

TOM SIMS



Snowboarding's "true pioneer," Tom Sims shaped the sport as a world champion athlete, visionary inventor, marketer, artist, and the passionate personification of the boarding lifestyle. Sims was also instrumental in snowboarding's first debut at the Nagano Olympics in 1998.

Tom Sims was one of the most influential pioneers in snowboarding, and in 1976 established his now heritage brand SIMS (Skateboards & Snowboards). His pure dedication ignited and defined the early stages of the sport. Tom left indelible tracks in every aspect of snowboarding, and helped catapult it to a mainstream audience after convincing the director to let him act as a snowboarding stunt double for Roger Moore in the 1985 James Bond 007 movie, "A View to a Kill."

"I will never believe Tom Sims invented snowboarding," says industry veteran Brad Steward, who worked for SIMS and later founded Bonfire. "I will always believe he invented the snowboarder." Sims provided that "first burst of energy that made us think, 'There might be something to do here,

something to grow here,'" Steward says.

As a teenager growing up in Haddonfield, NJ, Tom had become a talented skateboarder after a visit to his Grandparent's home in Los Angeles in the summer of 1963, where he was awed by neighborhood kids bombing the streets. Later that same year, when the New Jersey snow began to fall outside his 7th grade shop class, he built what he then dubbed a "skiboard." It was a short, crude, wooden device that enabled Sims and his friends to combine the feeling of skateboarding and skiing on the snow, at the nearby Tavistock Country Club golf course. Sims was always shooed away from the fairways in those days, but today a plaque is dedicated to honor Tom and commemorate the site as the beginnings of what he would eventually



hampion to become an Olympic port. February 9th is observed as Tom Sims Day in Haddonfield.

In the early 70's, Sims moved to Santa Barbara, California and continued shaping full-sized snowboards, longboard skateboards, surfboards and wakeboards. Pursuing his love of boarding in both summer and winter, he won the title of World Skateboard Champion in 1975, and a year later, founded SIMS and designed its iconic winged logo. During the winter of 1982, he was led blindfolded to a secret location in Lake Tahoe (turned out to be the Tahoe City dump), where he eventually witnessed what he deemed to be the future of snowboarding. A few of the local skateboard kids were launching themselves into a snow covered ditch on SIMS snowboards, sparking Tom's vision for what would soon become the halfpipe competition.

With snowboarding banned at virtually all ski resorts, Sims lobbied tirelessly to get them to open their lifts and slopes to this new sport. In 1983, he managed to convince the owner of Soda Springs ski area into letting Sims and his riders build the first halfpipe ever for competition, and host the first SIMS World Snowboarding Championships. Sims won the title of World Snowboarding Champion in 1983. In those early years, a divide existed between the East Coast Burton alpine riders, and the



West Coast SIMS riders who were also skateboarders. Sims' persistence in adding the skateboard culture of competing with tricks and having team riders won out, and the halfpipe became king in snowboarding, and later, a revered Olympic event.

Sims had passion and a creative mind to revolutionize the equipment, and his technological breakthroughs remain legendary — some include first heel and toe fold down bindings, first cracked metal screwed-in edges, first men's pro model with a revolutionary rounded tail, first all-mountain model, first women's pro model. Numerous early SIMS snowboard team riders are

renowned, some included Terry Kidwell, Craig Kelly, Shaun Palmer and Shannon Dunn.

Meanwhile, Sims was leaving his own mark as a competitor and the poster boy for the boarding lifestyle, equally talented as a skater, snowboarder, wakeboarder and surfer. In 1985 alone, he won the slalom at the U.S. Open of Snowboarding, captured the legendary Mt. Baker Banked Slalom, and, as a stunt double for Bond, introduced millions to the sport when he bombed down the mountain and streaked across



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Congratulations to the entire induction class of 2018, Skip Beitzel



WOLF CREEK, CO PHOTOGRAPH. JON FOSTER

a lake on a snowboard (all on the first take).

While Sims' equipment advances were revolutionary, and had a sterling reputation and product, as well as a talent of all-world team riders, Sims wasn't able to secure bank loans as snowboarding was considered a startup "fad" sport in those early years. Unable to compete financially in a suddenly fertile snowboard space, the SIMS business model became licensing agreements with various partners throughout the decades.

On Sept. 12, 2012, Tom Sims passed away due to complications following cardiac arrest, at a hospital near his home in Santa Barbara, Calif. In 2001, Tom met and married Hilary Sims, who became actively involved in the business. Together they raised five children (Tom had two sons and a daughter from a previous marriage, and was Step-father to Hilary's two daughters).

Hilary continues to own and oversee SIMS. Together with a small team, Never Summer Industries in Denver, and SIMS partners in Japan, they have all worked to push forward the iconic brand and carry on Tom's legacy, by relaunching SIMS back to core specialty retailers worldwide. SIMS in Japan is currently relaunching the skateboard sector as well.

Career Accomplishments



1963: Builds first "skiboard" in 7th grade shop class, Haddonfield, New Jersey.

1969: Builds first full-sized snowboard.

1971: Moves to Santa Barbara, CA and continues shaping full-sized snowboards, longboard skateboards, surfboards and wakeboards.

1975: Wins Skateboarding World Championship.

1976: Founded SIMS (Skateboards & Snowboards) - Trademarks the brand name and logo.

1982: Creates the first prototype metal heel and toe fold down binding.

1983: Builds first snowboard halfpipe for competition and hosts first SIMS World Snowboarding Championships at Soda Springs. Wins title of World Snowboarding Champion.

1985: Wins famed Mt. Baker slalom and U.S. Open slalom; appears as stunt double in "A View to a Kill".

1985: Introduces first pro model, Terry Kidwell signature, shaped with a new rounded tail which changes the sport of snowboarding in the halfpipe.

1994: Launches first model labeled as "All Mountain", and first women's pro model, the Shannon Dunn.

1998: Succeeded in helping to champion Snowboarding to the 1998 Olympics in Nagano, Japan

2013: Inducted into Skateboarding Hall of Fame.

2013: Featured in a global Mazda commercial campaign (on YouTube now) as a "Game-Changer" in the sport of snowboarding.

2018: Inducted into U.S. Ski & Snowboard Hall of Fame.

Born: December 6, 1950 (Los Angeles, Calif.)

Died: September 12, 2012 (Santa Barbara, Calif.)



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