the University of Chicago, graduating in 1955 with MA and JD degrees. He practiced law on the Iron Range of Minnesota until 1962, when as an avid skier he moved to Colorado and became part of the burgeoning ski scene at Aspen Mountain.

John joined the Denver law firm of Grant, Shafroth, Toll and McHendrie, and was a civil trial lawyer for 46 years. He represented a wide range of interests, from Denver corporations to immigrant sheep herders on the Western Slope. He served more than three decades as a director of Colorado Hearing, Speech and Language. He handled countless pro bono cases and was driven by a love of his profession and a lawyer's duty of care.

Divorced in 1978, he took on the task of raising singlehandedly his three teenage sons in his home in the Crestmoor neighborhood. He spent his rare free days from the office with his boys skiing, trout fishing, duck hunting, scouting in Montclair's Troop 62, and annual wilderness canoeing in Canada. He encouraged his sons' participation in student exchanges with Denver's sister city Takayama, Japan.

He was a longtime member of the Denver chapter of the Sons of Norway and wrote on the history of Norwegian-American settlement, including on illustrious ancestors of his own. He maintained friendships with distant relatives in and traveled often to ancestral villages in the Granvin district of Norway.

He traveled to usual and unusual places across the globe but loved nothing more than hiking and skiing in the mountains surrounding Colorado's Middle Park with any one of the numerous labrador retrievers he outlived over his long life.

He was able to live out his final years in his Denver home under the loving care of his caretakers and neighborhood friends.

He is survived by his sons, Christopher, Stephen, and Peter, and their spouses and children. 



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