

RALPH (DOC) DESROCHES

“Doc” was born in Mexico, Maine. He loved skiing and enhanced his interest in the sport when he began competing as a ski jumper. He recalls that the ski jump was across a highway and the landing hill was in his own backyard. He also competed on his high school ski team. He was a member of the ski team when he attended the University of New Hampshire. His inter-collegiate, regional and national meets included cross-country and downhill competitions.



After college, Doc went into military service. He sustained injuries that landed him in a military hospital. Upon discharge from the hospital, his physical weakness required that he get a job doing outdoor labor. He managed to land a job as “greens keeper” at Whiteface Inn in Lake Placid, New York. His duties there were to cut the grass. He still needed a job in the winter and was fortunate in 1945 to be recommended as the Ski Director of Laurel Mountain Slopes in Ligonier, PA. These slopes, outside of Pittsburgh, were owned by the prestigious Mellon Family. He became a ski instructor and a ski area operator which led his being a Charter Member of Professional Ski Inductors of America and Ski Area Operators in Pennsylvania. Doc also operated the Laurel Mountain Slopes Ski Shop. Because he was ingenious in resolving any complicated problems, he was appointed Assistant Manager and from 1957 to 1963 and was President and General Manager of Laurel Mountain Resorts.

Doc was instrumental in beginning a Junior Competition program at Laurel. From 1945 to 1963, he ran one of the biggest series of races for juniors in the Eastern U.S. He watched this project grow larger each year. He innovated a Christmas ski training camp and brought in youngsters from New Jersey, Maryland, Washington D.C., Virginia, West Virginia and Ohio. These programs increased the interest in skiing in Pennsylvania.

Doc also started the Western Ski Council and The Ski Federation. He has held many outstanding offices and memberships in various organizations including Director of the USSA and U.S. Ski Educational Foundation. He was an Honorary Lifetime Member of United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association (USEASA) and U. S. Ski Writer’s Association. He also served on the U. S. Olympic Development Committee and served as coordinator for the National Ski Week Committee. He continued as a member of the Professional Ski Instructors of America and the People-to-People Sports Committee. In 1967, he served as television representative of the United States Ski Association and retained his standing as an Alpine Official for the USSA. He continued as Director of the Ski Industries of America since 1971. He was also Secretary and President of the Pennsylvania Ski Federation. While his regional and national accomplishments are many, most of us remember when he was that Manager at Laurel Mountain.