

# Introduction

**B**oom and bust, war and peace, and swings between pessimism and optimism about the role of lawyers have marked the first century of legal education in Denver. Through its first one hundred years, the University of Denver College of Law has enabled generations of students to become lawyers and to participate in the development of the West and the nation. Some saw the school as an institution of practical instruction, centered on the contributions of judges and practitioners who served on the faculty. Others saw it as a place of abstract and theoretical teaching, with a type of instruction whose value became apparent only after graduation. As alumni, their work has been invaluable for maintaining our democracy, for strengthening the civil order, and for developing prosperity through efficient and fair business dealings.

This book combines recollections of College of Law alumni with a narrative of institutional history that students rarely perceive. After all, students concentrate on learning rather than on the process through which the learning is provided. There is an overwhelming theme in the alumni inter-

views. They show that the College of Law has always been a place where serious students have been earnest in glorious moments, and a few may have been dissolute, but the has been a person who saw legal education as a difficult but worthwhile means to a valuable result the opportunity to work as a to city, state and country. There is a strong theme, too, in the history of the University's efforts to provide that education. For a century, the University has marshalled resources to advance legal scholarship, law teaching, and — of most importance — the practice of the profession of law.

The University of Denver's first law students began their studies in the fall of 1892. The inauguration of law classes at the University was part of a national movement to of law. Albert E. Pattison, who had just completed a term as the first president of the Denver Bar Association, became the school's first dean. Ten years later, he was succeeded by Lucius W. Hoyt, who promoted the school's success in preparing students for bar passage and who developed the school's first clinical courses. One of the school's founders, George C. Manly, became its third dean in 1910. His long association with the school spanned the years from 1892 to 1936. During

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his deanship, from 1910 until 1926, it was reported that one third of Denver's lawyers were University of Denver law alumni.

In the 1920s, the American Bar Association (ABA) imposed new accreditation requirements for law schools, including a rule that a law school must have at least *Dean Manly* was strongly opposed to that requirement, but the University chose to comply with it when it was adopted. In 1927, the faculty was increased to include the required three full-time professors.

Roger H. Wolcott became the school's first full-time dean in 1928. During the Depression years, the school added a fourth full-time faculty member, but finances and physical plant were significant problems. During the Second World War, enrollment dropped to fewer than ten students, and following Dean Wolcott's resignation, an administrator was named to supervise the law school. Alfred C. Nelson served briefly in that capacity. In the post-war period, James F. Price led the law school as dean, developing joint degree programs that linked law and business study. W Gordon Johnston then began a ten-year term as dean, working on issues such as the development of a new law center building and achieving a merger with Westminster Law School.

The Westminster Law School is an important part of the history of legal education in Denver. For forty-five years, from its founding in 1912 to its merger with the College of Law in 1957, Westminster provided the only evening program of law study from Kansas City to the Pacific Coast. In Westminster's prime, its student body was large and its alumni were successful in the bar exam and in practice. Evolving accreditation standards eventually required expenditures too large for the budget of the entirely part-time institution, and the school merged with the University of Denver. Terms of the merger included naming the College of

Law library the "Westminster Law Library," and the development of an evening program at the College of Law. Westminster graduates are considered alumni of the University of Denver. For its entire duration, Westminster's program was marked by seriousness of purpose and dedication to a democratic ideal of the legal profession.

Harold E. Hurst was the College of Law's next dean, serving in the early 1960s. This was a time of dramatic increases in enrollment and of modernization of the curriculum. In 1965, Robert B. Yegge became dean. He oversaw continued large increases in the size of the student body and of the faculty. He directed the school into explorations of the links between law and the social sciences, serving until 1977. Yegge's successor was Daniel S. accomplished the school's move to its current campus and buildings. During his time as dean, the faculty's demographics began to match those of the students more closely than ever before.

Edward A. Dauer followed Hoffman, beginning his service as dean in 1985. Allocation of funds for scholarships increased during his term, and the school continued its development in many ways. Since July 1990, Dennis O. Lynch has been dean. His term has been marked by comprehensive evaluation of the curriculum and a renewed emphasis on alumni relations.

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