

# In Memoriam

## G. Lane Earnest

May 12, 1938—March 9, 2019

## John W. Low

August 7, 1923—March 28, 2019

### G. Lane Earnest



Prominent Boulder attorney and community member G. Lane Earnest—known throughout Colorado as “Earnie the attorney”—passed away on March 9, 2019, in the company

of his family and close friends.

A third-generation Coloradan, Earnie was born on May 12, 1938, and grew up in Denver. He graduated from Denver’s South High in 1956 and received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Colorado in 1960. While at CU, Earnie met and married “the light of his life” Barbara, and then began his first year at CU’s Law School. The next year, Earnie and Barb had their first child, Hillary. After graduating from law school in 1963, Earnie began military service in Charlottesville, Virginia, training at the U.S. Army’s JAG School. Earnie and Barb’s son, Keith, was born in 1964 while they were serving at Fort Knox. Earnie served as the legal officer at Fitzsimons Army Hospital from 1964 to 1966. Upon the conclusion of his military service, he was awarded the U.S. Army’s Commendation Medal for excellence in leadership.

Earnie and Barb returned to Boulder in 1966, and Earnie began his 45-year legal career. After a stint in the Boulder County District Attorney’s Office as chief deputy prosecutor, in 1969 he and Jerry Caplan formed the Boulder law firm of Caplan and Earnest (which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year). Earnie served as general counsel for Boulder Community and Platte Valley hospitals, as general counsel to

the Boulder Board of Realtors for over 35 years, and as co-counsel for litigation and corporate matters for the CU Foundation for many years.

According to Caplan and Earnest, “Earnie helped establish a culture of excellence built on a sense that a successful legal practice arises out of a well-rounded life of family, friends, colleagues, and community.” He was the host and voice of the Fourth of July fireworks celebration at Folsom Field for 30 years. He was master of ceremonies at countless community events, including the ribbon-cutting of the Pearl Street Mall in 1977 and the annual dinner of the Boulder Chamber of Commerce. He served as president of the CU Alumni Association, the Boulder Rotary Club, and the Boulder County Bar Association, and was campaign chair for Boulder County United Way. He served on the CBA Board of Governors, the Colorado Supreme Court Ethics Committee, and the 20th Judicial District Nominating Committee. He was a member of the board of directors of numerous Boulder banks, including First National, Arapahoe National, Bank One Boulder, and Wells Fargo’s community board. He received the Boulder Chamber of Commerce Lifetime Achievement Award, the Boulder County Business Hall of Fame Award, and the National Association of Realtors’ Counsel’s Award of Excellence.

Earnie was also an active member and elder of First Presbyterian Church in Boulder, where he taught adult Christian education for many years. He served on mission trip teams to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina; Mante, Mexico with Boulder Community Hospital; and the Philippines. He led a men’s Bible Study in his office for more than 40 years, and he was

an active supporter of Colorado Christian University.

Earnie was a dedicated runner, completing six marathons, including the 100th Boston Marathon. He was one of the Boulder’s boldest, having run all the Bolder Boulder 10K races until his battle with Alzheimer’s proved too great an obstacle. He skied for many years at Vail and Beaver Creek, but eventually traded his skis and the cold weather for golf clubs and warm winters in California. He and Barb began scuba diving in the ’70s and dove at the Great Barrier Reef, French Polynesia, the Seychelle Islands, many Caribbean reefs, and Mexico.

Earnie is survived by his wife of 59 years, Barbara; his daughter, Hillary Johnson (Eric); his son, Keith Earnest (Jana); his brother, Craig Earnest; his cousin, Janet Beardsley; and his wonderful grandkids, Allie and Matt Johnson, and Brooke, Connor, and Graham Earnest. He was preceded in death by his parents, George Sites and Lucia Hopkins Earnest, and his stepmother, Peggy Tague Earnest.

Contributions in Earnie’s memory may be made to the Alzheimer’s Association or First Presbyterian Church.

### John W. Low



John W. Low was born on August 7, 1923, and passed away peacefully in his home on March 28, 2019, at the age of 95. He was a proud World War II veteran and an institution in

the Denver legal community.

John grew up in Nebraska and Minnesota, graduating from Kimball High School in Kimball, Nebraska in 1940. He completed two years of college at Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln before World War II interrupted his college education. Enlisting in the Army Air Corps after the attack on Pearl Harbor, he was deployed with the 10th Division to India and Burma. As a navigator on B-25 bombers, he flew 74 missions, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross.


After the war, John graduated from Nebraska Wesleyan University in 1947, then moved to Denver, where he attended the University of Denver College of Law and ultimately joined Sherman & Howard LLC, where he spent the next 66 years in active practice. As a general practitioner, John was willing and able to handle any type of legal problem. However, after a few years, John obtained his first banking client—a

representation that would soon lead to the development of the firm's historic banking and finance practice. For decades, financial institutions turned to John for his guidance and counsel on federal and state regulatory matters, financings, and other transactions.

John was passionate about giving back to the community. He maintained an active presence in the Denver and larger Colorado community, serving as president of the Colorado Symphony Foundation, chair of the Denver Regional Advisory Board of the Institute of International Education, chair of the Mesa Verde Foundation, director emeritus at the Public Education and Business Coalition, and counsel to and trustee of the University of Denver, among others.

Above all, John had an incredible impact on Sherman & Howard and his colleagues in the banking and finance industry. He served as a mentor to associates and partners, and studied

the evolving regulations and complexities of the law to guide his clients and provide practical business solutions. The passion for his practice that he maintained throughout his career with the firm was visible in each matter that came across his desk.

John is survived by his wife, Merry, their four children and stepchildren, and six grandchildren and step-grandchildren. 

In Memoriam recognizes recently deceased members of the Colorado legal community. *Colorado Lawyer* relies on its readers for this information. Please send notices about recently deceased attorneys, judges, and other legal professionals to Susie Klein at [sklein@cobar.org](mailto:sklein@cobar.org). Reader-submitted "tributes" highlighting the individual's legal career are welcomed.



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