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## Warren A. Miller

Born: 1924

Information submitted by Ben Rinaldo in a nomination letter to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame

*Warren Miller was born in Hollywood in 1924, and grew up during the depression in a dysfunctional family. In retrospect, this background gave him his work ethic and is what has driven him until he has become world-famous as an entertainer, filmmaker, and writer.*

Warren Miller purchased his first still camera at the age of nine, for thirty-five cents. This started his career that has continued into the twenty-first century.

In junior high school woodshop, in 1938, Warren built his first surfboard and that same year he purchased a pair of pine skis with toe straps in a garage sale for two dollars.

Graduating from high school sixty days after Pearl Harbor was bombed, he enrolled in the University of Southern California and joined the Naval Officer's Training Program as soon as he was eighteen years old (October, 1942). He completed six semesters of college before going to officer's training school in Chicago, while changing his major every semester. While at USC, he self-published his first book, *The Navy Goes to College*.

During 1943, paper was hard to come by, so the book was printed as a class project of a friend who taught print shop at a local junior college. Warren only had to pay for the spiral binding of the book. It cost twenty-one cents a copy and he sold the one thousand copies for a dollar each.

His overseas career was in the backwaters of the war in the Pacific, though his boat was sunk in a hurricane in route from Guadalcanal to Pearl Harbor.

With the bonus he received when he was discharged, he bought his first 8mm motion picture camera and then cashed in his war bonds to publish two thousand copies of his second book, *Are My Skis on Straight?* This was a collection of cartoons that he had drawn while on leave from the Navy, skiing at Yosemite during Christmas of 1945. The book cost sixty-five cents a copy to print and he personally sold each copy for two dollars.

During the winter of 1946/47, Warren and his partner Ward Baker skied every resort in the west while living in a small trailer that was only eight-feet long, by four-feet wide. Warren paid his expenses by selling copies of the book, and drew additional cartoons that he sold for one dollar each. That spring he had enough cartoons to publish another book called *Nice Try George*. Living in the parking lot for another winter, Warren tried ski racing and went from a never-before-racer to a class "A" racer, placing second in the Far West Ski Association Championships and competing in the National Championships at Sun Valley, Idaho.

Warren's book about the winter of living in a trailer in the parking lots of the best ski resorts in the west, *Wine Women, Warren and Skis* is now in its seventeenth edition since 1957, with over 100,000 copies sold from the stage, at personal appearances, and book signings.

In 1948/49, he taught skiing at Sun Valley, where his movie career was jump-started when the President of Bell and Howell, Chuck Percy, and the Comptroller, Hal Geneen, were in his ski classes. They made arrangements to loan him his first 16mm movie camera, with him repaying them the \$265 out of his future earnings. Two of his ten-minute multi-sports films became finalists for Academy Awards.

In 1949/50, Warren taught skiing at the then, brand new resort of Squaw Valley, California, which at the time had only one chair lift and two rope tows.

Warren has three grown children who have followed in his footsteps: Scott, an award winning cameraman/director of television commercials with his own production company. His daughter, Chris is a still photographer for a weekly newspaper in Southern California who has her own successful wedding photography business. Kurt is a marketing man who raised the money to purchase Warren's film company ten years ago, operates it today, and has overseen its exponential growth. Warren however, still writes the scripts and narrates the annual feature-length film for him.

Warren believes strongly in putting as much back into the "human system" as possible. He spends a lot of time attending special events to raise money for causes he believes in.

With Warren's pre-sold name, great energy, and limitless creativity and such a unique perspective and sense of humor, he is ready for this next phase of his life: his new job as Director of Skiing at THE YELLOWSTONE CLUB in Montana. Tim and Edra Blixseth's dream of a private ski resort with a world class golf course and 13-miles of private trout fishing on the West Fork of The Gallatin River. At the same time, he is also involved with his other career of documenting a lifetime spent in search of the free lift ticket by telling his stories with THE WRITTEN WORD.

Warren Miller was elected to the U.S National Ski Hall of Fame in 1978.