

Charles Webb

Charles Webb is a shining example of the veterans of the 10th Mountain Division who came home to work in the ski industry and went on to become eminently successful in business and civic leadership.

He started his skiing career in the mid-1930s when he and his Philadelphia high school classmates drove up to the Poconos on weekends to have fun on their eight-foot-long ash skis. It was long before the region had rope tows and T-bars, but Charles and friends created their own primitive runs.

Charles carried his passion for skiing to Dartmouth College in 1939 and the ski team, which also included Dick Durance, Eddie “The Snapper” Wells and Harold Hillman, all prominent and avid skiers who helped modernize the sport in North America. The team was coached by famed Walter Prager.



Young Mr. Webb’s specialty was giant slalom, which suited his large frame and graceful style, but he also learned to jump and participate in cross-country events. In summers he ventured west to the Grand Tetons, where he was a mountain climbing guide and photographer.

After graduation Charles followed Dartmouth teammates and Coach Prager to the 10th Mountain Division, where they learned combat tactics and how to live out of packs with light equipment in every kind of weather.

One of Charles’s army buddies was Pete Siebert, a young man with considerable foresight. After the war Webb and Siebert returned to Colorado, as did many other 10th veterans. They became instructors in the Aspen Ski School under Friedl Pfeifer and Charles later became an examiner of professional instructors.

Until his death in 1998 Charles continued to be an enthusiastic skier, returning each year to Aspen or Vail. Whenever he visited Vail, he was able to joke about the great opportunity he had missed. He had turned down Pete Siebert’s offer to purchase 25 percent of Vail, which Siebert was about to develop.

But Charles went on to be a big success in other businesses, first in wool and then forming his own industrial products company. He devoted much of his time to community activities, particularly Abington Memorial Hospital. He is remembered there for his service on the board of directors and his generous donations.