



#89
Rhoda Wurtele Eaves
1922

Rhoda Wurtele, like her twin sister Rhona, was an intense alpine competitor who was absolutely fearless on the courses. The Wurtele sisters emerged on the international ski scene in 1943 at Lake Placid, New York, where the Canadian and American women's teams met in downhill and slalom racing, to bind the teams in the goodwill that still exists today. This was the Kate Smith Trophy Competition, in which the Wurtele twins shared top honors with Paula Kann and Becky Fraser. Rhoda won several major races, including the N.S.A. Downhill in 1947, and the North American Downhill in 1949.

Rhoda Wurtele, Canadian-born Alpine skier from Westmount, Quebec, was one of the famed Wurtele twins who so dominated Alpine skiing in the Eastern United States and Canada from 1943 through the late forties.

Rhoda and her twin sister Rhona first came on the international ski scene during the first Canadian-American Downhill Slalom staged at Lake Placid, New York in 1943, Rhoda placed second in the Downhill, edged out of first place by seven seconds by Paula Kann of the American Team. She placed fourth in the Slalom, and finished the competition third overall in the Combined. An excellent beginning for the Canadian youngster.

Rhoda skied for the Canadian Amateur Ski Association as a member of the Penguin Ski Club of Montreal, and the National Ski Association of America. Both Rhoda and her sister Rhona won many competitions on both sides of the United States-Canadian border, helping to forge a link in the goodwill chain binding the women skiers of both countries in unity and friendship.

Not only did these two sisters look alike, they skied alike. Rhoda was extremely aggressive on the slopes, and seemed slightly more adept at the high speed, treacherous downhill runs, and emerged more of a downhill specialist, although both were extremely strong with good balance, and Rhoda could defeat Rhona, or anyone else in any event on any given day. The difference in their abilities

were all but immeasurable.

The twins were voted Canada's "Outstanding Woman Athlete," winning the Federation Rose Bowl in 1945 and were runners up to Joe Krol (Football) for Canadian top athlete for 1947.

In 1948, they were on the Canadian Olympic Team at St. Moritz. Both were injured, but when Rhoda's cast was removed, she came in 3rd at Chamonix, France, in the Arlberg Kandahar Downhill. Rhona had to fly home with her injury.

Rhoda won the National Ski Association Downhill titles in 1947 and 1948, as well as most of the Canadian Amateur Ski Association Downhill titles from 1943 through 1950, along with several other titles on both sides of the border during this period.

Rhoda Wurtele entered the United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association Championships in 1948, and placed third in the Downhill. It seems Rhoda had a spectacular run, won the Slalom, and placed second to Rhona in the Combined.

These Canadian-born skiers did much to cement relationships among athletes of the United States and Canada, their good-natured and cooperative attitudes, as well as their fierce competitive attitudes, helped the athletes of both nations develop into strong competitive-minded skiers, part of which is still visible in the women's ski teams in both countries today.

Rhoda and Rhona Wurtele were elected to the National Ski Hall of Fame in 1969.