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Roy J. Mikkelsen

Born: 1907 Died: 1967

Roy Mikkelsen began his competitive skiing career as a youngster in Norway. He immigrated to the United States in 1924 at the age of 17. In Chicago, Illinois, he joined the Norge Ski Club as a Class "A" jumper. In 1933, Mikkelsen won the first of many Alpine titles, which made him a true four-event competitor.

Roy Johan Mikkelsen was born in Konigsberg, Norway, on September 15, 1907. He immigrated to the United States in 1924, at the age of 17. After working for three years on his uncle Knute Strand's farm, in Black Duck, Minnesota, he joined his brother Halvor in Madison, Wisconsin. A year later, he and Halvor moved to Chicago, where Roy became active as a ski jumper with the Norge Ski Club.

In 1932, after becoming a U.S. citizen, Roy represented his adopted land in the Winter Olympics at Lake Placid, New York. Later that year, he competed in the National Tourney at Lake Tahoe. There he met Wendell Robie, a founder of the Auburn Ski Club of Northern California. In 1933 and 1935, Roy won the National Ski Jumping Championships. He represented the United States again in the 1936 Winter Olympics and went on to win many alpine ski honors in downhill and slalom.

In April 1942, Roy enlisted in the United States Army. After finishing "boot camp" and officer's training school at Fort Benning, Georgia, he was assigned to the 10th Mountain Division in Colorado. After a short time, he was reassigned to the famous 99th Norwegian-American Battalion then in training at Camp Hale. This battalion fought its way across Europe under the command of General George Patton. The 99th received a proclamation of appreciation from King Olaf of Norway, whom Roy knew personally as Prince Olaf.

Roy was discharged from the army as a captain in November 1945 and returned to Auburn, where he and his wife Ester had lived since 1937. He always had been interested in civic affairs. Before he went into the service, he was president of the Auburn 20-30 Club. After his return, he became active in the Auburn Rotary Club and the Auburn Chamber of Commerce.

Roy was elected to the Auburn City Council in 1950. Elected mayor pro tem in April 1952 and mayor in November of the same year, he served with distinction until April 1954. Subsequently, Roy was appointed to the Placer County Planning Commission, with responsibility for developing ordinances designed to protect the region's natural beauty and to prepare for orderly growth. Roy was a prime mover in planning and securing the 1960 Winter Olympics for Squaw Valley.

Roy Mikkelsen's story exemplifies the life experience of a Norwegian immigrant who arrives in this country at a young age and becomes in turn a devoted husband, an outstanding national athlete, soldier, businessman, and civic and community leader.

Roy J. Mikkelsen was elected into the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1964



*Grinden Papers
Roy Mikkelsen, February 1933, in Auburn
Ski Club's Tournament at Cisco*