

US HOF 2021

Peter Graves

The man behind the voice: Graves has delivered insight, drama, color on many of the world's biggest stages in skiing since 1977.

Through more than four decades and hundreds of Olympic, World Cup and World Championship events (plus countless packages of Ricola throat lozenges and plenty of water), Peter Graves's inimitable voice has become synonymous with skiing. From calling the closest cross-country ski race in Olympic history at the 1980 Lake Placid Games on ABC to serving as the stadium announcer at the dramatic, post-9/11 Olympic opening ceremonies in Salt Lake City, Graves has provided the soundtrack for many of the biggest moments in the sport. This included nine Olympics and, most recently, Mikaela Shiffrin's thrilling wins on home snow at the World Cups in Killington.

"I loved every moment of it," Graves says.

Besides his grounding as a TV sportscaster and stadium announcer for a wide range of sports, Graves served as a U.S. Cross-Country Ski Team coach and development director and led the Harvard Nordic ski team from 2002-08. He's also owned and managed a ski touring company, directed cross-country events for Special Olympics International, and served as the Nordic editor for *Ski Racing* and *Ski Trax*.

Born May 16, 1952, in Bennington, Vt., Graves joined the Mt. Anthony Union High School ski team, where he was coached by Bucky Broomhall and Birger Vigsnes, eventually earning a spot on the Eastern junior national Nordic team. After graduating in 1975, he attended Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colo., where he competed for four years on the cross-country squad for Dolph Kuss, who had coached the U.S. Nordic combined team in two Olympics. Intending to work his way up into a large mainstream media market, he initially worked as the news director at a Durango radio station and as a news reporter for an Albuquerque TV station before returning to his first love. "It was the lure of skiing and the culture that drew me back," he says.

Graves' stadium career began in 1977, when he called the internationally acclaimed American Birkebeiner ski race at Telemark in northern Wisconsin, a post he held through

2008. In 1980, he was on hand in Lake Placid with Bill Fleming to call the closest duel in the history of the discipline, when Thomas Wassberg of Sweden nipped Norwegian Juha Mieto by a hundredth of a second in the 15k, then suggested they melt and meld the medals together to create two gold-silvers. “We were literally standing on our toes,” Graves recalls. (Shortly afterward, the FIS ruled that cross-country finishing times would be rounded to the nearest tenth.) That moment, along with the opening ceremony in Salt Lake, when the 9/11 flag from the World Trade Center rubble was raised in Rice-Eccles Olympic Stadium, stands out in 40-plus years of calling events. “Under extraordinary circumstances, that was really, really moving.”

Graves covered the 1984 and 1988 Olympics for ESPN’s SportsCenter and was the primary television announcer for the USST from 1986-1990. Segueing into stadium announcing, Graves learned to build a rapport with on-site fans and a strategy for covering a lengthy list of competitors. “Everybody is important to me,” he says. “It’s much more than who wins. And I know what’s it like be in the middle of the pack.” He learned to moderate his voice in the 1990s (“So I’d have a place to go,” he says), and diligently follows a pre-race routine: Plenty of Ricola and water, humming the scales for a vocal warmup, and meditating on the goals for the day.

Anyone who’s attended World Cups in Vail, Aspen, or Killington has heard his voice. The same goes for various venues at the 2002, 2010, 2014, and 2018 Olympics. At the latter Games, he worked as the public address announcer at the alpine events in PyeongChang, South Korea, before moving on to the World Cup Finals in Åre, Switzerland.

Outside of skiing, Graves has been active in a wide range of sports, and all told has called thousands of events. During the 1990s, he was an expert commentator and host for international mountain biking on ESPN, OLN, TSN and Eurosport, and won the *VeloNews* announcer of the year award. He served as stadium announcer for every World Mountain Biking Championship from 1991-2007. He handled on-site cycling announcing at the 2004 and 2016 Olympics as well as in Tokyo in 2021. Graves has been a fixture as an announcer for the Lumberjack World Championships in Hayward, Wis., which was televised by ABC, and the finish line announcer for Grandma’s Marathon in Duluth since 1978 (earning a place in the event’s Hall of Fame).

Graves lives in East Thetford, Vt., just above Hanover, N.H., with his wife of 33-plus years, Cami Thompson-Graves, who is the head women's cross-country ski coach at Dartmouth. They have two children, Willy (who competed on the U.S. Nordic Combined Team), and Kate, who raced for the Putney School, and one grandchild.

Career Accomplishments

Born: May 16, 1952 (Bennington, Vt.)

1977: Begins a nine-year run as the stadium announcer for the American Birkebeiner.

1980: Provides expert commentary for the cross-country and biathlon events alongside Bill Fleming for ABC at the Lake Placid Olympics.

1984, 1988: Serves as expert commentator for Nordic events on ESPN's Sports Center.

2002: Serves as stadium announcer for the opening and closing ceremonies at Salt Lake for the Olympics and Paralympics, along with on-site call of the cross-country and jumping.

Also works as an associate producer for Games' sports production department.

2002-2008: Leads Harvard as the school's head Nordic coach.

2010: Announces 2010 Vancouver Olympics cross-country and jumping; earns the USSA's John Clair Award for lifetime service.

2014: Announces alpine, jumping and medals plaza at 2014 Sochi Olympics.

2016: Earns FIS Ski Journalist of the Year honor.

2018: Announces alpine events at PyeongChang Olympics.

2022: