

## David Fowler

Skiing was the farthest concept from David Fowler's mind when he stepped on a land mine while on patrol in Cambodia nearly 40 years ago. But the near life ending experience that cost Dave a leg, put him on the path to overcome one of life's large moguls and move on to become a leader in the infancy of Pennsylvania's adaptive skiing programs.

Recuperating at Valley Forge Army Hospital, Dave took up the challenge from a combat wise sergeant, Leon Dubay and headed for some tough rehabilitation on slopes. That was Dave's introduction to skiing and it unfolded on the trails of Doe Mountain (now Bear Creek), less than an hour from the hospital.

Dave had a lot of help getting started before he could even think of starting to help others. Doe Ski School Director, Dr. Hubert Seemann, saw gristle in Dave's approach to skiing, his own rehabilitation, and his growing interest in helping others. They formed a bond and Dave Fowler worked at and ultimately mastered his new found sport. He did it on one ski.

But Dave also had a few other pressing items on his plate – picking up life he led before serving in Viet Nam – finishing college and starting a family.

Then a trip to the Poconos set his course in skiing and a plan to help other amputees, mostly wounded veterans, like himself. Dave met Bill Stenger, then General Manager at Jack Frost, now an owner manager at Vermont's Jay Peak. Like Hubert Seemann, Bill saw the potential that Dave presented to guide a little known program. Dave became a weekend instructor for amputees and then became a key figure in the growth of skiing for the "52 Association" which is dedicated to rehabilitation, through sports for injured G.I.'s.

Through the "52 Association" and with the help of corporate sponsors, Dave took the concept on the road, launching ski clinics for amputees from California to Maine and even into Canada. Working with the Eastern Pennsylvania Ski Instructors Association, Dave never forgot his Pennsylvania roots. He became active at home in teaching the teachers how to teach the disabled.

The program spread far beyond amputees and veterans and became a therapeutic and rehabilitative mainstay for anyone who wanted to conquer a disability through the sport of skiing. But there were new horizons and new challenges ahead, as many people dealing with disabilities were looking for therapeutic opportunities on the golf course, as well. Dave was ready and began teaching a new sport in an adaptive style. Expanding on his role in this new sport, he is currently Head Golf Pro for Caesar's Pocono Resorts.

Dave Fowler's motto, which helped him to help others has been, "Do not focus on what a person doesn't have, but on what they have left. We all have abilities and we all have disabilities. Learn to work around the problems."

Dave's tireless dedication to skiing and introducing the sport to thousands of handicapped Pennsylvanians has earned him well deserved recognition within the sport.