

Blegen biographies

Nominee: Thelma Hoessler
Nominated by: Anna McIntyre

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“Those that can’t do, teach!” Thelma Hoessler briefly taught children how to ski. She then focused on making ski racing more fulfilling for them, by directing her organizational/educational abilities towards education of required officials. This decision began more than 30 years as a USSA Alpine Official.

Trained in Timing and Calculations by Allen Church, Thelma shifted to Race Administration and is recognized as one of the “Premier Race Administrators in North America.” She has been privileged – with support from many qualified officials – to serve as Race Administrator at all levels of events in the United States, Canada and South Korea.

In 1992, after several years as clinic coordinator for USSA’s RMD, she assumed Chairmanship of the USSA AOEWG. This requires months of time organizing, preparing and publishing more than 1500 pages of materials and has resulted in a high level of professionalism among USSA Alpine Officials.

Thelma is considered a major source for USSA and FIS rule applications; if she doesn’t know the answer, she can and will direct you to someone who does.

In 1996, at USSA’s request, she became involved with Snowboarding, gained an appreciation of a new snow sport and aided in the development of the documents required by its various events.

Thelma has not forgotten senior ski and snowboard officials who helped her gain knowledge and expertise and continues to recognize the value of their guidance. She finds satisfaction serving as a mentor and passing on the many lessons she has learned. Her teaching experience includes clinics throughout the United States and Canada.

Thelma is committed to providing quality events for competitors, coaches and fellow officials and speaks out when faced with those who may settle for less. While oftentimes perceived as being too outspoken, her dedication to the sport and its participants takes precedence over perceptions of others; her love for the sport is unconditional.

Skiing and Snowboarding: Thelma doesn’t do the first anymore and never could do the second, but she continues to devote her skills, time and passion so competitors can enjoy events that are fun, fair and are conducted in accordance with current rules/standards. When she finally accepts retirement from the sport she loves, she will do so knowing the Alpine Officials’ community will be left in strongly educated hands; her hope is her remembrance will be: “She was a good and fair official; she taught us well!”

Nominee: Paul Fremont-Smith
Nominated by: Gary Black Jr.

Dear Nominating Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I put forth Paul Fremont-Smith as a nominee for this year's Blegen Award.

Paul Fremont-Smith
8 New County Road, P O Box 8
Seal Harbor, ME 04675-0008

Paul has spent decades supporting our athletes both at the Olympic and World Cup levels as well as the club level voluntarily. He is a former member of the USSA board of trustees. For more than ten years, Paul has provided housing for our athletes living and training in Austria. He has spent countless time volunteering for the alpine races at Sugarloaf, ME and was instrumental in securing the US Nationals contract with Sun Valley and Sugarloaf. Paul and his wife Carol, have supported many scholarship grants for athletes attending school. Most recently, Paul has been involved with the creation and implementation of the Sun Valley Ski Academy, working with both the Sun Valley Ski Education Foundation and the Community School. He has also been a long time supporter of our Gold Pass program, giving his Gold Passes to local clubs for their use.

In short, Paul has spent much of his life dedicated to the sport of alpine skiing. He is a friend to our athletes and our organization and we are grateful and honored by his ongoing support.

I encourage you to vote for Paul as this year's recipient of the Blegen Award.

Best,

Gary

Nominee: Ted Sutton

Nominated by: John Jacobs and Joe Lamb

I would once again nominate Ted Sutton, his decades of service to the sport of Alpine Skiing deserve this recognition. Joe Lamb

Ted Sutton is the quintessential USSA volunteer. He has taken his passion for skiing and decades of experience in the ski industry to provide a lifetime of support for USSA programs – most notably in providing his expertise in the design and safety of race courses.

Growing up in Vermont and New Hampshire, Sutton got his start on a pair of 10th Mountain Division skis given to him by his uncle. He parlayed that into a racing career as a youth in the former Eastern Ski Association.

Sutton's career in skiing began as an instructor in Aspen under the legendary Friedl Pfeifer in the early '60s as well as working patrol at Loveland. He brought his skills back to New England, working as an instructor and snowmaker at Boston Hill – where he met his wife Herta.

Working together with ESA President Bob Thompson in the mid-60s, they partnered with the Boston Globe to form the Eastern Mass Buddy Werner League, with over a thousand kids participating. He soon began coaching in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

A talented promoter of ski racing, Sutton soon became a certified official and coach, expanding his role and the reach of programs like the Buddy Werner League. By the mid '70s, Sutton became vice chair of the Eastern Alpine Competition Committee. His career expanded in the late '70s when he was named program director and head coach at Crotched Mountain, NH, creating the first USSA High School Championships in 1981.

His career working on race courses took a big jump around the 1980 Olympics. He had worked the pre-Olympic World Cup at Whiteface in 1979, later being recruited by Chief of Race Willy Schaeffler to be his assistant for the 1980 Olympics.

His work at the 1980 Olympics set him on a pathway to work more with courses around North America. He also became a USSA technical delegate. At the 1985 FIS Congress in Vancouver, he was named as a FIS course inspector. He became a FIS technical delegate in 1985.

Sutton moved on to Loon Mountain as program director and head coach in 1986, dramatically ramping up his engagement with USSA racing, as well as redesigning and engineering new race courses and safety systems at resorts around New England. His work at Loon later expanded to director of environmental liaisons and planning of development.

By 1996 he had taken over leadership of the FIS Subcommittee for Alpine Courses and Chairman of the USSA Alpine Course Approval working group, taking over on the retirement of Nelson Bennett. He continued in that role recruiting course inspectors and developing instrumental training programs. In 2008 he turned the reins over to Bruce Crane, but has remained active as a FIS and USSA course inspector and technical delegate, as well as a board member of NHARA for more than 30 years.

Ted Sutton's accomplishments and leadership roles go on and on. For more than five decades, he has been one of America's most valuable 'go to' leaders in alpine ski racing. His work on race courses has had an immense impact on the sport that will be felt for many years to come.

Most importantly, he is a volunteer's volunteer. While he made his career in the ski industry, what he gave back on his own time has made a positive difference in our sport worldwide.

Ted Sutton is an ideal candidate for the USSA's highest honor, the Julius Blegen Award. His volunteer spirit and willingness to share his passion is a great example to others.