

#206

## Tom Corcoran

Born: 1931

*Tommy Corcoran burst on the ski scene in the '50s, when Dartmouth dominated U.S. racing, in the era of Brookie Dodge, Bill Beck, Ralph Miller, and Chick Igaya.*

Shortly before WWII, after returning to the U.S. from Japan where Tom was born, Tom's parents split up. Tom's mom remarried the chief engineer of Wheeler Airlines, a bush airline based in Quebec's Laurentian Mountains, near Mont Tremblant.

Young Tommy was invited to attend an English-speaking tutorial school run by the Wheeler family, which also owned the Gray Rocks Inn. School ended at noon each day, and the kids skied all afternoon on the rope tow hill behind the inn. While academically impaired, unintentional byproducts of this one-room school were three grads who skied for their country: Lucile Wheeler and Pete Kirby for Canada, and Tom for the U.S.

When Tom was 12, his parents sent him to private schools in New Hampshire, including Exeter Academy, to fill the academic holes. Tom went on to Dartmouth, which in the early '50s attracted more than half of the U.S. Alpine Ski Team. It was the springboard to Tom's racing success, and by the time he graduated in 1954, he was winning major ski races across North America.

Between 1954 and 1960, he made the 1956 & 1960 U.S. Olympic Ski Teams, and the 1958 U.S. World Championship Team. In between teams, Tom spent two years as a U.S. Naval Officer on active duty, and earned an MBA from the Harvard Business School.

During his seven years of international ski racing, he had many victories, including four U.S. National Championships, the Roch Cup twice, the Harriman Cup, Parsenn Gold Cup, Silver Belt, Kandahar of the Andes and Quebec Kandahar, and the National Championships of Canada, Chile, and Argentina.

Tom's most significant result was placing 4<sup>th</sup> in the 1960 Olympic Giant Slalom at Squaw Valley after starting 26<sup>th</sup>, the highest placing for a U.S. male skier in the event until Bode Miller won the silver medal in 2002. Tom also placed 9<sup>th</sup> in the 1960 Olympic Slalom. His last skiing victory was winning three events in the 1968 U.S. Master's Championships.

After retiring from international skiing after the 1960 Olympics, Tom worked for three years in finance in CA before landing the job of Assistant to the President of the Aspen Ski Corp. in Aspen, Colorado. After a 2-year apprenticeship in ski area management, Tom quit his job and returned east to locate a mountain he could develop.

In 1965, he found his mountain next to an undeveloped hamlet called Waterville Valley in new Hampshire's White Mountain National Forest. Tom founded the Waterville Company, Inc. to build and run the ski operations and other recreational facilities, and to serve as master developer for a planned upscale resort community in the scenic hamlet.

For the next 35 years, he served as the Company's president and CEO, building a ski area that annually attracted more than 300,000 skiers and served as host for 10 Alpine World Cup events, including 2 World Cup Finals, more than any other North American resort at the time. The readers of SKI and Tennis Magazines routinely rated Waterville Valley among the best 50 U.S. resorts.

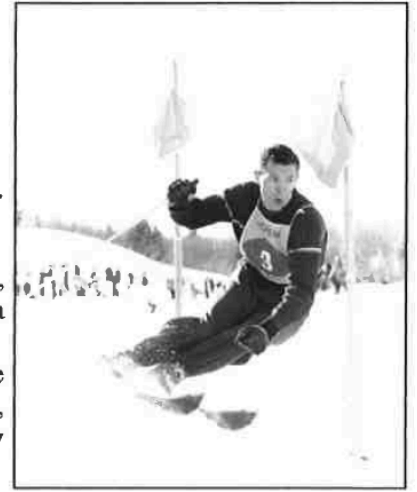
The Company sold the ski facilities in the early '90s, but retained all the remaining developable land in the village, and has continued to build it out according to plan. The pedestrian, low-rise village, which has won numerous planning awards, now has 7000 beds and a wide range of quality services. It will not be fully complete for another decade.

Tom was active in many ski industry organizations. He was a director of the National Ski Areas Association for 20 years, and served as its chairman for two years. He was also chairman of the American Ski Federation, a coordinating group of ski industry associations. Tom served more than 20 years as an elected director of the U.S. Ski Association. And he served 35 years as an elected Selectman in the Town of Waterville Valley, the longest term for an elected town official in New Hampshire.

Tom and two partners started Alta Sport, a specialty ski shop, in California in 1961, and he owned 20% of Scott USA (ski poles) for 5 years until the company was sold in 1970. He was Racing Editor of SKI Magazine for 7 years, and in 1964 earned full-certification in Colorado as a PSIA-qualified ski instructor.

Tom was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1978 as both a Skisport Builder and Ski Athlete. He received the Blegen Award in 1991, the highest award of the U.S. Ski Association. In 1995, he was elected to the Rolex International Ski Racing Hall of Fame.

Tom retired in 1999, but still serves as his company's chairman. He and his wife, Daphne, spent most of the next 4 years in their sailboat on a 20,000-mile circumnavigation of the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea. They live adjacent to the ocean on Seabrook Island, just south of Charleston, South Carolina, play golf, and ski in the spring. They now have a motorboat that they took 2700 miles this past summer from the Florida Keys to the Ottawa River in Quebec, near where Tom learned to ski.



*Berko Photo, Aspen, CO*  
**Tom Corcoran enroute to winning the Roch Cup in Aspen for the second time, 1957.**