

**Harry Hom Dow  
Suffolk Law School 1929**

**Harry Hom Dow was born on March 13, 1904, in Hudson, Mass., to Hom Soon and Alice Dow, both Chinese immigrants.<sup>1</sup> He was the oldest of six children in a family of three sons and three daughters.<sup>2</sup> After Harry was born, he and his parents relocated from Hudson to Boston, where Hom Soon Dow opened a laundry business, the H.S. Dow Laundry Company, that became quite successful.<sup>3</sup> Harry attended the Dwight Grammar School, presumably in Boston, for eight years.<sup>4</sup>**

**In 1916, Hom Soon Dow passed away, leaving management of the laundry, which had begun to suffer in the face of rising competition, to his wife.<sup>5</sup> Although Harry was still in school at the time, he helped his mother, who had no business experience, take over the laundry, move it to a new location (70 West Dedham Street in Boston) and make it thrive.<sup>6</sup> He worked at the laundry for several years, then began working in the insurance business, all while still in school.<sup>7</sup> He took one course (mechanical drawing) during the summer of 1918 at Lincoln Preparatory School, formerly Northeastern Preparatory School, on Huntington Avenue in Boston, then attended Boston English High School from September of 1918 to March of 1921.<sup>8</sup>**

**By 1920, 15-year-old Harry Dow, his mother, and his siblings, Nellie (14), Howard (12), Nettie (8), Hamilton (6) and Nora (4), were living at 371 Shawmut Avenue in Boston.<sup>9</sup> A 1929 newspaper article about the H.S. Dow Laundry Company states that Harry continued to work in the insurance business after leaving high school, but by 1925, he had returned to his family's laundry.<sup>10</sup>**

**In 1925, Harry Dow enrolled at Suffolk Law School.<sup>11</sup> On his admission application, he listed as one of his references Joseph F. O'Connell, a Boston lawyer and former United States congressman who served as on the Suffolk Law School Board of Trustees from its inception and as its Vice President from 1919 to 1936.<sup>12</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Suffolk Law School Application for Admission, September 9, 1925, Suffolk Law School Registrations 1925-1926, A-L, no application number; "Chinese Mother Wins Big Battle," [Boston Globe], October 6, 1929. Note: It is believed, but has not been confirmed, that the article about Harry Dow's mother and the family's laundry business appeared in the *Boston Globe*; it could have appeared in another local paper.

<sup>2</sup> United States Census 1920, Massachusetts, Suffolk, Boston, Enumeration District 171, Sheet [?]A.

<sup>3</sup> "Chinese Mother Wins Big Battle," Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> SLS Application for Admission, Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> "Chinese Mother Wins Big Battle," Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> "Chinese Mother Wins Big Battle," Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> "Chinese Mother Wins Big Battle," Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> SLS Application for Admission, Ibid, Appendices, Transcripts from Lincoln Preparatory School and Boston English High School.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census 1920, Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> "Chinese Mother Wins Big Battle," Ibid.; SLS Application for Admission, Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> SLS Application for Admission, Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> SLS Application for Admission, Ibid.; "O'Connell, Joseph Francis," from the Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=O000026>. Note: Various Suffolk Law School catalogues and directories were consulted to determine O'Connell's years of service on the SLS Board of Trustees.

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By this time, Harry had moved to another house on Shawmut Avenue, number 385, with his mother and three of his siblings.<sup>13</sup> He began working for the United States Immigration and Naturalization Services in 1928.<sup>14</sup> He graduated from Suffolk Law School in 1929 and that same year became the first Chinese American to be admitted to the bar in Massachusetts.<sup>15</sup> By 1930, he was still living at 385 Shawmut Avenue.<sup>16</sup> The 1930 census states that he was a lawyer at that time, probably for the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services.<sup>17</sup> Also, the 1936 Suffolk Law Alumni Directory lists his address as 124 West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street, New York City, but it is unclear whether this was a home or business address.<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, by 1948, Harry Dow had a private law practice, dealing specifically with immigration law, with offices in Boston and New York City.<sup>19</sup>

Harry Dow retired in 1963 and spent the next twenty years doing volunteer work in Boston, serving as a legal adviser for many organizations that were dedicated to serving the city's less privileged citizens.<sup>20</sup> He was particularly concerned with issues facing Boston's Chinatown neighborhood and his home neighborhood of the South End.<sup>21</sup> He served on the boards of many organizations, including Boston Legal Services, the South End Health Center, South End Neighborhood Action Program, Inc. and Central Boston Elder Services, Inc. and advised groups including the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association.<sup>22</sup>

Harry Dow also served in World War II as a captain in the Army Intelligence Corps and in the Korean War.<sup>23</sup>

Harry Dow died in January of 1985 after being hit by a truck on Boylston Street in Boston.<sup>24</sup> He was survived by his second wife, Rita (Lee), four sons, Frederick H., Alexander H., Roderick H. and William H., one daughter, Mu Ying Dow, and six grandchildren.<sup>25</sup> William and Mu Ying Dow are children by his first marriage.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> SLS Application for Admission, *Ibid.*; United States Census 1930, Massachusetts, Suffolk, Boston, Enumeration District 13-198, Sheet 1A.

<sup>14</sup> Obituary, *Boston Globe*, January 24, 1985.

<sup>15</sup> Suffolk Law Alumni Directory, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1936, p. 43; Obituary, *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Census 1930, *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Census 1930, *Ibid.*; Obituary, *Ibid.*; Dow, Frederick H. "Harry H. Dow, Esq." Harry H. Dow Memorial Legal Assistance Fund Nineteenth Year Annual Report: 2003-2004, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> Suffolk Law Alumni Directory, *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Obituary, *Ibid.*; Dow, Frederick H., *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Obituary, *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Obituary, *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Obituary, *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Obituary, *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Obituary, *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Obituary, *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Obituary, *Ibid.*

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