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Edwin Eaton

Born: 1910 Died: 1983

Information submitted in a nomination letter to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame by Walt Schoenknecht with Charlie Gibson

Ski sport and organized skiing in the United States have been blessed over the years with many hardworking and dedicated individuals. No one was ever more dedicated to the sport than Eaton, nor served better.

Graduating from Penn State in 1933, he connected with the Hamilton United Aircraft Corporation near Hartford, Connecticut, where he worked until his retirement.

Ed had skied for several years, but his first contact with organized skiing came in 1939 when he joined the Hartford Ski Club. Ed gave completely of his time and effort. He was elected Director of the Hartford Club and served as director for twenty years. He was president of the Hartford Club on three occasions, the only person ever to serve more than one term as president. He is a life member of the club and a senior downhill, slalom and combined champion several times.

In 1945, Ed was named a Director of the United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association (now USSA – Eastern Division) and remained a director for twelve years. From 1946 to 1949, he served as Secretary of the USSA and was elected president in 1949. He was re-elected president, again, in 1950 and in 1955. Ed was active as chairman of the executive and publicity committees and a member of the amateur instructor, visual aids, editorial and ski patrol committees. He became an approved amateur ski instructor, a uniform test judge and a certified alpine official. In 1951, he was elected the first honorary life member and in 1952 was made an Honorary Life Director of the USEASA.

Ed was active in the development of the Connecticut Ski Council, and served as a director in 1947 and as a race chairman in 1947, 1948, and 1949. In 1953, the Connecticut Ski Council presented him with a scroll honoring him for his services to skiing in Connecticut, the nation and the world. The citation expressed the gratitude of Connecticut skiers for his years of service to skiing and ski organizations.

The National Ski Association (now the United States Ski Association) elected Ed to its board of directors in 1950, and he was elected to the office of vice-president the same year. In 1952, he became president and was active as chairman of the N.S.A. Downhill and Slalom and Eligibility Rules Committee. He was a member of the finance, editorial and press relations committees, and also with the 1956 Olympic Ski Games Committee. He was a nationally certified alpine official and served as chief or race referee at major competitions, including the United States Senior and Junior Championships, the North American Championships and the American Internationals.

There was always a need for safety in skiing, and Ed organized the Hartford Ski Club Patrol and was appointed a National Ski Patrolman, in 1944. He was the first N.S.P.S. Section Chief in Connecticut and then regional chairman for the state. He received two yellow N.S.P.S. Merit Star Awards and in 1962 received the Purple Merit Star for saving the life of a fellow skier.

In 1953, Eaton went to Europe to represent the United States at the World Ski Congress in Innsbruck, Austria. At the meeting, he became vice-president of the F.I.S. (International Ski Association) and a member of the F.I.S. Executive Council. He was presiding officer and senior official at the opening of the 1954 World Ski Championships in Sweden. These were exciting days for Ed as there was a private luncheon with the Crown Prince Olaf, and he was the personal guest of the King at the Homenkollen in Oslo, Norway.

Ed continued to work for and with skiing. There are many other outstanding awards such as, being selected for the American Ski Trophy, working as an associate editor of the *American Ski Annual* and the *Eastern Ski Bulletin*. He was a vice-president of the Mad River Corporation, and was honored by the Amateur Ski Club of New York when they elected him their first life member.

But above all, he possessed a deep love of the sport and enjoyed every minute of it whether it be helping a child on the kiddy hill, or sitting in council with skiing's highest echelons or just making as many fun runs as a day would allow. When well into his sixties, he skied the lip of Tuckerman's famed Headwall.

No sport could ever get more out of any one man.

Edward Eaton was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1980.

