

Sally Deaver (Murray)

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Although war clouds were gathering over Europe, December 14, 1933 was a glorious day in Philadelphia for prominent surgeon Dr. Montgomery Deaver and wife Pricilla for it was the day daughter Sally was born. The celebration would have been even more joyous had the family known that Sally was to become one of the finest athletes in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, especially representing the sport of Alpine Skiing.

Ten years later when Sally's father was called to duty with the Navy, Sally went to the North Country School at Lake Placid, New York. While there she was introduced to Alpine skiing, and during Christmas Holidays spent in North Conway, New Hampshire she had her first lessons from the dean of Alpine Skiing, Hannes Schneider.



With the war ended, Sally and her family returned to their home, "Brookside Farm" in suburban Philadelphia. Her studies resumed at Springside School where, her classmates recall, her arrival there was rather explosive with a positive attitude, especially "when right". She was articulate, skilled with the written word and Editor of the Chestnut Burr. They soon recognized that she did well academically, but was an outstanding athlete and somehow kept a gaggle of beaux at bay.

Following graduation and her debut in 1951 she went north again, this time to Vasser where she excelled in sports, especially Skiing. The summer of her sophomore year was the first of several South American winters spent studying ski racing in Chile coached by Emile Allais. This was followed by a winter in the race program at Stowe, Vermont, which she financed as a "ski bum", before she was able to persuade her father that she could make the National Ski Team. In subsequent years her coaches included Stein Erickson, and U.S. Team members Buddy Werner and Tom Corcoran. As a result of this coaching, her dedication and determination enabled her to win several Championship Races in Chile during 1953-55.

Her return to the U.S. in 1956 saw the start of a brilliant, but brief career. In 1956 she won the National Women's Giant Slalom and the National Women's Slalom Championships at Squaw Valley, California. In 1957 she won the National Women's G.S. Championship at Sun Valley. To top it off she won the Women's Alpine Combined at Aspen, the result of having won the Alta Cup, the Roch Cup and the Harriman Cup. Burr Simms of the LA Herald-Examiner wrote, "Pretty Sally Deaver's ...triumphs in the country's top three invitationals were unparalleled. Sally... has been racing for only four years." The following year 1958 Sally was seeded #2 behind Nonie Foley on the U.S. FIS Team. When she placed second in the FIS Championship at Badgastein, Austria, the United States Delegation lead by Roland Palmedo was jubilant. The best performance by an American since Andrea Lawrence in 1952. After the race Sally said, "...There is no point in trying for fifth or sixth. You have to think only of coming in first."

At Aspen while running in a downhill she went off a bump, hit a tree and stopped short of a mineshaft. Not hurt physically but badly shaken she continued to race that year to become what to many was Pennsylvania's First Lady of Skiing. A sure pick for the 1960 U.S. Olympic team Sally gave up this honor at age twenty-six to marry Benjamin Murray in December of 1959. Sally surrendered her brilliant skiing career and returned to her former love, training, showing and racing horses. Unfortunately an equestrian accident in 1963 took Sally's life. She was doing what she enjoyed, training a young horse for jumping competition. Sally was only twenty-nine years old.

Sally Deaver, was a fine ambassador of skiing, for Pennsylvania and the United States. On February 28, 1978 she was inducted into the National Ski Hall of Fame. May she serve as an inspiration to all young people desiring to enter in the World of Ski Competition?