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Thor B. Grosword

Born: 1928

Information submitted in a nomination letter to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame –
Sponsor: Jerry Grosword

The sport of skiing in the Rocky Mountains owes part of its rapid growth to the leadership, inspiration, dedication, and selfless service of Thor B. Grosword.

Thor Brandt Grosword was born in 1928, the oldest son of Thor C. Grosword, founder of the Grosword Ski Company in Denver. Thor skied as soon as he could walk, beginning a lifelong involvement that advanced the sport of skiing in Colorado and across the nation.

He ran his first downhill race on Berthoud Pass at the age of nine and competed throughout his high school years for the Ski Club Zipfelberger. Through his father, he attended many of the early historic events in Colorado skiing.

He began his serious competitive career skiing for Western State College in Gunnison, Colorado, in 1947. For four years, Thor was among the region's leading four-way competitors. After graduating, he served in the U.S. Air Force as a survival instructor, then entered the University of Colorado, School of Engineering and graduated in 1957 as a mechanical engineer.

On his return to Denver, he became – and remains – a mainstay of organized skiing in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain Division. In 1957, he joined the Board of Certified Ski Officials Association, an organization responsible for qualifying and supervising ski competition officials. Thor was named treasurer in 1958 and chairman in 1959. He co-authored the nation's first timing manual, and became a certified referee, chief timer, and jumping judge. He conducted clinics and examinations that dramatically improved the quality of officiating at meets.

Thor's home area was the Winter Park Resort, where at first, he was actively involved in virtually every competitive event held there, including a number of national championships. Its reputation as a host of competitive events rose extremely high and remains so today due in part to Thor's oversight of its standards of excellence.

He was a member of the board of directors of the Rocky Mountain Ski Association from 1972 to 1975, fostering the organization from its earlier days on. Thor ran the Winter Park Ski Jumping Program from 1967 to 1985, teaching youngsters the sport of ski jumping in a program that provided free instruction and coaching – and produced National, World Cup, and Olympic Team nordic specialists. In addition, Thor inspired nordic competitors to become coaches and national officials.

Thor first reached the national stage as a USSA jumping judge in 1967 and judged for many years. He was named to the USSA Jumping Committee; the Junior Nordic Committee; the USSA Ski Jump Engineering Committee; and Jumping Judges' Committee. His work had such merit he rose to international stature as Chief of Alpine Calculations at the 1960 Squaw Valley Olympics and at the 1980 Lake Placid Olympics where he was named Chief Steward for ski jumping.

Thor joined the Winter Park Resort fulltime staff as finance manager for the Mary Jane expansion in 1974 and coordinated the largest single ski area expansion undertaken to that point in the United States. That project was completed on time and under budget in December of 1975. He was active in national ski industry affairs for many years and served as a member of the National Ski Areas Association's Economic Study Committee until his retirement in 1987.

In 1981, he joined the Colorado Ski Museum and Ski Hall of Fame as a volunteer helping plan displays and raise funds. Named chairman from 1983 to 2004 of the museum's Operation and Collections Facilities, Thor oversaw renovation of exhibits that were completed in 1986.

Thor next served as the museum's treasurer and vice-president and was heavily involved in the design and construction of the renowned Spirit of America's Champions exhibit featured during the 1999 World Championships and the next season displayed at the Joe Quinny building during the 2002 Olympic games in Utah. He has served as chairman of the museum's Hall of Fame Nominations Review Committee and rewrote the rules for election to the hall.

He supervised the writing and implementation of the museum's Collection and Collection Registration and Documentation manual. Under his direction, volunteers investigated several possible locations, inventoried all the artifacts in storage, obtained the lease of and relocated artifacts to the Resource Center space at 13401 West 43rd Drive in Golden, and then held orientation meetings for the Resource Center volunteers and began the process of cataloging the artifacts as computer data. This unique facility provides storage and working space that will eventually make accessible an enormous collection of the museum's artifacts and research materials and will serve as a model for future development of other museums.

The Rocky Mountain Ski Association awarded Thor its highest honor, giving him the 1973 Halstead Memorial Trophy. In 1991, he was elected to the Colorado Ski Hall of Fame.

Thor B. Grosword was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 2004.

