

In Memoriam

Ellen JoAnne Chestnutt

May 15, 1928–January 14, 2025



Ellen JoAnne Chestnutt, 96, of Colorado Springs, passed away peacefully in the early morning hours of January 14, 2025. Her final months were marked by two falls that resulted in fractures to both hips.

Ellen was born on May 15, 1928, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She was preceded in death by her parents, Arthur and Lydia Ziemann; her older brother, Fred; her husband of 32 years, William John (Bill) Chestnutt; and her son Greg. She is survived by her sons David, Doug, and Tim, and five grandchildren, Heather, Joshua, Justin, Tatum, and Courtney.

Ellen was a retired attorney who graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a Bachelor of Science degree in botany. In 1952, she received her JD from the University of Wisconsin Law School, the only female in her graduating class. Although Ellen was shy by nature and did not initially plan to become a trial lawyer, her participation in law school mock trials made her highly sought after to play female roles in court scenarios. Ellen recalled that in those days law school exams could be four hours long with essay-type questions; she made history by advocating to type her exams using her portable typewriter, paving the way for change in a male-dominated environment.

A job offer to join the editorial staff of Shepard's Citations brought Ellen to Colorado, where she met and married Bill. The couple had four sons in four years. While working at Shepard's, Ellen became pregnant with her first son, David. At the time, Shepard's had a policy requiring women to quit at five months

pregnant. Ellen pointed out that the policies were directed at specific departments and successfully argued that the policy did not apply to her role in the editorial department, becoming the first pregnant editor in the history of Shepard's Citations.

In 1964, Ellen opened her private law practice. At the time, there were just two other female attorneys practicing law, and Ellen viewed it as an advantage to be part of that minority. Reflecting on how times changed, Ellen recounted the following:

The court rule requiring parties to "dress appropriately" meant women were not allowed to wear slacks in court. One of my clients had a long walk to come to my office before her scheduled divorce hearing. It was a cold day and she arrived wearing warm slacks. I knew she would not be allowed in for her hearing wearing slacks, so I had her roll her slacks up to her knees and keep her coat on all during the hearing. She got her divorce.

She also spoke of how in 1964 there wasn't air conditioning in the courthouse (now the Colorado Springs Pioneer Museum), and recalled how on very hot days the windows in the Division One courtroom were opened to let in some fresh air despite the noisy traffic on Nevada Avenue; on numerous occasions, pigeons would fly in the windows and flap around the courtroom. She later became the first female deputy district attorney in the 4th Judicial District of Colorado and ultimately served as the first female chief deputy district attorney in the state.

Ellen specialized in addressing interstate child support cases, an area where her leadership brought transformative changes. In one year alone, Ellen's team collected \$1 million

in restitution and back child support. Her work resulted in federal and state laws being amended and modeled after her team's success in El Paso County. One of her career highlights was her invitation to testify before a Senate Congressional hearing in Washington, DC, at the request of Chairman Jesse Helms. In 1974, Ellen was appointed to the National Task Force on Child Support and later served on a federal advisory committee to draft regulations for the program. Ellen's career was filled with many successful felony convictions; in one particular year she tried 24 consecutive felony cases without losing one.

Throughout her career, Ellen received numerous prestigious awards, including lifetime memberships and leadership roles in the National Welfare Fraud Association, the National Child Support Enforcement Association, the Colorado Family Support Council, and the Colorado Welfare Fraud Council. She was also recognized by the Colorado Women's Bar Association for 25 years of service and received the Portia Award for outstanding female attorneys. Yet one of Ellen's most cherished accolades was a personal letter from Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

After leaving the DA's office, Ellen taught part-time at Pikes Peak Community College and the Colorado Springs Police Academy. She also served as an appeals referee with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment.

Ellen's life extended far beyond her professional achievements. Growing up in Milwaukee, she was a shy yet accomplished student and athlete. She was a cellist in the Milwaukee All-City String Ensemble, played the clarinet in the Wisconsin All-State Band, was a member of the American Legion Band, and studied piano. She excelled in field hockey and swimming. She participated in synchronized swimming programs and earned second place in women's high board diving competitions in both Wisconsin and Colorado. Ellen also worked as a lifeguard at the famous Broadmoor Hotel.

One story about Ellen's early Colorado adventures took place during a group hike to Pikes Peak on a moonlit night in August. The group was heading up to the summit to watch the sunrise when they ran into a

snowstorm—bad enough to close the Pikes Peak highway—and they lost the trail in the snow. The hike tested everyone’s resilience, but they made it up and down safely.

Ellen was also a dedicated member of the First United Methodist Church Chancel Choir for 18 years, an experience that included singing in European cathedrals during a choir tour. She was deeply committed to her family, balancing a demanding career with her roles as a loving wife and mother. Ellen prepared school lunches, cooked family meals, helped with homework, taught her sons to swim, and even sewed and mended clothes. Her brownies and holiday cookies were legendary. Ellen had been a nursery school volunteer, a home room mother, a PTA officer, a Cub Scouts den mother, a neighborhood watch captain, a county election judge, and a Registered Parliamentarian.

Her hobbies included swimming, reading, and genealogy. Ellen traced her family lineage back to the 1600s, discovering multiple ancestors who fought in the American Revolution, a connection to Amelia Earhart, and ties to the family that homesteaded a ranch, for whom Blodgett Peak is named, and what is now part of the US Air Force Academy. She was a member of the Pikes Peak Genealogical Society and the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Ellen believed that when a person dies, the world loses a small library. Her wisdom, tenacity, and warmth will be deeply missed by those who knew her. One of her favorite quotes reflects her enduring humor: “Old lawyers never die; they just lose their appeal.”

—Submitted by Tim and David Chestnutt

John Anderson Purvis

August 31, 1942–December 21, 2024



John Anderson Purvis, 82, passed away on December 21, 2024, with his youngest daughter and his son at his side.

John was born on August 31, 1942, in Greeley, the only son of Emma Lou and Virgil J. Purvis. He attended North High School and then enrolled at Harvard University, graduating cum laude in 1965. He received his JD from the University

of Colorado Law School in 1968. In 1976, he married his wife, Charlotte, his partner in life for 48 years.

John had a long and remarkable career as an attorney in Colorado, beginning in the Boulder County Public Defender’s Office in 1968 and ending in private practice, where he focused primarily on representing brain injury victims. He was a practicing attorney until the year he died.

John received the CBA’s Outstanding Young Lawyer of the Year Award in 1978 and the Distinguished Achievement Award from the University of Colorado Law Alumni Association in 1997. He was the Colorado state chair of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers and the American College of Trial Lawyers. He chaired the Committee on Conduct of the US District Court in Colorado, the CBA Litigation Council, and the Colorado Public Defender Commission.

He taught evidence, advanced trial advocacy, and trial advocacy at the University of Colorado Law School.

In 2019, John received the prestigious William Lee Knous Award in recognition of outstanding achievement and sustained service to Colorado Law. He was one of only a small handful of lawyers nationally to be elected to the International Society of Barristers, the International Academy of Trial Lawyers, the American College of Trial Lawyers, and the American Board of Trial Advocates.

John is and will always be remembered for many things, not least among them his delight with life and his contagious sense of humor. He loved his family, art, politics, dogs, traveling abroad, detective fiction, green chile, sports, and anything that made him laugh until he cried.

He is survived by his wife, sister, son, two daughters, and seven grandchildren.

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Samuel E. Wing

October 12, 1943–November 26, 2024



Samuel E. Wing, a well-known Denver securities law attorney, passed away on November 26, 2024.

Sam was born on October 12, 1943, in Hot Springs, South Dakota, the eldest child of Everett and Virginia Wing. He was raised throughout the West—as his father’s career was in the oil fields—and spent his high school years in Casper, Wyoming. After graduating from Natrona County High School in 1962, he attended Casper College and later the University of Denver, receiving a bachelor’s degree in accounting in 1966. Shortly thereafter, he enrolled in the University of Wyoming College of Law, where he served as editor in chief of the *Wyoming Law Review*. He graduated from law school, cum laude, in 1969.

Sam began his legal career in Denver in 1969 as an associate at the Denver law firm of Keller & McSwain. He became a partner in 1971, and the firm evolved over the years to become Jones & Keller in 1991. In total, Sam practiced law for over 55 years. Throughout his career, Sam was the lead lawyer in taking dozens of companies public, with many being oil and gas or mining companies. In 1980, his law firm took more companies public than any other firm in the United States. He also completed all types of securities and business transactions in representing issuers, broker-dealers, sales agents, and selling shareholders, as well as boards of directors and special committees in a variety of securities matters, in going public and going private transactions, and in mergers and acquisitions. He was the lead attorney on significant business transactions and joint ventures in the United States and in Australia, Greece, Italy, Morocco, Mozambique, New Zealand, South Africa, South Korea, and the United Kingdom. He was a public arbitrator for the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority from 1986 through 2023.

Sam was a brilliant intellect, writer, and teacher. He co-authored numerous publications, including *Securities Law-Cases-Text-Problems* (Clark Boardman & Co. 1973); *Going Public*

Handbook (Clark Boardman & Co. 1984); *Mergers and Acquisitions in Colorado: The Art of Doing Deals* (National Business Institute 2000); and *Negotiating and Drafting Acquisition Agreements in Colorado* (National Business Institute 2004). He taught securities law, corporate law, and accounting for lawyers as an adjunct professor of law at the University of Wyoming College of Law (1972–86) and as a lecturer at the University of Denver College of Law (1971–75).

Sam is survived by his daughters Wendy Wing and Morgan Miller; son-in-law Matthew Miller; grandchildren Everett Kane, Sam Kane, Georgia Kane, Giavanna Jeffrey, and Sutton Miller; sister Beth Moore and brother Robin Wing; and several cherished nieces, nephews, and friends. Sam was preceded in death by his parents Everett and Virginia Wing; brother Jon Wing; and brother-in-law Jim Moore.

Although Sam relished his travels around the world and riding his Harley Davidson through Colorado, Wyoming, and South Dakota, his family and his work were where he found his greatest joy. He was amazingly generous with his family, colleagues, and friends. Sam’s legacy will live on through the lives he touched, the principles he championed, and the family he adored. He will be deeply missed but never forgotten. **CL**

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. High-resolution photos are appreciated.