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Edna Dercum

Born: 1914

Edna Dercum was a top skier in downhill, slalom, and giant slalom. She also became an author and a coach.

Edna Dercum was born in Clarissa, Minnesota, in 1914. In 1937, she married Max Dercum. The following year, 1938, Edna raced in the California State Downhill and Slalom Championships. In 1939, she was informed by Margaret J. Neyland, Secretary of the U.S.E.A.S.A. that she qualified for the Olympic Tryouts at Mt. Hood, Oregon.

Moving to State College, Pennsylvania, in the fall of 1938, where husband Max, coach of Penn State Ski Team, was a Professor of Forestry, Edna organized and was race chairman of first Pennsylvania State Championships. In 1940 and 1941, she was Pennsylvania State Women's Downhill and Slalom Champion.

In 1942, she wrote the story "Forestry Goes Skiing" about the Forest Service's roll in ski development. This was published by the Pennsylvania Forestry Association in *Forest Leaves* magazine.

Following World War II, Max and Edna moved to Colorado with son Rolf, age 3, and daughter Sunni, age 2. During the summer of 1946, Edna fed and housed (in the original Ski Tip Lodge cabin) the crew working on the trails and lifts at Araphoe Basin. From 1948 to 1952, Edna was elected Summit County Clerk and Recorder. During this time she taught the Breckenridge, Colorado, teaching children to ski. Three of these children were chosen to compete in the National Junior Ski Championships.

In 1947, Edna organized and was president of Araphoe Ski Club. She became a fully-certified ski instructor in 1952, and in the same year she received her Class "A" race card. Edna taught in the Willy Schaeffler Ski School at Araphoe Basin, Colorado for the next 18 years.

In 1953, she placed among the first 10 women in the national downhill, slalom, and giant slalom championships held at Aspen, Colorado. At the time, Edna was 39 years old.

The National Combined was won by Katy Rudolph. Edna placed 2nd in the May Day Slalom, Woman's Class "A" at Araphoe Basin, Colorado in 1953. (The slalom was won by Skeeter Werner.) That same year, Edna placed 2nd in the first National Women's Senior (now Masters) Giant Slalom.

In 1963 through 1965, Edna was Chairman of Rocky Mountain Division Women's Race Committee and succeeded in forming an Elite Class "A" for woman racers.

From 1955 to 1989, Edna won or placed in the first 3 places of the following races: The Taos Cup, the Class "A" Giant Slalom at Winter Park, Colorado, the Class "A" Open Giant Slalom and the Loveland Basin Grand Prix.

From 1938 through 1989, Edna won over 75 gold medals, not including combined trophies, in both Class "A" races and National and International Masters Downhills, Slaloms, Giant Slaloms, and Super Giant Slaloms.

In 1980, Edna was inducted into the Colorado Ski Hall of Fame.

From 1980 through 1989, Edna raced in the International Masters Race in Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Spain, France and the U.S. She won the International Women's Masters Criterium World Cup with the exception of 1988, when she was second, losing to a French racer, Francinette Chotard. During this time, Edna also raced in National Masters Races in Mt. Alyeska, Alaska; McCall, Idaho; Aspen, Colorado; Jackson Hole, Wyoming; Big Sky, Montana; and Mt. Bachelor, Oregon.

In 1981, Edna wrote and published the book *It's easy Edna, it's downhill all the way*, a story of ski pioneering in the high country of Colorado. This is also a story of Edna and Max's building and operating one of the first and oldest ski lodges in Colorado, known as the Ski Tip Ranch. Ski Tip Lodge was the site of meetings founding Keystone Ski Area, now one of the leading ski area in the United States.

Edna was the oldest active woman ski racer in the world and was named to the U.S Masters Ski Team for 1990.

Edna Dercum was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1991.

