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## James Griffith

Born: 1929 Died: 1951

*James A. Griffith was a member of the 1950 United States F.I.S. Team which skied at Aspen; he was firmly in second place in the Downhill when he took a bone-jarring fall near the finish line. He crawled and clawed across the finish line, not a winner of the race, but a finisher to be sure. Griffith did win the National Ski Association downhill title in 1950 while skiing for the Sun Valley Ski Club.*

James A. "Jimmy" Griffith was born in Boise, Idaho, on February 14, 1929, later moving to Ketchum, Idaho, in the shadow of the world famous Sun Valley Ski Area. Jimmy attended the University of Colorado after the end of World War II at the time when the rumblings of the Colorado ski boom were starting to be heard. It was not the popular publicized sport it now is, but Jimmy's skiing ability was well known to those who skied.

Jimmy was dark-haired and stocky, with a lust for everything he did, and would not have been taken for the athletic celebrity he was had you not known him. His attitude was remarkably even-handed, as Dean Harry Carlson of Colorado University stated: "Some young athletes are inclined to think that the little puddle of fame they are sitting in is an ocean. Jim Griffith was more likely to hail the puddle sitters than to think himself worthy of notice. James Albert Griffith was one of the ten finest athletes ever to attend Colorado University."

As quiet and self-effacing as Jim was in the college crowd, he was brilliant, hard-nosed, and aggressive on skis. Jim was a member of the United States 1950 F.I.S. Ski Team during the meet at Aspen. He was apparently flashing to a second place finish in the Downhill when he took a bone-jarring spill near the finish line, ending up far down the list, but finishing! Jim Griffith did win the National Ski Association National Downhill title in 1950 while skiing for the Sun Valley Ski Club.

Jim entered the United States Air Force after graduating from college and was named to the United States Olympic Alpine Team for the 1952 Winter Olympics. While on leave from the Air Force, Jim was practicing a downhill at Alta, Utah, in

preparation for the games, when he left the high speed turn and badly fractured a leg. A blood clot developed, and three days later, on December 6, 1951, Olympic hopeful Jimmy Griffith, died in a Salt Lake City, Utah, hospital. He was twenty-two years old.

James Albert Griffith was elected to the National Ski Hall of Fame in Ishpeming, Michigan in 1971.

