

## In Memoriam

### Barbara A. Duff

December 23, 1954–October 26, 2024



Barbara A. Duff passed away peacefully on October 26, 2024. Barb was born on December 23, 1954, in Denver, and attended All Souls Catholic School and St. Francis de Sales High School. After graduating from Avila College, Barb went to work for Safeco Insurance Company, where she worked in the claims department. While working full-time at Safeco, Barb attended law school at night at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law. She graduated from law school in 1983 and went to work with Hall & Evans, LLC, where she learned the intricacies of civil trial work under the tutelage of her mentor, Dick Hanneman. Barb excelled in her career at Hall & Evans and became a partner in 1989. Barb left Hall & Evans in 1998 to start her own law firm, Duff & Zinser, LLC (later Duff, Larson & Pearl, LLC), where she continued her illustrious career until she retired in 2005. Barb tried cases all over Colorado in county, state, and federal courts. She was respected by her legal peers and judges and enjoyed a reputation as one of the top civil trial attorneys in the state.

In 2001, Barb was coming home from work when her car was hit head-on by a drunk driver. Barb sustained a traumatic brain injury, multiple broken bones, and a ruptured diaphragm. She spent weeks in Denver Health and three months as an inpatient at Craig Hospital. Through hard work and determination, as was Barb's way, and with the help of Craig staff, Barb returned to work as a trial attorney in just six months.

Barb retired from the full-time practice of law in 2005. Thereafter, she opened an

office where she focused on assisting people, particularly disabled people, in obtaining legal representation. Unfortunately, the multiple sclerosis that Barb was diagnosed with at age 37 was exacerbated by the injuries Barb sustained in the 2001 accident, resulting in Barb spending her final years in a skilled nursing facility. Not to be deterred, Barb continued therapy at Craig Hospital, participated in family outings, and became the pseudo-social director at the facility, where she made good

friends who would turn to her for her sage advice on a variety of topics. Never giving up on her passion for law, Barb would champion her own rights and those of all the residents in the assisted living facility, often meeting with the ombudsman's office to ensure the fair and equal treatment of the residents. In the evenings, after dinner, you could always find Barb watching *Jeopardy* and shouting out answers, most of which were correct. Her friends considered her smart, kind, compas-

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sionate, driven, loyal, and funny. She will be missed by all, and her spot at the head of the dinner table will be difficult to fill.

Barb enjoyed many activities outside of the practice of law. She was one of the original members of the Hall & Evans investment club. Members took turns researching potential investment options, making a presentation and recommending whether the club should invest. As time went on, interest in the club as an investment strategy waned, and it was converted into a book club. The book club continued for several years, usually hosted with dinner in a member's home. Barb was an avid and skilled golfer. She and a group of friends traveled far and wide to play golf, including to Hawaii and Jamaica. Barb was proud of her Irish heritage and traveled to Ireland to explore her roots. Barb cherished her family, including her nephews, whom she doted on and adored. She and her mother and siblings built a mountain retreat west of Denver and spent many days enjoying the Colorado seasons there.

Barb is survived by her mother Margaret and her sisters Liddy and Susan. She is also survived by her nephews Patrick, John, Justin, and Tyler, and their children, as well as several aunts and many cousins. Barb was preceded in death by her father Jack and her brothers Patrick and Mike.

Contributions in Barb's name may be made in her memory to the Craig Foundation, 3425 S. Clarkson St., Englewood, CO 80113, or Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, 6400 Minnesota Ave., St. Louis, MO 63111.

—Submitted by *Laura Trask Schneider*

### **Michael D. "Sandy" White**

*November 8, 1941–September 3, 2024*



Family, friends, and the legal and water communities are deeply saddened by the death of Michael D. "Sandy" White on September 3, 2024. Sandy was a preeminent water and natural resources lawyer who practiced for nearly 40 years in Denver, Fort Collins, and Grand Junction before

retiring with his wife to an active life of community service in La Veta, Colorado. Sandy will be remembered by all who knew him as a loving husband and father and a generous, loyal, and trusted friend.

Born in Leavenworth, Kansas, to a military family, Sandy grew up in Wyoming and attended schools in Cheyenne before enrolling at West Point Military Academy, where he graduated with distinction and earned All-American honors as captain of the rifle team. After extended overseas service with Air Force intelligence, Sandy returned to earn a master's degree in operations management from the University of Southern California and a law degree from Cornell Law School. He was admitted to the Colorado bar in 1970.

After practicing for several years with large and small law firms, Sandy became one of the founders of White & Jankowski in 1984, where he practiced until retiring. His career covered a broad range of activities and interests. He served as a master-referee for the Colorado water courts for complex water cases involving trans-mountain and federal water rights. As an advocate, he litigated over 100 water cases throughout the Rocky Mountain West and argued a case involving tribal water rights in Wyoming before the US Supreme Court. He was honored as a "Water Buffalo" by the Colorado Bar Association and taught on the faculty of the University of Colorado and University of Denver law schools, and at the Colorado State University engineering school. He was the author of one book and over 30 articles on legal issues and spoke at over 100 legal education seminars in 17 states.

Sandy's retirement was in name only. Instead of spending his time hunting, fishing, and writing, he devoted it to community affairs, serving the Huerfano County planning commission as well as the boards of the county historical society, the federal mineral lease district, the county water conservancy district, and the La Veta Fire Protection District. He chaired the county Republicans as well as the Arkansas Basin Round Table. He was also active in the La Veta Episcopal Church, the La Veta United Methodist Church, and the Cuchara Christian Fellowship.

Sandy's favorite leisure activity was to be with his family. He and his wife of 61 years, Mary D., had three children and seven grandchildren. Sandy attended their athletic and other events whenever possible, and the family joined Mary D. and him on innumerable hunting trips and "great camping expeditions" in Southern Colorado. He is survived by Mary D. and all his children and grandchildren.

Though thought of by his legal opponents as a fearsome adversary, it was Sandy's gentility and kindness that truly marked his personality inside and outside the courtroom. A colleague in a lengthy water court trial in which Sandy represented the City of Thornton penned this limerick about Sandy as the case proceeded.

If the battle could be won with a smile  
Then Thornton's ahead by a mile  
Your kindness and wit  
Have flagged not a bit  
And saved this whole bloody trial.

Sandy will be dearly missed by all those who knew him. His example will live on in those he mentored.

—Submitted by *Diane Jankowski*

In Memoriam is a complimentary service of the CBA honoring the lives and work of recently deceased members. Please email submissions to Susie Klein at [sklein@cobar.org](mailto:sklein@cobar.org). High-resolution photos are appreciated.