

In Memoriam

Leo Gemma, Jr.

August 6, 1927–September 24, 2019

Dennis Jacobson

June 1, 1953–September 9, 2019

Bruce Schilken

March 20, 1941–September 4, 2019

Felix D. Valdez, Jr.

July 9, 1940–August 24, 2019



Leo Gemma, Jr.

Leo Gemma, Jr. passed away September 24, 2019, at his home in Center, Colorado. Leo was born in Youngstown, Ohio on August 6, 1927

to Italian immigrant parents, Leo and Victoria Gemma, and had four siblings, Charles, James, William, and Mary Lou. He spent about two years in the Navy, serving during the Korean conflict. After leaving the Navy, Leo attended Hiram College in Ohio.

Subsequently, he moved to Colorado and attended the University of Denver Law School, graduating in 1955. Leo married Mary Anne Bowen in 1961. Leo and Mary Anne had five children and were married for 51 years when Mary Anne passed away in 2012.

Leo served for a time as chief juvenile probation officer in Denver; was a referee (now known as a magistrate) in the Denver Juvenile Court; and served on the Denver City Council. He practiced law for over 50 years throughout the Denver area and retired at age 80. Upon retirement and following the death of Mary Anne, he moved to Center, where he continued to live independently, enjoying the company of neighbors, old friends, and his dogs.

Leo maintained his mental clarity until death and spent his last years writing stories, painting, thrift shopping, cooking, and entertaining guests. He could always be counted on for friendship, counsel, and finding the funny things in life. Leo didn't prioritize material things, but rather cherished living deliberately and freely on his

own terms. He was satisfied seeing a sky full of stars, being surrounded by the Sangre de Cristo mountains, and having the soft ears of his dogs to pet at the end of each day.

Leo is survived by his children, Anthony, Diane, Christopher, Victoria, and Leo III, as well as his 10 grandchildren and one great grandchild, in addition to a large extended family and countless friends.

Dennis Jacobson

Dennis Jacobson started The Law Office of Dennis J. Jacobson in Jefferson County in October 2000. He previously worked at Polidori, Rasmussen, Jerome and Jacobson from 1983 to 2000. Dennis began his career as a deputy district attorney for the State of Colorado, serving in the First Judicial District prosecuting cases in Jefferson and Gilpin County. He received the First Judicial District Bar Association's Outstanding Young Lawyer Award in 1983 and its Award of Merit in 1998. Outside the office, he shared a passion for scuba diving with his wife, Debbie, and was an active and credentialed scuba diver.

Bruce Schilken


Bruce Andrew Schilken was born in Mankato, Minnesota on March 20, 1941 to Florence Anderson and David Schilken. He moved to Denver when he was 10. Bruce attended St. Francis de Sales school and high school. After high school, he attended Regis University, where he graduated cum laude with a major in accounting. While attending Regis, he married Marianne Marriott. They had two sons, Patrick and Michael. After several years, he enrolled in the University

of Denver Law School. His law practice was primarily focused on estate planning. Bruce's wife passed in 2001. The following year, he met Barbara Clifton, who was his partner until his death. He is survived by Barbara; his son Patrick and grandchildren Kyla and Sommer; and his son Mike, daughter-in-law Jaymie, and grandchildren Kelli, Michael, and Drew. He was preceded in death by his brother, Steve Schilken.



Felix D. Valdez, Jr.

La Jara resident Felix D. Valdez, Jr. departed this world on August 24, 2019 at his home. He was born on July 9, 1940 in Alamosa, the

son of Felix Valdez, Sr. and Candelaria M. Chavez Valdez. Felix was a veteran and served in the U.S. Army. After his military service, he married Catherine M. Chavez on March 1, 1969. The two shared a long and loving union until his passing, having just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Felix was a loving husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, cousin, and friend. He enjoyed fishing, handball, camping, traveling, and spending time with his family. He was an avid Colorado Rockies fan and was a member of the American Legion. He is survived by his wife Catherine Valdez; son Matthew Valdez; daughters Julia (Christopher) Cartellone, Maria Elisa Valdez, and Stephanie (Juan Chamocho) Valdez; grandchildren Kaylyn Cartellone, Sonya Cartellone, and Nathan Cartellone; sister Consuelo (Larry) King; brothers Raymond (Darlena) Valdez and Joseph (Mary Jane) Valdez; and many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents Felix Valdez, Sr. and Candelaria Valdez. 

In Memoriam lists the birth and death dates of recently deceased members, including obituaries and tributes as received. The CBA relies on correspondence from members for this information. To help us recognize as many members as possible, please send notices to Susie Klein at sklein@cobar.org.