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Clayton Chauncey Dorsey

By JOSEPH C. SAMPSON, *of the Denver Bar*

In the death of Clayton Chauncey Dorsey on September 22, 1948, the Denver Bar has lost one of its most truly distinguished members.

Born in Sandusky, Ohio, March 21, 1871, the son of Stephen W. Dorsey, one time United States Senator from Arkansas, and Helen M. Wack, he lived much of his early life in Washington, D. C., and later on his father's ranch near Springer, New Mexico. He was educated at Oberlin College and Yale University, receiving his B.A. degree from Yale in 1890.

Mr. Dorsey did not attend a law school, but studied in the office of Teller (Henry M.) and Orahod and was admitted to the bar of Colorado in 1893 and was employed by said firm and its successor, Teller, Orahod and Morgan. He practiced alone from 1899 to 1900. In 1900 he formed a partnership with Mr. Willard Teller, which association continued until 1905, when Teller retired. Then he formed a new partnership with William V. Hodges. Dorsey and Hodges continued until the organization with Gerald Hughes in 1911, of Hughes and Dorsey, of which firm he was an active partner until his retirement in 1937.

Mr. Dorsey married Miss Marguerite Montgomery in 1897, and she, as well as their two children, Helen (Mrs. Edward G. Knowles) and Montgomery Dorsey, survive.

For many years Mr. Dorsey represented the Union Pacific Railroad, being made its General Attorney in 1905, which position he held until his retirement in 1937, handling all that company's important litigation in Colorado. He was instrumental in bringing about the settlement of the celebrated controversy between the Union Pacific and the Southern Pacific over the control of the Central Pacific, the connecting link between Ogden and San Francisco. He represented the predecessor companies of the Denver Union Terminal Railway and advised that company at the time of its organization in 1914 and the building of the present Union Depot, which involved extensive litigation.

Mr. Dorsey represented The Denver Union Water Company in its many controversies with the City of Denver over the acquisition of the water plant, earning recognition as an expert in the handling of valuation matters. He advised in connection with the reorganizations of the Denver Tramway and the Moffat Road, and of many other corporations. One of his later legal triumphs was establishing the validity of certain of the Moffat Tunnel Improvement District Bonds.

When in the early thirties questions arose as to the exemption from taxation of property belonging to Denver University, Mr. Dorsey carried through

the Supreme Court of Colorado a fight to establish the tax exemptions which had been granted to the Colorado Seminary, the University's corporate name, in its special charter granted by the legislature in 1864.

Mr. Dorsey had an enviable record as an accomplished trial lawyer. He appeared many times before the Supreme Court of the United States and counted as personal friends many members of the Court, especially Justice Charles Evans Hughes and Justice Willis Vandevanter. Much of his litigation was in the federal courts and he was always *persona grata* to the judges of the Eighth Judicial Circuit, and later of the Tenth Judicial Circuit.

Mr. Dorsey was active for many years in the clubs of Denver, maintaining membership in the University Club, the Denver Club, and the Denver Country Club. He was a member and actively interested in the Denver, Colorado, and American Bar Associations. In 1924 he joined the group of members of the American Bar Association who journeyed to England for the historic meeting which was held there.

A staunch and influential Republican, though often urged to allow himself to be considered a candidate for judicial or other appointment, he remained a faithful party man without personal political ambition.

He was interested in civic affairs and for years he served the Children's Hospital as counsel and of late years as a member of its advisory board. His church affiliation was with St. John's Cathedral.

Known for his professional attainments, not only in his home state of Colorado, but by his fellow-lawyers throughout the nation, Clayton Dorsey will always be remembered as representing the finest standards and traditions of the legal profession.

Throughout his many years of practice, he established a reputation for professional ability and unquestioned personal integrity which has never been surpassed by any member of the Bar.

Unfailing in his courtesy and consideration for others; meticulously ethical and conscientious in all his professional relationships, whether with courts, clients, jurors, or witnesses; invariably and sincerely modest and unassuming in both manner and attitude; tirelessly energetic in the performance of duty; a devoted husband and father and a faithful friend—Clayton Dorsey provides a model pattern for every young lawyer to emulate. If one were to sum up his life and character, it could be done, without the least overstatement, in these few words: A great lawyer and a Christian gentleman.