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John U. Carlson
1940-1992

IN TRIBUTE

This issue of the *Water Law Review* is dedicated to the memory of John U. Carlson, a much respected and beloved member of the Colorado Water Bar. Born in Terry, Montana in 1940, Mr. Carlson graduated from the University of Montana in 1962. After attending Queens College at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, he graduated from Yale Law School in 1967. In 1968, he joined the Denver law firm of Holland & Hart. Mr. Carlson founded his own law firm in 1985, currently known as Carlson, Hammond, and Paddock.

Having grown up on a Montana ranch, Mr. Carlson was aware of the importance of natural resources from an early age. As an adult, he was able to pursue his interest in water when he joined Holland & Hart. His *amicus* brief on behalf of the Twin Lakes Reservoir and Canal Company in *United States v. New Mexico* is largely credited with the court created measure and limit of federal reserved water rights for federal reserved lands. This doctrine was further defined in *United States v. City and County of Denver* with respect to national forests, monuments, parks, public springs, water holes, and hot springs, where he again represented Twin Lakes. Mr. Carlson continued to participate in later federal reserved water rights cases, most notably *United States v. Jesse* and *United States v. Bell*.

Mr. Carlson's impact on the development of Colorado water law was evident in other significant cases such as *Alamosa-Lajara v. Gould*, where he represented, among others, the Rio Grande Water Users Association. The case determined the effect of state rules promulgated to meet interstate compact obligations on water rights granted under the prior appropriation system. In addition, the court's opinion further defined the outlines of the doctrine of reasonable means of diversion with respect to surface streams and tributary groundwater. Mr. Carlson also ably represented the cities of Westminster, Pueblo, and Colorado Springs in their acquisition of crucial water rights through exchange for municipal growth.

Mr. John Carlson passed away in 1992. He is remembered both as a force in Colorado water law and as a model attorney who cared deeply for each of his clients, representing them to the best of his abilities.

