

January 2021

The Honorable Daniel B. Sparr, Federal District Court of Colorado

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Recommended Citation

Diana A. Cachey, The Honorable Daniel B. Sparr, Federal District Court of Colorado, 71 Denv. U. L. Rev. 63 (1993).

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THE HONORABLE DANIEL B. SPARR,
FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT OF COLORADO

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At my first American Inn of Court¹ (AIC) dinner, I met Judge Daniel Sparr among the many judges and practicing attorneys² who selected “pupils” to learn about client advocacy and the promotion of professionalism within the legal community. These AIC dinners and pupillage meetings increase legal skills and professionalism “by passing down from one generation to another the best of American litigation . . . by furnishing role models, in our masters, of proper civility, ethical conduct, and skills . . . by bringing together people who litigate against each other to break bread and to discuss these issues with one another.”³ The Honorable Daniel B. Sparr, one of the more prominent “role models” and members of the William E. Doyle Inn, acted as vice-president of the Inn for a second consecutive year. Judge Sparr previously served as secretary in 1988 and as treasurer in 1988, and is currently an emeritus member of the Doyle Inn.

Judge Daniel Sparr and other AIC judges, barristers and masters teach in the traditional English way—by discussing trial techniques and legal strategies over dinner. Judge Sparr sat at my dinner table the evening of my first AIC, so I asked him whether he received a letter regarding a biographical article that would feature his career in the *Denver University Law Review*. Judge Sparr merely nodded and replied “I think so” with no apparent eagerness to be chronicled in *The Review*. As an AIC member, Judge Sparr helped sponsor student participation in the Doyle Inn program; as an officer, he gave much to us law students before we even met him.⁴ To give something back, I now honor him in an article profiling his notable legal career.

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1. Established in 1985, the American Inns of Court Foundation is dedicated to the promotion of “the ideals of excellence and professionalism, the exercise of civility and courtroom competence, the spirit of mutual cooperation and camaraderie, and the adherence to legal ethics.” AMERICAN INNS OF COURT FOUNDATION, THE FIVE YEAR PLAN (on file at the American Inns of Court National Headquarters, 1725 Duke Street, Suite 630, Alexandria, Va. 22314).

2. Each AIC is comprised of a group of judges, lawyers, law professors and law students who meet once a month to “break bread” and discuss matters relating to ethics, professionalism and lawyering skills.

3. Cohn, Sherman L., *From the President*, THE BENCHER, Dec. 1992, at 2.

4. The educational benefit of AIC membership:

is measured in several ways. We hear anecdotes from judges who report on the perceptible improvement in the practice of law before them: in the increased efficiency, and hence, economy, as well as the increased level of civility, when Inn members are involved in litigation. And we see the increased number of Inns, often growing out of an already existing Inn.

Since I only met Judge Sparr last October, I began the task of acquiring information regarding the judge's life and career by contacting his colleagues, particularly the other members of the Doyle Inn. There was no dearth of testimonials to Judge Sparr's character, ethics and professionalism—several attorneys and judges quickly volunteered to help chronicle his estimable career. A picture of Judge Sparr as a distinguished legal professional soon formed.

Daniel B. Sparr, born in Denver on June 8, 1931, lived most of his life within the borders of our mountainous state. Being a native Coloradan, it's no surprise that Judge Sparr is an avid water and snow skier and enjoys boating and fishing. As a law student and attorney, and more recently as a state and federal judge, his career location allows him to enjoy his passion for the outdoors. Of the twenty-seven years that he has served as a professional in the legal community, Judge Sparr spent all of these years living in Colorado.

Educated exclusively at the University of Denver (DU), he received his Bachelor's of Science degree in Business Administration in 1952. After graduation, Judge Sparr served as a Captain in the United States Air Force from 1952 until 1955. As an air force officer, he held assignments at Edward Air Force Base in California and Hill Air Force Base in Utah. He also served in the Korean Zone of Operations in Kunson and Tagué City, Korea.

In 1955, Judge Daniel Sparr began working as a staff technician and service representative for Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company in Denver. He stayed with Mountain States through March, 1963, eventually becoming the Traffic Chief for its Colorado Springs office. After many years, Sparr left Mountain States to become Sales Administration Vice-president for Brad Wolfe Construction Company of Lakewood. This move was occasioned by his desire to return to Denver and attend law school.

Eleven years after receiving his undergraduate degree, Sparr returned to DU to study law, where he graduated from its College of Law in 1966. Daniel Sparr excelled as a law student, finishing his final year on a part-time fellowship.

Shortly after his graduation, Daniel Sparr began practicing law as an associate for the law firm of White and Steele. There Sparr practiced insurance defense law for several years, then returned briefly to Mountain States to work in the Office of General Counsel. Eventually he made partner at White and Steele in 1971. Several years later, he decided to start his own practice in Denver.

Judge Sparr practiced as an attorney-at-law in Colorado for over a decade—from 1966 until 1978. That year, twelve years after his law school graduation, Governor Richard D. Lamm appointed him to the Colorado District Court for the Second Judicial District for a term beginning March

Id. The AIC environment is an educational experience for all participants who mutually benefit from one another's backgrounds and insights.

1, 1977. Judge Sparr served for thirteen years as a trial judge in Colorado. In 1981, the United States Senator William Armstrong nominated Daniel B. Sparr as a federal district judge. President George Bush thereafter appointed him to sit on the United States District Court in Colorado, where he presides today.

In addition to his dynamic law practice, his involvement in the Doyle Inn and his tenure on the Colorado and federal courts, Judge Sparr remains active in several legal and civic organizations. Judge Sparr has served on the Board of the American Board of Trial Advocates since 1987 and has acted as treasurer and vice-president. He also served on the advisory boards of the Denver Paralegal Institute, Arapahoe Community College, Metropolitan State College, Boy Scouts of America and the national certification board of the National Legal Secretaries Association. Additionally, he has held positions on the faculty at both Arapahoe Community and Metropolitan State Colleges.

Evidenced by his life and legal career, Judge Sparr most assuredly was worthy of the role he assumed as a model of "proper civility, ethical conduct and skills" for the students and young attorneys of the Doyle Inn.⁵ We younger members of the Doyle Inn certainly hope to continue his tradition of excellence and professionalism,⁶ with his distinguished example as our guide.

5. The first Denver AIC was named after the Honorable William E. Doyle, deceased Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. The Doyle Inn was the only AIC in Denver until recently when members of the Doyle Inn helped form several more Inns including one honoring the late Alfred J. Arraj, Senior Judge, United States District Court, District of Colorado and another in honor of the late Thompson J. Marsh, Denver University law professor.

6. Designed to improve the practice of law, the American Inns of Court concept adopted the traditional British model of legal apprenticeship and modified it to fit the American legal system's specific needs. Cohn, Sherman L., *From the President, THE BENCHER*, Dec. 1992, at 2. In the American version, judges and attorneys act as Barristers and Master Benchers to pupils in a mock apprenticeship program, which serves "[t]he central purpose of the AIC concept . . . to raise the standards of the legal profession." *Id.*

