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Bill Lash
Born: 1928

Bill Lash's role in the organization and development of professional ski teachers, certification standards, and education of American instructors is a matter of record.

Bill Lash began skiing in Southern Idaho, in 1940. A native of Twin Falls, Idaho, Lash met Claude Jones of Magic Mountain, Idaho, in the summer of 1945. Lash, a draftsman at the time, helped Jones design and build an early ski lift. For his services, Jones promised Lash he would help make him a ski teacher. Lash was the first ski school director at Magic Mountain in 1947. He was certified by the Intermountain Ski Association in 1950. This was the same year Lash and other ski school directors formed the Intermountain Ski Instructors Association. Lash became president of ISIA in 1951, organized the association, wrote its articles of incorporation and by-laws, and created a working board of directors. Lash claims to have been influenced by Alf Engen, Alta, and Friedl Lang, ski coach at the University of Utah. Lang was a former Arleberger, Hannes Schneider Ski School and Eastern Certified. Lang had begun a program for recreational skiers at Utah and also started the first Methods of Teaching Skiing Class at the college level in the United States. This was to play an important part in Lash's ski life.

Lash learned his ski teaching from Jones, by reading Otto Lang's *Downhill Skiing* and by shadowing ski classes of the Sun Valley Ski School. His interest in certification began here where he met many United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association Certified Ski Teachers. The Eastern was the best plan in the U.S.

While an undergraduate student at Utah, Bill Lash was asked to teach the class, *Methods of Teaching Skiing* and to direct the University in Utah's ski program. Lash became involved in instructor training programs and incorporated this into the Intermountain Ski Instructors Association. Lash made contact with the Far West Ski Instructors Association and the Rocky Mountain Ski Instructors Association in 1952. Lash had met Willy Schaeffler in 1951 through Friedl Lang. Lang and Schaeffler had discussed the importance of the United States having a national, professional ski teachers' identity – as in Europe and Canada. An early meeting of ski school directors and instructors was held in Estes Park, Colorado, in June of 1952. At this meeting were Willy Schaeffler, Sepp Ruschp, Bob Law, Phil Clark Jr., Junior Bounous, Gordon Wren, John Litchfield and Lash. Lash considers this the important milestone in ski teachers' organization development. Bill Lash, in cooperation with the late Tommy Tyndall, published a report: *Progress Report on the Development of Certification of Ski Instructors of America* – and an evolution toward a national affiliation of instructors.

In 1957, Lash was appointed Chairman, Certification Committee, National Ski Association. In 1958, in Alta, he was finally able to bring together a meeting of instructors from all seven divisions of the National Ski Association. The meeting was a week long session and discussions included certification standards and technique. Lash took movies and notes on the hill sessions. From this Bill Lash published his *Outline of Ski Teaching Methods* in 1958 and Second Edition in 1959. This was the first complete ski instructors' manual distributed on a national level. Lash organized the first national ski school directors' meeting in Arapahoe Basin in 1959, and Brighton in 1960. At the Brighton meeting, Lash's Certification Committee conducted the first national instructors' exam with examiners from all seven divisions examining. Thus, in May of 1961, Lash started the Professional Ski Instructors of America and served as its president for eight years.

Bill Lash with Lou Lorenz and Dick Voorhees started the Greater Salt Lake Ski Schools at Solitude Ski Area in 1963. Bill and Paul Valar wrote the three editions of *The Official American Ski Technique* (1964-66-70).

Lash was instrumental in seeing PSIA and the United States were represented at the Sixth Interski in 1962 and the Seventh in 1965. Demonstration teams were sent out for the first time by the U.S. It was Bill Lash and Willy Schaeffler who were responsible for bidding and getting the Eight Interski at Aspen, Colorado in 1968. Lash served as Chief of the U.S. Delegation for the Seventh and Eighth Interski.

Bill Lash was active in the National Ski Areas Association and regional ski areas associations for over thirty years. He represented the Burke Rubber Company to the ski industry. He was the recipient of the Intermountain Ski Areas Association Award in recognition of outstanding effort to further the sport of skiing in 1985.

Bill Lash was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1983; the PSIA-I (Intermountain) Ski Hall of Fame in 1989; the University of Utah J. Willard Marriott Library, Ski Archives Award for Contribution to skiing in 1991; the Golden Quill Award for outstanding contribution to American Skiing by the North American Ski Journalists Association in 1992; the Alf Engen Ski Hall of Fame in 1993; and awarded the PSIA Lifetime Achievement Award in 2002. He was inducted into the Intermountain Ski Hall of Fame in 2004.

