

**The American Ski Jumpers Hall of Fame**

**2018 Nominee**

**Ernest D. "Ernie" Dion**



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**Ernest "Ernie" Dion**

**(1916-1999)**

I am honored to nominate Ernie Dion to the American Ski Jumpers Hall of Fame. Ernie was born in Irasburg, VT on December 10, 1916 and started skiing at the age of 10. His competitive career spanned 40 years. In 1932 when Ernie was 16 years old, he won his first Class A races – two downhill and two slalom events on Mt. Washington, NH. He also took a second place in slalom at Berlin NH, and a second place in jumping at Mt Washington. In 1934 Ernie won the United States Eastern Interscholastic Ski Championships in both jumping and combined events.

Between 1935 and 1940 Ernie was among the best American-born ski jumpers in the country. In 1935 he became the first American-born skier to win the Class B Eastern Championships at Lake Placid, NY; in 1936 he placed second in Class A; in 1937 he dropped to 8<sup>th</sup> place, but the following year he was the second American after the Norwegians Ruud and Kotlerrud; in 1939 he tied the Olympic skier Ottar Satre for the honor of being runner up. Ernie placed second in the Olympic tryouts in 1938 at Berlin NH, virtually assuring himself a spot on the US team, but the 1940 Olympic Games never took place because of World War II. In 1946 He traveled to Steamboat Springs, CO and placed 5<sup>th</sup> in the National Ski Jumping Championships. These achievements are truly remarkable considering the dominance of the Scandinavian skiers in the ski sport during this period of time.

During Ernie's career as a jumper he won 19 State jumping titles, including the Massachusetts, Vermont, Maine, New York, Connecticut and New Hampshire Championships. He also won the Canadian Regional Championships at Lac Beau Porte, Quebec, 1949 and 1950. His jumping career ended in 1972 in Rumford, Maine after 40 Years of competition, where he placed second in the Super Vets Class.

As Skiing became more popular the media's interest also grew. Newspapers, magazines and even TV became interested in Ernie and his family. Collier's Magazine did a lengthy article in December 1952 Issue, People and Places Magazine did an article on summer Jumping on crushed ice and featured the Dion family in July, 1953, and Boy's Life did another featured Article in February 1954. In 1956, the Dion Family was featured on The Arthur Godfrey's "Winter Wonderland" television special held in Lake Placid, NY.



Ernie's influence on skiing throughout the Northeast was widespread. In addition to his recognition as a long time competitor, he contributed immeasurably through his skill as a coach. In 1951 Ernie started a junior ski team and within a few years eight of its original nine members represented the East in four disciplines at the Junior Nationals.

In the Mid 1950's he built Snow Crest Ski Area (Since renamed Whaleback) and the first programs he started was a free "ski week" each February to teach the local kids how to ski. During his lifetime it was estimated over 20,000 youngsters from the local community learned to ski as a result of his efforts. A few years after Snow Crest was up and running he noticed the city owned and operated ski area was all but abandoned, so he took his construction equipment to Storrs Hill ski area and with the help of donations from local businesses brought it back to life. It is still fully operational today.

Finally, in 1973, Ernie was appointed to New Hampshire's first Governor's Sportsmen's Advisory Committee and served for several years. As a result of his accomplishments, he was recognized by being inducted in the National Ski Hall of Fame in Ishpeming, Michigan as both an Athlete and Ski Sport Builder in March 1984.

In conclusion, I'm certain that with all he achieved in his lifetime, he loved being a ski jumper and promoting the sport most. He would be greatly honored to be inducted in the American Ski Jumpers Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

  
Doug Dion

*Dions Make Daring Triple Jump*



Ernie doing a crowd pleasing triple jump with his sons Roger and Doug at the Dartmouth Winter Carnival in early the 1950's