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knowledge of Hispanic culture, history and
traditions.*

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Time to Renew for 2018

A Journey in Time
– A Story About Dr. Lorenzo A. Trujillo –
“Living History From a Genealogy Foundation”

Article adapted from a writing by: Christine M. Arguello, Judge, U.S. District Court of Colorado

Scripture teaches that our decisions determine our destiny. Here is a story about a kid who grew to achieve his life goals and aspirations based on his decisions as influenced by his ancestors, parents, and family.

Law, Education, and the Arts
Children, Youth, and Families

Preface

Lorenzo Trujillo is a multi-generation Hispano/Mexicano/Indio whose family roots in the Southwest United States are grounded in his ancestors of Northern New Mexico and who have lived on their land grants outside of Taos, New Mexico since 1716, and later in San Luis, Colorado. He has committed his life to public service for the betterment of Spanish-speaking people in the United States. His values and cultural pride were established by his ancestors, grandparents, parents, and family. One of his cousins, Dario Gallegos, opened the first mercantile store in 1857 in San Luis, Colorado. The store remains open and is run by descendant family members.



Trujillo’s uncles were instrumental in opening the seating at the movie theatre in Brighton, Colorado to Hispanos so they were no longer required to sit in a segregated section. His mother, Oralia Duran Trujillo, wrote a seminal work in her mid-seventies: *Autumn Memories: My New Mexican Roots & Traditions*. She was a founder of the Southwest Dancers who presented traditional New Mexico dances (polkas, schottisches, vales, redondos, and cuadrillas) of the 1800’s.

Trujillo’s aunt, Eva Nuanez, is lauded one of the pioneers of traditional music of the Southwest leaving a legacy of recordings that stands among the great treasures of the Music of Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico.



Eva Nuanez performed traditional music with her brother – Filbert, guitarist, and husband of Oralia Trujillo, until he passed away. ^{His sister} ~~She~~ was the first folklorico dancer at Casa Bonita where she performed for approximately a decade.



Filbert Trujillo served in the US Navy 1945-1946, and again from 1947-1948.

Lorenzo's wife, Ellen Alires-Trujillo, and her Alires family are also from the people of Northern New Mexico.

She, too, with her family continue to pass on the traditions of the early families from New Mexico. Ellen, an attorney, was a co-author with others of: *Hispanic Pioneers in Colorado and New Mexico*, published by the Colorado Society

of Hispanic Genealogy. Ellen's brother, Benjamin Alires, his wife, AnaLee, (a distant cousin), with the help of a family committee, authored a family history book titled: *Historic Southwest Rendezvous: La Familia de Cayetano Martinez y Martina Lucero*. Trujillo and his family are proud members of the Colorado Society of Hispanic Genealogy. These are the foundations of Trujillo's life and journey.



Today, Lorenzo Trujillo is a private attorney practicing in the areas of Estate Planning and Administration, Business, Corporate and Non-Profit Entities, Education Law, and as an American Arbitration National Panelist practicing: Mediation, Arbitration, and Negotiation. (See: *TrujilloLegal.com*) He was the Assistant Dean of Students and Professional Programs at the University of Colorado Law School, Partner/Member in the law firm of Sherman and Howard LLC, and past General Counsel to the Hispanic National Bar Association in Washington, D.C. Since 2015, Trujillo has focused his energies on developing a premier mentoring program for aspiring law students (Law School...Yes We Can) and a superior mariachi program for Colorado through Metropolitan State University's Music Department as an affiliate professor of music. The performing mariachi is known as the Mariachi Los Correcaminos de MSU Denver. (Facebook: *Mariachi Los Correcaminos de MSU Denver*). In 2016, he was appointed *Direttore della musica sacra ispanico* of the Conservatory of Music for the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Denver, a highly prestigious position that is unique in the United States Catholic Church.

Aristotle said, what you do repeatedly is who you are. Over the past 66 years of Trujillo's life, he has followed the same call to focus his work as a culture bearer and defender of the rights of children and their families through education, law and the arts.

The Arts as a Path to Self-Confidence in Understanding of Culture

At age of 16, Lorenzo Trujillo joined the Mariachi Alegre de San Cayetano, where in later years, he became the music director of this community mariachi and choir until 2007. This group was deeply embedded in the Mexican/Hispano communities of Colorado and was asked to play for many family events from birth to death.

As early as 1969, Trujillo co-founded the Guadalupe Mestizo Folklórico Dance School in the north Denver community at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church. The school and program teach children Mexican folklórico dance and is still operating today. He then started to teach folklórico dance, music, and history at the University of Colorado at Denver and Boulder and gave over 2,000 lecture-demonstrations, concerts, and classes throughout Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming, California, Arizona, and Texas, teaching about Mexican, Hispano, and Latino culture. His focus was to teach youth pride in their history and culture through the arts. As one of the founders and chairs of the Asociación Nacional de Grupos Folklóricos, he directed and taught at national workshops and conferences.



This led him to serve as an artist of the National Endowment for the Arts. Since those early days, Trujillo co-founded Hilos Culturales (Southwest Cultural Arts Organization: *Hilos Culturales.org*), and the Chicano Humanities and Arts Council (<http://www.chacweb.org>). In 1989, he co-founded with his aunt and father, the Southwest Musicians, a group which specializes in the presentation of music of the 1840's in Colorado and New Mexico.

He has recorded seven CD's with these groups and still maintains an active performance schedule for community events. Today, all of these organizations are successfully offering classes to youth and adults through conferences, workshops, and community outreach presenting Hispano/Mexicano/Indio heritage in context with the arts.

In the early years of his life, his music and dance interests led Trujillo to complete a Master of Arts degree in Theatre Dance with post-graduate studies in music, violin and voice. He completed a Doctorate in Education at the University of San Francisco and wrote a



psychological/education dissertation study that focused on self-concept and cognitive growth through the arts among low-achieving students at Mission High School in San Francisco, California. He replicated this study in the 1990's in Adams County Public Schools years later, which produced the same high degree of success among participating students. For his work in the arts, he was awarded the Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts in 1996. In 2004, he was presented with the Premio Hilos Culturales designating him a Distinguished Traditional Folk Artist in the traditions of Spanish Colonial Folk Music and Dance of Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado and in 2009, he was inducted into the Chicano Music Hall of Fame. In 2011, he was awarded the Tesoro Oro recognition from the Tesoro Cultural Center.

In 2015, Trujillo joined the part-time faculty of Metropolitan State University in the Music Department. His leadership with the student mariachi has provided students with opportunities to explore Mexican/Hispano/Latino heritage through music. The group has performed with the Colorado Symphony, and for the Colorado Music Educators' Association, and The Mexican Consulate, among many others. His music has taken him on tours of Italy, Ireland, Mexico, Peru, and to many locations in the United States.



The Law and Education

Returning to the history that resulted in his work today, Trujillo decided to study law because of the connection between public policy and the factors effecting successful achievement of minority and linguistically diverse students in society – and, because his father would not rest until he was educated in the law. Coming from a traditional Hispano family of Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico, there was no alternative to obedience to his father's wishes. So, he went to law school.

Upon completing a second doctorate in law at the University of Colorado Law School, Trujillo entered in to a new chapter in life working for the Law Firm of Frie and Arndt. A few years later, Trujillo became a named partner - Frie, Arndt & Trujillo, LLP. During these years, he worked closely with matters of public policy to advise in the revision the school suspension/expulsion law of Colorado as a Task Force member of the Colorado Lawyer's Committee to include due process rights for students and a more clearly defined process and procedure for students and administration. He successfully litigated multiple cases dealing with matters in immigration, social security disability, employment and wage disputes, wrongful termination, not-for-profit organizations, family law, business law and many other issues in a general civil law practice. Many of his clients were Spanish-speaking Mexicans or Hispanos who were seeking access to the courts and resolution to complex problems in their lives. The case that Trujillo remembers with great fondness was when representing a migrant family who worked in the fields of Longmont, Colorado. The hiring farmer decided not to pay the mother, father and three children for their summer work on his farm and threatened them if they would pursue legal action for payment. In the end, the farmer paid the workers under a notice of treble damages and litigation. The family paid Trujillo with 100 pounds of fresh pinto beans and two chickens.

Trujillo left private practice to work with students in Adams County Public Schools. The district he worked in had a very high Mexican/Chicano low socio-economic base with a high dropout rate, expulsion rate, suspension rate, and low achievement. He worked for the schools as an administrator and as in-house counsel to address these matters from within the system. His purpose was to directly work with the students, their families, and community to reduce the high dropout rate, expulsion rate, suspension rate, and increase achievement using the law and his knowledge of applied curriculum.

While working in the schools, Trujillo was able to successfully fight numerous battles on behalf of non-English speaking children and their families. As an advocate, Trujillo negotiated on behalf of the Associated Directors of Bilingual Education (ADOBE) for the enforcement of an agreement between the Colorado Department of Education and ADOBE on behalf of limited-English-proficient children in public schools. During this time of the Colorado Accountability Act/Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) and the Leave No Child Behind Act, Trujillo successfully advocated on behalf of Spanish-speaking children for testing of cognitive knowledge in their native language rather than testing for knowledge in a language that is not understood by the children and not reflecting their true knowledge.

He served as co-counsel in the statewide battle to defeat Amendment 31, which would have forced non-English speaking children in the public schools into a one-year English immersion program and opened the door to lawsuits against public school employees for speaking with students in their native language and with liability to extend beyond a student's high school graduation by seven years. This work took Trujillo, his co-counsel, and a large community of interested parents to the Colorado Supreme Court on two occasions where he was successful in winning the cases, and then, to the general electorate to win the defeat. This is the only state where the "Unz Initiative" was defeated in the U.S. A similar initiative successfully passed in Massachusetts, Arizona, and California.

It was during this period that Trujillo implemented a truancy reduction project in the Adams County Schools that became a statewide model based on its success to keep kids in school. The five-year study was published by the University of California at Davis, *Journal of Juvenile Law and Policy* (*School Truancy: A Case Study of a Successful Truancy Reduction Model in the Public Schools, UC Davis Journal of Juvenile Law & Policy, Vol 10, Winter 2006, No. 1, pp. 69-95*). The study was acknowledged and praised by First Lady Laura Bush in a letter she sent to Trujillo which stated, "President Bush and I are grateful to educators...like you who are taking positive steps to intervene before young people have strayed too far." While serving as in-house counsel in the truancy program and litigating approximately 350 cases a year, Trujillo also served as the high school Principal at Lester Arnold High School. The strict discipline and high expectations of formerly low achieving, mostly low socio-economic Hispanic students resulted in their academic successes, gains on the CSAP, and high school graduation. In 2004, the high school was awarded the Governor's Distinguished Improvement Award to recognize the school as one of the most improved public schools in Colorado.

The University of Colorado Law School Alumni Association commended Trujillo for his work in education and law with the Distinguished Achievement in Education and Law Award in 2002.

Colorado Hispanic Bar Association, Hispanic National Bar Association, and Colorado Bar Association

As an attorney, Trujillo has been active in the Colorado Hispanic Bar Association (CHBA) and the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA), as well as the Colorado Bar Association (CBA). As an officer in these organizations, including President of the CHBA, Regional President of HNBA, and General Counsel to the HNBA, Trujillo led numerous efforts to address issues effecting Hispanic/Latino communities in Colorado and the nation. As referred to earlier, he was very successful in addressing language minority issues and educational issues of Mexican and

Hispanic students in the schools. However, as a statewide and regional spokesman for the rights and respect of diverse members of our society, he authored numerous media commentaries to address legislation and other policies that potentially would impact Chicanos, Hispanos, Mexicans and other ethnic communities of color.

In September of 2006, Trujillo was appointed to the prestigious position of General Counsel of the Hispanic National Bar Association. In this capacity, he worked with the National President and the Board of Governors to represent the more than 33,000 Hispanic/Latino attorneys in the United States and the communities they represent. During his term of office, national projects were initiated to educate youth about the American legal system. During this time, he was able to influence national policy and statewide legislation. For his advocacy and successes, the HNBA presented Trujillo with the prestigious National Lawyer of the Year award.

Trujillo served on the Judicial Nominating Commission for the 17th Judicial District, being appointed by the Governor, Attorney General, and Chief of the Colorado Supreme Court. In this capacity, he was influential in gaining the appointment of two Hispanic women to the County and District Court benches in Adams County. However, as CHBA President, his successes were even greater in getting judges throughout Colorado appointed that are understanding of the Hispanic/Latino issues in the courts. He served on other Supreme Court Commissions, as well, addressing issues of children, families, and culture.

University of Colorado Law School and the Law Firm of Cage Williams, P.C. (subsequently merged with Sherman and Howard LLC)

In 2004, Assistant Dean Lorenzo Trujillo joined the administration and faculty of the University of Colorado Law School and the law firm of Cage Williams, P.C.

As Assistant Dean of Students and Professional Programs at CU Law, Trujillo was instrumental in raising the focus on diversity. Diverse student admissions and enrollment increased in the seven years he was involved in recruiting and admissions. Scholarships awarded to diverse students increased during this period. CU is a state school and as a result of the end of affirmative action, all diverse students were admitted with the highest credentials along with their non-diverse classmates. This required focused efforts to identify these students from a national pool of applicants. Trujillo led a school-wide diversity initiative that resulted in a series of recommendations to address concerns and needs of diverse students at CU Law. Two Colorado Law graduates from this period became prominent Colorado legislators: Representative Crisanta Duran, Speaker of the House and Representative Daniel Pabon.

On a national front, Trujillo worked to address American Bar Association (ABA) Accreditation Standards so that they reflected Michigan University court decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court. Based on the brief co-authored by Trujillo and Jimmie Reyna, the ABA dropped its language to allow schools to be accredited based on "efforts" to diversify. In amended language, the ABA requires "commitment that is demonstrated by concrete action." Interpretation 211-3 provides, "[t]he determination of a law school's satisfaction of such obligations is based on the totality of the law school's actions and the results achieved." (emphasis added) This is a matter of national public policy that impacts all diverse law school applicants.

During his years at Colorado Law, he engaged in research resulting in a five-year study addressing: *The Relationship Between Law School and the Bar Exam: A Look at Assessment and Student Success*, University of Colorado Law Review, Vol. 78, 2007, 69-114. The article was recognized as one of the top 10 most downloaded law research articles in the country by Social Science Research Network (SSRN) and was recommended by The Aspen Institute for its readership. The article provided aspiring attorneys with meaningful insight into the elements of the Bar Exam and to understand the key factors of success or failure in passing the exam.

In 2015, Trujillo became the first President of the Board of Law School... Yes We Can (Si Se Puede), the preeminent pre-law undergraduate mentoring program in the United States. This was a project developed by Federal District Court Judge Christine Arguello to answer the pipeline issues related to the shortage of qualified undergraduate students aspiring to and entering into law schools across the United States. LSYWC has become one of America's premier mentoring programs for aspiring attorneys wishing to enter law school supported by an army of volunteer judges, attorneys, and current law students. In 2017, Trujillo's two-year term presidency ended having achieved the establishment of the organization and having welcomed three incoming classes of Fellows into the program. Lourdes Trujillo, his granddaughter was inducted into the 2017 incoming class of LSYWC.

Over these years, Trujillo has maintained an AV "Preeminent" Rating (Highest Possible Rating in both Legal Ability and Ethical Standards) as an attorney from Martindale Hubbell, a Superb Rating from Avvo in Estate Planning and Business, and in 2017 was named a Top Lawyer in recognition for Excellence and Achievement by the legal community. This was highlighted when the Colorado Hispanic Bar presented Trujillo with their Lifetime Achievement Award in 2017.

God, Family, and Country

Trujillo is active in the Catholic Church and plays for community services on a regular basis. His music keeps him grounded and with the people he grew up with and loves.

He loves spending time with his wife, three children, their spouses, his seven grandchildren and three great grandchildren. Trujillo and his family are active in local, regional, and national issues that affect their lives, their communities and the especially our youth. Finally, he is especially active in his music life directing the student mariachi at Metropolitan State University and the Southwest Musicians – both presenting aspects of traditional Hispano/Mexicano/Chicano culture in Colorado.

Trujillo believes that each person can achieve his or her desires if willing to pursue his or her specific goals. There is no easy path other than hard work, persistence, diligence, and ganas.