

# Far West Ski Association

presents the **Snowsports Builder Award** to



## *Jimmie Nunn — Architect of City and Slopes*

**Jimmie Nunn's** footprint is on each of Arizona's ski areas. From his first days on skis in 1934, Nunn has been involved in the development of skiing throughout the state — Arizona Snowbowl, Sunrise Ski Park, Mt. Lemmon and Williams. Receiving his first pair of skis Christmas of 1934, Jimmie taught himself to ski on unplowed city streets in Flagstaff and on any nearby hills. By 1938, locals were skiing on the San Francisco Peaks and soon Arizona Snowbowl was opened.

Jimmie was on the Flagstaff High School ski team, took Red Cross classes from high school teacher and ski coach Ralph Wheeler (future Flagstaff mayor), and joined the ski patrol in 1940. After serving in the Navy in 1946, he attended Arizona State Teachers College (now Northern Arizona University) and was on the college ski team. He transferred to the University of Colorado-Boulder, receiving a degree in architectural engineering.

In 1952 he returned to Arizona and began his architectural career with Haver, Nunn & Associates in Phoenix. In his 33 year career, he designed to strict standards tracts of homes, industrial buildings, schools and public buildings, and even part of Luke Air Force Base housing. But skiing was always a big part of Jimmie's life. He spent all the time he could in Flagstaff, a fact well noted by his colleagues in the Phoenix office.

The Phoenix Ski Club (PSC) was formed in 1948 and Jimmie joined in 1952. During the summer months he and other PSC members cut and groomed new ski trails with other club members. The original Hart Prairie lodge, built in the 1930s by the CCC, burned down in 1952. Agassiz Lodge was then built by volunteers from PSC and Jimmie was called on to draw up "as built" plans after enthusiastic owner Al Grasmoen had neglected to get plans and approval from the Forest Service before its construction.

In the early days of Snowbowl, much work was done by volunteers in return for lift privileges. But that had to change, even though Snowbowl's first two-seater Riblet chair lift, installed in 1962, was another volunteer project. Jimmie surveyed and determined the location of the lift and, with other PSC members, spent the summer putting it in.

Jimmie was a first class downhill racer and participated in the annual Thunderbird races at Snowbowl. As a PSC member he was on Ski Patrol and received a National Appointment (#1599) in 1954. Jimmie also helped a new generation of skiers by transporting PSC junior race team members to races on weekends as far away as California, driving all night so the racers could be on the slopes by 9 a.m. Saturday.

In 1960, Jimmie was on ski patrol at the Olympics in Squaw Valley, the first time the games were covered by a volunteer patrol. It was also here that he met his wife and ski patroller Jerry who was a member of the National Ski Hall of Fame for her achievement as the first female Forest Service Snow Ranger (National NSPS #121) and promoter of the Avalauncher, which uses air to launch explosive charges into avalanche-prone slopes.

In 1962, Tucson's Mt. Lemmon ski area was developed by Snowbowl's previous owner Al Grasmoen and Jimmie went down several times to discuss runs and rope tows with Al. The beginning of Sunrise Ski Park was Jimmie's next major ski project. Together with White Mountain Apache Tribal Chairman Ronnie Lupe, Jimmie was involved in the earliest planning and construction of Arizona's last ski area.

He and Lupe met with council members and elders and helped convince them that a ski area was in the best interest of the tribe and that their sacred grounds would not be violated. He remembered, "A few buddies and I walked that entire Sunrise area. We rented an airplane, took pictures, and laid out the ski trails from those aerial pictures. Then I went to the EDA and got the money — \$29 million from two different grants. I also had to build a road to the ski area, which is about 12 miles long." He designed the master plan for the Sunrise Ski Lodge on Sunrise Mountain — and then did it again a year later after the original burned down. He also designed the nearby overnight Sunrise Lodge.

Jimmie still lives in the house he built at the base of the San Francisco Peaks. Here also is the Arizona Ski Museum, one of only a few in the United States. It is a collection of ski memorabilia including hundreds of skis, boots and bindings from wooden planks used early in the last century to current days' modern equipment; photographs, posters and newspaper articles; trophies; even an early model of the avalauncher. Jimmie has preserved the history of skiing in Arizona for all to see in his museum.

Jimmie Nunn's years of dedication to snowsport in Arizona has made an impact to benefit all who ski here. His heart still patrols the runs at Arizona Snowbowl. Jimmie Nunn is a Snowsports Builder for Arizona and the nation.

Respectfully nominated by *John Watson & Jane Jackson*.