

2012 ~ HONOREES

# Mason Beekley

Ski Historian

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Mason Beekley founded the International Skiing History Association, bequeathing to the sport the world's finest magazine about its history, the largest website dedicated to ski history, and an awards program honoring authors and filmmakers who keep the sport's rich past alive. He also left one of the world's greatest collections of ski art and books, a treasure for historians.

Beekley grew up in Connecticut, where he was an avid skier as a young boy. As a student at Princeton, he began to collect ski books. After graduation, Beekley taught at the Eaglebrook School in Deerfield, Mass., where he coached skiing.

By 1990, he'd expanded his library to more than 1,500 ski books. He also began to collect exquisite pieces of ski art, from ski posters to pins. According to Swanns Galleries, in N.Y., Beekley almost single-handedly created the market in rare ski posters.

In 1991, Beekley wrote to more than a hundred prominent skiers and ski historians around the world inviting them to join what he called the International Skiing History Association. The goal, he said, was to



who contributed \$14,000. He spent \$41,000 and made up the shortfall of \$27,000 from his own pocket. Beekley would subsidize the association's work over the next decade.

The key to ISHA's success was its publication. In 1992, it took over the Maine-based magazine "Snow News," renamed it "Skiing Heritage" and appointed Morton Lund editor.

Beekley died of cancer in 2001. His collection moved from Hartford, Conn., to Mammoth Lakes, Calif., where it stayed until 2010.

Today ISHA's 2,000 members hold the Mason Beekley Memorial Lecture during its annual skiing history week.

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"disseminate and help preserve the heritage of skiing."

He also wanted ISHA to promote friendship among ski-history buffs. In 1992, he organized the first gathering of ISHA members in Whistler, B.C.

The next year, the gathering took place in Sun Valley, where John Jay showed one of his classic films.

By the 1993 Sun Valley meeting Beekley had recruited 230 members,

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**2001 ~ THE FAMED BEEKLEY COLLECTION MOVES TO MAMMOTH LAKES**

Mason Beekley's passion for ski history led to his founding of the International Skiing History Association, which is now 2,000 members strong.



COURTESY OF THE BEEKLEY FAMILY(2)