

## *New Mexico Ski Hall of Fame*

2009



# Bill Burgess



Bill Burgess grew up in Spokane, Washington. He started skiing at Mount Spokane in high school with a set of hand-me-down skis and boots from his sister. After skiing at Mount Spokane for several years, he was offered an instructor job.

He was in the Army in 1960, stationed at Fort Ord, California. He went to the Presidio in San Francisco and talked his way into the 6th Army Recreation Group and was sent to Squaw Valley for the winter to help with the 1960 Winter Olympic Games.

Bill was assigned to a ski platoon and led the platoon all over the mountain following Willy Schaeffler, the Director of Ski Events for the Olympic Games at Squaw Valley. He eventually became one of the first certified ski instructors in the Army.

After getting out of the Army, Bill eventually ended up in Angel Fire, New Mexico. He qualified for certified instructor in the Rocky Mountain Ski Instructor Association with badge number 705. He was appointed to the Board of Directors of RMSIA and served as vice president. Shortly after moving to Angel Fire, Bill became concerned that there was

no instructor certification for Nordic skiers and instituted a plan to include Nordic instructors in the RMSIA.

He was instrumental in opening the first Nordic ski area at Angel Fire on the golf course and was host area when UNM competed in the Nordic Women's Nationals at Angel Fire.

In 1975, Bill came up with the idea for what would become the World Shovel Racing Championships. Traditionally, the first week of February was a slow ski week and Bill used the idea to boost attendance. It eventually grew from just number 12 grain scoops to high-tech drag sprints between racers on super-modified sleds. The races went on hiatus in 2005 due to liability concerns, but returned as production-class races using just the grain shovel again in 2010.

Bill mc'd the Heublein liquor race series around New Mexico ski areas for several years in the late 1970's and has always had a big hand in New Mexico skiing.

Bill Burgess passed away September 3rd, 2018.