

## *Herman Kress Dupre*

In his 40 years at the head of Seven Springs Mountain Resort, Herman Kress Dupre transformed a tiny ski area with two rope tows on his parents' property into an internationally known, year-round 5000 acre resort in a setting of beautiful hills, lakes, hiking, biking, and riding trails, reminiscent of the Bavaria of his immigrant mother and father. Today, Seven Springs is one of America's busiest ski resorts.

As CEO of the resort, Mr. Dupre planned and implemented the infrastructure for the community of Seven Springs, with its own municipal water system, airport, golf course, condominium complexes, ski lodges, and high rise luxury hotel with every conceivable guest amenity and activity. He was responsible for the design and construction of the many log-and-stone structures located around the resort.

Situated in the Laurel Highlands of southwestern Pennsylvania, Seven Springs is the largest employer in the county. "Seven Springs exists," says its mission statement, "to provide relaxing, invigorating, family oriented recreation for its guests; to provide wholesome, rewarding long-term employment for its people; and to provide vitality to the community of which it is a part."

Known as "the father of snowmaking," Mr. Dupre holds 34 U.S. patents for the HKD snowmaking system. He is the chief engineer for Snow Economics, Inc. and his system is now sold worldwide. His new Backyard Blizzard home system based on the HKD concept became available in the winter of 2000. Without the benefit of his work, many winter resorts throughout the world would not have the snowmaking capability they utilize today!

Mr. Dupre began his tenure as CEO of Seven Springs in 1955, when, as a young lieutenant aboard a U.S. Coast Guard Cutter in Alaska, he was called home due to the death of his father. At the age of 22 he inherited the presidency of Seven Springs and its two rope tows, one of which was installed in 1935, making it one of the oldest in the United States. A year later, he bought a Poma lift from Jean Pomagolski who was visiting from Val d'Isere. He collected \$1.50 per day per skier, which included use of the 20 and 30 meter jumps. He also added floodlights and music for night skiing.

In 1957, Mr. Dupre married Mary "Sis" McSwigan, an English and physical education teacher from Pittsburgh. This was also the year Mr. Dupre attempted to make snow by spraying a garden hose in zero degree air. His experiments led to his snowmaking

system and eventually Seven Springs boasted one of the largest systems in the world.

In 1958, the Dupre's first daughter, Denise, was born. This was also the year they moved out of the shed that housed the Poma motor and into a home with heat. At this time resort guests stayed in men's or women's dormitories, the barn was converted into a rental shop, and Herman installed a second chairlift. In subsequent years eight additional children followed, as did a long list of improvements to the facilities at Seven Springs.

The years 1955 to 1978 represent the first half of Mr. Dupre's career at Seven Springs. During the 80's and 90's the resort continued to grow exponentially. Herman was instrumental in adding a range of new facilities including an Exhibit Hall, Festival Hall, recycling center, tubing park, and several lakes. And to this day, Herman still takes the time to throw another log on the fire.

