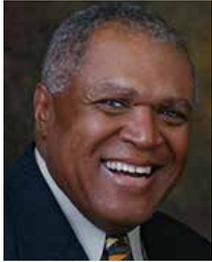


# In Memoriam

## Norman Strickland Early Jr.

November 14, 1945–May 5, 2022



Norman Strickland Early Jr., esteemed public official and fierce advocate for the rights of victims and the betterment of Black lawyers, passed away on May 5, 2022, at the age of 76.

Norm was born on November 14, 1945, in Washington, DC, to Norman Strickland Early Sr. and Gloria Robinson Jackson. In Washington, DC, he attended Paul Junior High School and Calvin Coolidge High School. As a student at Coolidge, he distinguished himself as both a scholar and athlete. He was a top college recruit in track and field, and his courses of study included Spanish, which he would continue to use during his trips to Spanish-speaking countries.

After graduating from high school, Norm attended American University (AU), where he earned a bachelor's degree in government and distinguished himself, again, as a student-athlete and campus leader. He was a member of AU's track team for all four of his college years. His coach, Jack Linden, modeled a racially integrated team environment and had no tolerance for racism. Norm competed in a variety of events, including the triple jump, long jump, and relays. He still holds records at AU in both the triple jump, second all-time at 14.08 meters, and the long jump, first all-time at 7.04 meters.

It was during his years at AU that Norm's passion for politics began. He served as president of his sophomore class and as vice president of the student association. He also was the first Black elected president of AU's student government. Norm won the 1966 election with 52% of the vote and established a campaign that called for the end of status quo type government

and a reorganization of representation in student government based on school enrollment and area of residence. Norm also honed his natural gift of oration at AU, winning the oral interpretation contests at the school's Speech Festival in 1964.

While in college, he joined the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity, which was a welcoming all-white organization. He established close relationships with his fraternity brothers, and these connections evolved into many lifelong friendships that supported Norm both professionally and personally.

After graduating from AU, Norm earned a law degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of Law. At Illinois, his love of competition and recreational sports continued, which expanded his diverse group of friendships. His law degree provided him with the opportunity to pursue a fellowship to assist under-resourced communities in Denver. He was admitted to the Colorado bar in 1970 and worked for the Legal Aid Society of Metropolitan Denver as a Reginald Heber Smith Fellow (Reggie). Norm continued to pursue his interest in politics, becoming the Colorado delegate for Shirley Chisholm, who was the first Black woman to run for president.

Norm then joined the Denver District Attorney's Office in 1973 as a deputy district attorney under Dale Tooley, eventually becoming a chief deputy DA. Norm distinguished himself as a highly skilled trial attorney with a keen sense of fairness and justice, and he naturally became a mentor to his colleagues. After 10 years in the office, he was appointed Denver district attorney by Governor Dick Lamm in 1983, a position he held until 1993. During his tenure as Denver DA, he would write handwritten notes to his colleagues affectionately called "Norm-a-Grams."

Norm also worked hard to create the most diverse district attorney's office in the state,

hiring lawyers and staff of color and various other identities. His leadership style facilitated numerous colleagues cultivating their gifts as leaders. His staff often ascended to city, state, and national positions. Norm was grateful to those with whom he worked, for both their incredible professional contributions and their friendships, and he consistently credited his team's efforts for the professional accomplishments in his life.

During his career, Norm helped establish and lead numerous organizations. One organization Norm championed was the National Organization for Victim Assistance. He served as the organization's president, continuing his career-long legacy of fighting on behalf of victims' rights. These efforts led to Norm's multiple awards throughout his life, including the Justice Department award for unrelenting service on behalf of crime victims, a government leadership award from the National Commission Against Drunk Driving, and an Ending Violence Effectively award for his work in helping sexual abuse survivors. Finally, the Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance also named their highest honor "The Norm Early Exemplary Leadership Award."

In addition to becoming a champion of crime victims' rights, Norm co-founded two premiere organizations dedicated to helping ensure the success of Black lawyers within the profession. First, noticing a lack of prosecutors of color around the country and the absence of an organization connecting them, he created a pathway to unite and advance Black prosecutors. He started calling offices throughout the country and compiled a list of 175 Black prosecutors, many of whom were from the Chicago area. Wanting to be a part of establishing an organization dedicated to connecting and supporting Black prosecutors, over 100 individuals gathered in Chicago in 1983. After numerous meetings, the National Black Prosecutors Association was born, with Norm becoming its first president. The organization is still committed to the mission to "uplift and engage the communities we serve through programs and outreach." Second, Norm co-founded the Sam Cary Bar Association, which is dedicated to advancing the careers of Black lawyers in Colorado. As a Colorado attorney since 1970, he

wanted to provide more Black lawyers with the opportunity to connect, collaborate, and thrive. Norm continued to support these organizations even after transitioning to the business world.

After running for mayor of Denver and leaving the district attorney's office in 1993, Norm entered the business world, forming the Criminal Justice Services line of business for Lockheed IMS. He also was a partner with BounceBack, Inc., a company that provides prosecutors and judges with software, education products, and services that support efficient, professional misdemeanor diversion, probation, and offender education programs, including an automated bad check management software program.

Norm co-authored (with Danielle Young and illustrated by Brent Naughton) a book in 2000 entitled *Step Ball: A Child's Book about Feelings and Differences*. The book is about Norm's childhood experience playing a game called step ball with a white neighborhood boy who invented the game. The experience helped Norm realize, even as a young child, the realities of racial discrimination and the impact it has on relationships and friendships. This and other experiences of racial discrimination in his life helped make Norm a person accepting of all people, no matter their race, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Later in his career, Norm made frequent appearances on national television as a legal analyst and maintained a full speaking schedule on topics relating to children, crime victims, substance abuse treatment, trial tactics, and diversity and workforce enhancement. He also joined the Denver law firm of Welborn, Sullivan, Meck & Tooley as special counsel. In addition, he was a brilliant officiant at the weddings of his closest friends' children.

Although Norm was a public figure, he also treasured his time with his family and friends. Whether it was at a community function, family gathering, sporting event, or household get-together, family and friends would surely experience one of Norm's bear hugs, huge smiles, and laughs that would bring joy to an entire room. Norm loved spending time with his son Ali during events through Slippers-N-Sliders (Denver's Black ski club) in particular. He also enjoyed going to Broncos games and school

events with his son Kendall. Both Ali and Kendall learned lessons from Norm that positively impacted their lives in many ways. His love for them and his entire family will always remain in their hearts. Norm did not just tell you how much he cared about you, he showed you. He was a spirited supporter and cheerleader during youth sporting games and had a knack for creating nicknames for his sons and players that they still remember and laugh about to this day. Decades later, the impact of Norm's efforts as a public figure and family member continue to leave an indelible impact on the lives of all he encountered. As a father, brother, grandfather, uncle, and father-in-law, Norm was the family's patriarch.

Norm was predeceased by his parents Norman Sr. and Gloria, stepfather Ellsworth, and son Ali. He is survived by his son Kendall; grandsons Khalon, Keon, and Kalel; daughter-in-law Tené; sisters BJ and Jan; brothers Jack and Eddie; and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

**E. Steven Ezell**  
*January 15, 1947–June 14, 2022*

E. Steven Ezell passed away on June 14, 2022, following a lengthy illness.

Steve graduated from the University of Texas–Austin and St. Mary's University Law School. He was admitted to the Colorado bar in 1975 and practiced law in Colorado Springs for nearly 46 years.

Steve worked in the District Attorney's Office, Fourth District of Colorado, where he also served as chief deputy. He was a partner at Melat, Pressman, Ezell and Higbie, and then at Buell & Ezell, LLP, where he worked for over 20 years. His decades in private practice ran the gamut from personal injury to estate planning.

Steve was an active member of both the Colorado and El Paso County Bar Associations. At the CBA, he served as vice president, chaired the Professionalism Committee, and served on the Board of Governors, Budget Committee, Amicus Brief Committee, and Professional Reform Task Force. At the El Paso County Bar Association, he served as president, treasurer, Probate Section chair, and Membership chair, and was a member of the Board of Trustees.

Steve also served on the Colorado Supreme Court Disciplinary Panel and was a longtime member and former president of the Ben S. Wendelken Inn of Court. Outside the legal community, he was deeply involved with various organizations promoting foster care and adoption.

**Thomas C. Seawell**  
*March 10, 1937–June 28, 2022*



Thomas C. Seawell was born in Denver on March 10, 1937, and died on June 28, 2022. He will be greatly missed by his family, friends, and professional associates.

Tom graduated from East Denver High, Dartmouth College, and the University of Colorado School of Law. He served as an assistant US attorney in Denver and was engaged in private practice in Denver.

Tom served as a trustee of the Denver Bar Association, president of the Denver Law Club, and founding president and director of the Faculty of Federal Advocates. He received the Denver Law Club's Lifetime Achievement Award and the Faculty of Federal Advocates' Donald E. Cordova Award for Distinguished Service.

Tom was an enthusiastic outdoorsman and truly loved the Colorado mountains, rivers, and streams. He shared his love of the outdoors with his family and spent many happy hours four-wheeling and hiking with his wife of 63 years, Marcia.

Tom is survived by his wife Marcia; children Deborah, Leslie, and Diana; grandchildren Erin, Jackson, Erik, Michelle, Olivia, and Maxwell; and great-grandchildren Leah, Emma, Kate, Finn, and George. He was preceded in death by his parents Jackson and Ellen, sister Ann, and grandson Garrett. 

In Memoriam honors the life and work of recently deceased CBA members. Email submissions to Susie Klein at [sklein@cobar.org](mailto:sklein@cobar.org). High-resolution photos are appreciated.