

## *Harry Griffith Sr.*

Harry started skiing in the early 1960's, joined the Norristown Ski Club in 1963, and then worked as a volunteer at the Elk Mountain races. With the growing popularity of skiing in the state, Pennsylvania Eastern Ski Council chairmen Bob Turner appointed Harry in 1968 to organize a junior racing program for the children of the more than thirty council ski clubs.

Harry and his family regularly skied at Elk Mountain, and in 1969, Harry approached owner's Gus Stepbacker and Jerry Beaudry to set up a formal racing program. A trail was set aside for race training, timing shacks were built, and experienced coaches were hired. Money to fund the program came from the Eastern Council's bargain barn, a concept that Harry borrowed from a Maine ski club. For years, the bargain barn was the Council's sole means to provide funding for its race program.

Alpine racing in Pennsylvania continued to grow, as the Central and Western regions of the state started junior racing programs similar to those sponsored by the Eastern Council. The increased level of Pennsylvania competition provided opportunities for closer coordination with the rest of the Middle Atlantic and New England states. The Pennsylvania Alpine Race Association (PARA) was set up as part of the reorganization of the United States Ski Association, and Harry was named as Chairman. Attending monthly USESA meetings in Brattleboro, he used this forum to get Pennsylvania Junior racers invited to races in New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. In 1973, Harry and Bob Kilgore conceived the Pennsylvania Derby, the first State Championships, which were subsequently opened to out-of-state competitors. Harry remained chairman of PARA until 1979. As part of the racing world, Harry earned a National Technical Delegate ranking. He was one of four alpine officials from Pennsylvania who were selected to work as officials at the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York.

Harry Griffith has been recognized for his contributions to Pennsylvania skiing. In 1968 - 1969 he received the Fritz Koenig award and was honored in 1969-70 for "Outstanding Service to the Eastern Pennsylvania Ski Council". In 1973 he received an award from EPSC in "Appreciation and with Thanks for Dedicated Service". In 1978 EPSC honored him "In Recognition for Your Many Years of Service in Establishing and Sustaining a Jr. Racing Program in PA". In 1980 he received an award for his service at the Lake Placid Olympics. Harry has also received numerous ski racing awards from the Norristown Ski Club and from the Eastern Pennsylvania Ski Council.

Skiing was a family affair with the Griffith's. Harry's two sons Harry Jr. and William started as Class 3 & 4 racers and worked their way into the upper ranks of Pennsylvania junior skiers. In 1976, Harry Jr. retired the Governors Cup, after winning the state championship three years in a row. Later, while skiing for Dartmouth College, he was named to the U.S. Ski Team Downhill Development Team. William raced in intercollegiate events for Bates College from 1977-83, and Harry's daughter Susan competed in the Pennsylvania Special Olympics, winning three gold medals. To support their skiing habits, Harry's wife Charlotte started working in the industry. After an initial stint at Bea's Ski Shop, she teamed up with George Salter to found Salter's Ski Shop. At 75 years of age, Harry still takes to the slopes along with his family and friends.

