

# EARL HOLDING



**BORN:**  
**NOVEMBER 29, 1926**  
**SALT LAKE CITY, UT**

**E**arl Holding is a self-made man who earned the accolades of the ski industry and winter sports enthusiasts by restoring Sun Valley, the historic Idaho ski resort, to its original quality and pre-eminence, and by transforming Snowbasin from a sleepy Utah day area into the ski resort that hosted the 2002 Olympic Winter Games Downhill events.

Holding was born and raised in Salt Lake City, Utah, where he learned the value of a day's labor as a youth, working several jobs during the Depression. Upon graduation from the University of Utah in 1952 with an engineering degree, Holding was offered the opportunity to move to and manage Covey's Little America service station and motel on the western prairie of Wyoming. Within two years of taking over the property, Holding and his wife, Carol, transformed it into the highest volume service station in the country. The family went on to build additional Little America properties in Cheyenne, Wyoming, Flagstaff, Arizona and Salt Lake City, Utah.

Although many people assume that the large petroleum company, Sinclair Oil Corporation, acquired Little America, it was actually the other way around. In 1976, Holding's hard work put him in a position to buy Sinclair. This bold move changed his business from a regional chain of truck stops and motels to an oil company covering much of the territory west of the Mississippi River.

In 1977, Holding purchased the iconic ski resort of Sun Valley, originally founded by Union Pacific scion Averill Harriman in 1936. The beautiful one-of-a-kind, year-round resort was in need

of the attention to detail that was Holding's trademark. He began with a beautification project of planting thousands of trees, then added one of the world's largest snowmaking systems. Five new high speed detachable quad lifts were built on the mountain and several stunning new day lodges and restaurants. Holding's love of the western outdoors marks many of his endeavors; he personally oversaw the design of the new lodges including maximizing their breathtaking mountain views. The new Sun Valley Nordic Center hosted the International Special Olympics in 2009.

Holding became involved in northern Utah's Snowbasin in the early 1980s when it was a small day area. He was enthralled by the mountain's potential as an undeveloped treasure. Through continuous attention to detail and design, Holding was able to build new lifts, lodges and restaurants at Snowbasin in time to host the 2002 Men's and Women's Downhill and Super G Olympic events.

In addition to building Snowbasin, Holding supported the Olympic dream by building the five-star Grand America Hotel in Salt Lake City to host Games' sponsors, and dedicating his 800-room Little America Hotel as the headquarters for Olympic officials. His tireless efforts to bring the games to Salt Lake City were instrumental in their success.

Earl Holding is acknowledged as an important contributor to the outstanding success of the 2002 Winter Olympic Games, leaving a long-term legacy of quality and service. Skiers and the entire ski industry have benefited from the Holding family's passion for developing first-class ski resorts at Sun Valley and Snowbasin.

## VISIONARY LEADER AND OWNER OF SUN VALLEY AND SNOWBASIN



**Earl Holding, seen here with Gretchen Fraser, is acknowledged as an important contributor to the outstanding success of the 2002 Winter Olympic Games, leaving a long-term legacy of quality and service.**

