

#279

## Harold S. Hirsch

Born: 1907 Died: 1990

*Harold S. Hirsch, realizing the need to revolutionize ski apparel, began manufacturing ski clothing under the name White Stag, in 1930.*

Harold Hirsch was born in 1907, and as a 16 year old, attempted to climb Mount Rainer, and froze all ten toes. He realized then that ski equipment and clothing needed much improvement.

He attended Dartmouth College from 1925 through 1929, returning to Portland and went into the family business, Hirsch-Weis, a tent manufacturing company. In 1930, he began to design and manufacture ski clothing under the name White Stag, a combination of Weis, meaning white in German, and Hirsch meaning stag. His first customers were Army Navy Stores, but the business grew, as did quality and he hired salesmen and added new styles.

When Minnie Dole founded the National Ski Patrol System, he approached Hirsch to design a distinctive parka for patrollers. Hirsch designed a hip-length parka that was wind-proof and had a double back, its distinctiveness provided by its rusty red color.

Hirsch approached other clothing manufacturers and got a "gentleman's agreement" not to use the rust color in their clothing, guaranteeing the Ski Patroller would stand out on the slopes. Hirsch was one of the founders of Ski Industries America and served as a director, president and eventually chairman of the board.

Another of Harold Hirsch's contributions to American skiing was the establishment of the Hirsch Award, made each year to one member of the U.S.



*Harold S. Hirsch was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in a special, early ceremony at his home in Portland, Oregon, February 3, 1990. The regular induction ceremony that year was held October 5-6. Pictured is Harold with Burton Boyum presenting him with his plaque.*

Ski Writers Associations for Excellence in Journalism. First awarded in 1963, each year it has been the most coveted award in winter sports writing. In 1984 he added two more awards, one for excellence in ski photography, and another in ski sport broadcasting. In the early years, these awards were offered by the U.S. Ski Association. However, today the U.S. Ski Writers Association handles the choice of winners. The writer's award consists of a silver-plate antique typewriter, while the photographer's award is an antique camera and the broadcaster's award is an antique microphone. All the awards were designed and produced by Mr. Hirsch.

Down through the years, Mr. Hirsch provided the U.S. Ski Team, as well as the U.S. Ski Association with large silver trophies called the White Stag Award, and which may now be found at the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in Ishpeming, Michigan, with many dozens of names thereon of the famous men and women skiers of past generations.

Among his many awards, Mr. Hirsch is Honorary Ski Patrolman #28; he is also an honorary member of the U.S. Ski Writers Association.

Harold Hirsch was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1990.