

# Samuel Dazzo: The American Dream

Sam Dazzo doesn't have a whole lot of time to mess around, but it isn't just because he was born in the early 1900s. He has too much to do to waste time visiting with someone who might want to interview him about his life, his career, and his genuine love for the Law School.

He keeps a home in Riodoso, New Mexico, and spends several months a year in Hawaii. His residence is in Albuquerque, where he practiced law from 1936 to 1974. It is in Albuquerque that he keeps so busy enjoying "visits to the Country Club, reading, doing nothing, listening to the sound of the wind, watching the rain and snow fall, visiting with my son and four grandchildren, and generally, doing nothing."

His day is sometimes interrupted by telephone calls, "sometimes from Gene Nichol, sometimes from other people wanting to know something." Dazzo is doing what many people only dream of. He is retired and financially comfortable. He is enjoying his life, the beauty of the Southwest, and his family.

Sam Dazzo was born in Colfax County, when New Mexico was still a territory. He is the son of Italian immigrants who came to America in the 1800s. His father came to America between 1890 and 1895. "He came through New Orleans and ended up in Albuquerque doing a little bit of everything. We were very poor, but very educated."

Dazzo and his brother are both graduates of the Law School. Nicholas Dazzo graduated in 1932; Sam graduated in 1934. Their sister Mary has an undergraduate degree from the University of Northern Colorado (Greeley), which she earned in 1926. Dazzo is very proud of his family's educational legacy. "My family believes in education, always did. I'm old that one grandparent was the resident of the University of Padua medical school in Italy. It is the oldest medical school in Europe."

Dazzo decided to go to law school in "1932, when I couldn't find a job after I got out of college. I guess that's still the same reason people go to law school.

"I do have some fond memories of my years at the Law School. There were only about 30 students in the whole school. I look at this picture of my graduating class and I can't believe that we all look so young. One of my classmates, Dave Evans, was stoking the furnace at a sorority house, and he was making beer—to the delight of the girls—and it exploded and they had to expel him. . . . I wasn't in a fraternity. I was too poor. I was lucky just to be in school.

"Professor Arthur was a dear old fellow. He had me over for Thanksgiving my freshman and junior year. He always had a Supreme Court Justice over, too. I also spent Christmas at his house. And Professor Folsom, the one the field is named after, he was quite a character. He said he was related to President McKinley, and had a rocking chair that had previously belonged to the President. He wouldn't let anybody sit in it. But, when I was a law student, he let me sit in that chair."



Frances and Samuel Dazzo (34)

After law school, Dazzo specialized in Indian law and oil and gas law. He represented seven Indian tribes, including the Southern Ute, Acoma, and Jicarilla Apache nations. He served as general counsel to his Indian clients, but represented "anybody and everybody who had a case and needed some help. Everybody from Nelson Bunker Hunt, the billionaire, to Joe Blow on the street, who didn't have a dime."

Dazzo had a distinguished legal career. In 1938, he was appointed to serve as a U.S. Commissioner, a position presently titled U.S. Magistrate. He served in the Judge Advocate General Department of the Army from 1942 to 1946. Shortly after World War II, he was admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court. He appears in the *History of New Mexico* for the years 1938 and 1945; and he is listed in *Who's Who in New Mexico*, and *Who's Who in the West*. Still, he says the most satisfying moment of his career was the day he retired.

If you ask Sam Dazzo if the practice of law is different than it used to be, he'll tell you, "You used to be able to trust a lawyer's word. If he said something, you could rely on it. These days, lawyers want to make hundreds of thousands of dollars right away. They don't care about their clients. They care about money. Judges have just as much responsibility for the decline of the profession. They don't control the lawyers."

Dazzo's disappointment in the legal profession hasn't prevented him from being a strong financial supporter of the Law School. He and his wife, Frances, provide a scholarship and a substantial monthly contribution. He says, "I love dear old CU. It reminds me of how poor I was when I went there. . . . I don't know how much money I've given. If I had to sit down and figure it out, I probably wouldn't give that much."

Sam Dazzo doesn't like to talk much about his success, but he may just be the real-life embodiment of the American dream.



*A law school's caliber can be measured in part by the achievements of its graduates, and CU School of Law alumni rank high on many scales. What's more, they—and other friends of the school—help ensure the school's solid reputation with their generous gifts of time, advice, and donations.*

**C**harles Berry ('75) Chuck Berry's roots run deep in El Paso County. He was raised in Colorado Springs, attended local schools, and graduated from St. Mary's High School in 1968. He is currently in his seventh term representing House District 21 in southern Colorado Springs. He was elected speaker of the Colorado House of Representatives by his colleagues in 1991, 1993, 1995, and 1997.

On his way to becoming house speaker, Berry earned a B.A. *magna cum laude* from CU in 1972 and a J.D. from the Law School in 1975. After law school, he was appointed deputy district attorney for the Fourth Judicial District, which includes El Paso and Teller Counties. In 1981 he was appointed El Paso County attorney, a position that he held for four years. He was elected to the Colorado House of Representatives in 1984.

Speaker Berry's committee memberships include chairmanship of the Interim Committee on Criminal Justice and the Joint Review Committee on Economic Development. He has been a member of the Tax Policy study. He has also served as chairman and vice chairman of the Executive Committee of Legislative Council, a member of the Executive Committee of the National Conference of State Legislatures, and a member of the Commission on Uniform State Laws. He also served on the Colorado Commission on the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution. In 1992 he received

the Law School's Alumni Award for Distinguished Achievement in Government and Public Service.

Berry continues to practice law. When the legislature is not in session, he is special counsel to the firm Holme, Roberts & Owen.

**S**amuel Dazzo ('34) Sam Dazzo doesn't like to talk about his successes much, but he may well be the embodiment of the American dream. The son of Italian immigrants, Dazzo was born in New Mexico when it was still a territory. Dazzo is very proud of his family's education legacy. "We were very poor, but very educated." Dazzo and his brother are both graduates of the CU Law School. Nicholas graduated in 1932; Sam received his degree in 1934. Their sister Annette graduated from the University of Northern Colorado in 1926. "My family believes in education, always did. I'm told that one grandparent was the president of the University of Padua Medical School in Italy. It is the oldest medical school in Europe."

Dazzo decided to go to law school in 1932 because, as he put it, "I couldn't find a job after college. I guess that's still the same reason people go to law school." He remembers his years at CU with nostalgia: "I do have some fond memories. . . . Professor Arthur was a dear old fellow. He had me over for Thanksgiving my freshman and junior



year. He always had a Supreme Court Justice over, too. I also spent Christmas over at his house. And Professor Folsom, the one the field is named after, he was quite a character. He said he was related to President McKinley, and had a rocking chair that had previously belonged to the president. He wouldn't let anybody sit in it. But, when I was a law student, he let me sit in that chair."

Dazzo has had a long and distinguished legal career. After law school, he set up a practice in Albuquerque, where he specialized in Indian law and oil and gas law. He represented seven Indian tribes at one time, including the Southern Ute, Acoma, and Apache nations. As Dazzo stated, he also represented "anybody and everybody who had a case and needed some help. Everybody from Nelson Bunker Hunt, the billionaire, to Joe Blow on the street who didn't have a dime." In 1938, he was appointed to serve as a U.S. commissioner, a position now known as U.S. magistrate. Shortly after World War II, he was admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court. Still, he says the most satisfying day of his career is the day he retired.

Over the years, Dazzo has been a loyal supporter of the Law School. Perhaps because of his financial struggles to stay in law school and his affection for CU, Dazzo has provided scholarships for CU law students for 16 years. During these years, he has been a faithful correspondent with the Dazzo scholars. Dazzo says he remains current with the Law School and Boulder through news from his grateful scholarship recipients. "I love dear old CU.

It reminds me of how poor I was when I went there. . . . I don't know how much money I've given. If I had to sit down and figure it out," Dazzo jokes, "I probably wouldn't have given that much!"

**N**icholas Doman ('35) Nicholas Doman was born in Budapest, Hungary, studied at the London School of Economics, and received his initial legal education at the University of Budapest before coming to Colorado, where he received his master of laws degree from CU in 1935. After obtaining a doctorate of law degree from the University of Budapest, he settled in to an academic life, first as a member of the research faculty at the University of Chicago and later as a professor at the College of William and Mary.

During World War II, he served as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army in Italy and, after the war, he began his career as an international lawyer. He was appointed assistant to the U.S. chief prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials and special representative of the U.S. chief of the Armed Forces in Europe at wartime trials in Budapest and Prague. His first deposition was taken from Rudolf Hess; one of his first trials was the prosecution of Hermann Goering. He helped to obtain confessions from 22 top German leaders, including Goering, whom Doman described as "one of the most brilliant persons I ever met."

In 1947, Doman entered the private practice of law in New York City with the predecessor of the firm with which he has been associated for over 45 years, Choate, Doman, Moore & Hahn. His international law practice has taken him all over the world, and involved him in many celebrated cases. From the early

