



Obituary:

Sepp Kober: Long-time Ski Director at The Homestead Resort in Hot Springs, VA. Honored as “The Father of Southern Skiing” by the Southeast Ski Areas Assn., he was inducted as a Member of the U.S National Ski & Snowboard Hall of Fame.

Joseph H. “Sepp” Kober, 88, of Hot Springs, VA, passed away peacefully at Bath County Community Hospital Aug 3, 2010. He was born Oct 25, 1921 in Igls, Austria. He is survived by his wife Marion Kober of Hot Springs, one son Joseph B. “Sepp” Kober and wife Measi of Charlottesville, VA., one daughter Waltraud Wandel and husband Albrecht of Reutlingen, Germany, one sister

Waltraud Karakaschian of Stuttgart, Germany, two grandchildren Joseph B. “Seppi” Kober Jr. and Katharina Wandel and one nephew Jurgen Karakaschian. Mr. Kober was preceded in death by his first wife Isobel H. Kober.

Sepp Kober was the primary builder of the Downhill Alpine Skiing Industry in the southeastern U.S. His efforts helped create one of the largest and most active ski markets in the country. From 1958 through the 1970’s, ski areas in Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri and Tennessee got their start under his guidance and planning. In the process, he earned regional and national honors.

As Ski Director at The Homestead from 1959-1998, he was the first to prove that skiing in the snow-starved South could become a reality. In 1962 he represented the southeast ski region as a charter member of the National Ski Areas Association. His efforts to organize ski clubs in the region created a flow of new skiers that continues to this day and is recognized by ski industry leaders as critical to the growth of the sport nationwide.

He co-founded and served multiple terms as president of the Southeastern Ski Areas Association. He was the region’s first certified ski instructor, its first ski area director, the first to teach ski area management and train professional instructors in the region. He was first to organize and host USSA sanctioned races and events and was first to promote junior racing and NASTAR below the Mason Dixon Line.

With his compact, powerful and effortlessly graceful skiing style, he inspired southern ski entrepreneurs to invest in the snowmaking infrastructure that would become the mainstay of the southern ski industry. He provided areas and shops with accredited sources of inventory, rental equipment, and ski lifts. In 1970, he founded the Southeastern Ski Representatives Association (now the Southeastern Winter Reps Assn) and was its president for six years.

He was the South’s first ski instructor at its first rope tows in 1958, at Weiss Knob in West Virginia and at Wisp in Maryland. At that time he was a prominent European ski racer who had also coached the national teams of Norway and Spain. He came to America as a skiing instructor at Stowe, VT, before migrating south where he was quickly hired by the 5-Star Homestead Resort in Hot Springs to start its skiing amenities and to sell the incongruous idea of Southern skiing.

For his contributions to the ski teaching profession in the region he received an honorary lifetime membership by the Professional Ski Instructors of America.

In 2009 he was inducted into the U.S. National Ski & Snowboard Hall of Fame, the equivalent in

sports to induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY.

During World War II he served with the Mountain Division of the Austrian Army.

A funeral Mass will be celebrated 11:00 A.M., Friday August 27, 2010 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Hot Springs, VA. Officiated by Father John McGinitty. Burial will be in the Warm Springs Cemetery. Immediately following the services a reception and celebration of "Sepp's" life will be held at the Homestead Ski Area and Lodge. Memorial contributions can be made to the Bath Community Hospital at P.O. Drawer Z or the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame.