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Devereaux Jennings

Born: 1924 Died: 2000

Information taken from nomination letter to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame submitted by Tom Corcoran, in 1989.

H. Devereaux "Dev" Jennings whole life revolved around skiing and the mountains: ski racer, ski official, ski coach, ski retailer, designer and manufacturer of ski apparel, ski marketer, and veteran of the famous 10th Mountain Division.

H. Devereaux Jennings grew up in Salt Lake City, Utah, and learned to ski there. From 13 to 18 years of age, he was a very promising young racer who was invited to participate and raced in the most prestigious national ski races of the pre-war era (there was no junior class): the National Championships, Harriman cup, Silver Belt, etc.

His promising racing career was interrupted by World War II. When Dev turned 18 in 1942, he enlisted in the 10th Mountain Division, serving first as a ski and rock climbing instructor, and later as a combat rifle squad leader through the worst of the Italian fighting. Senator Bob Dole was Dev's platoon leader, and their friendship continued after the war. Jennings later became an officer of the 10th Mountain Division Alumni Association.

From 1946 to 1948, he skied on the Aspen Ski Team, the Colorado State University and University of Utah Ski Teams. He skied constantly in the top three places in collegiate and National events. In 1947, Jennings skied well enough to be named to the 1948 U.S. Olympic Team which competed at St. Moritz, Switzerland.

In 1948, Jennings founded and was president of Sporthaus in Salt Lake City, Utah. It was a specialty ski shop, the first in the country. Skiing was still a cult sport where you bought skis without edges, selected the edge you wanted, and found a shop that knew how to rout and mount your edges. There were only a handful of shops around the country that really knew what they were doing. Dev's Sporthaus was one of them, with a national reputation. He later opened another Sporthaus shop in Salt Lake City and one in Westwood Village, California. He was actively involved with the shops until 1962.

During Dev's 14-year involvement with the Sporthaus stores, he was also active as a ski rep, importer, manufacturer, wholesaler, and distributor of many products, some with the Sporthaus label. He manufactured and distributed a number of ski products that he himself designed: the Davos Duster Cap, Devils Cap, and Sporthaus Pants were great favorites in their day and widely recognized. His Sporthaus checked-gingham, pullover, raglan-sleeved shirt was a classic in its time. He designed the first colored skis, the Blue Mothers, which won a lot of western races and turned a lot of heads. He always donated his ski products generously to the U.S. Ski Team.

Dev was always interested in helping young children become ski racers. He coached divisional teams at a number of Junior Nationals, and in the early 1950s, founded SCATS (Ski Competition and Training Society) in Salt Lake City. Junior racers paid only \$10 a year, and coaching was provided every Saturday by former U.S. Ski Team members and guest coaches. The program produced some of Utah's best racers.

The 1950s saw Jennings as Chief of Course for the North American Championships, leading up to Assistant Chief of Course under Willy Schaeffler, at the 1960 Olympics at Squaw Valley, California.

Jennings moved to New Hampshire in 1970 to serve as Executive Director of Waterville Valley Associates, and is affiliated with the New England Ski Museum at Franconia, New Hampshire.

An effective voice and proponent for the sport of skiing, Dev was highly regarded by his peers within the sport and the ski industry. He saw the sport and ski industry grow and mature and was an active participant and influential in almost every aspect of the sport.

H. Devereaux Jennings was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1989.



Devereaux Jennings in 1989 at U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame induction ceremony.

