



## BERNARD “BERNIE” DION

Bernard dedicated over 70 years of his life to the sport of ski jumping as competitor, coach and judge. Born into a family of skiers, he started skiing the year he started walking. His father and uncles were collectively known as The Flying Dion's throughout the Eastern region. Before Bernie was a teenager, he was regularly jumping over 200 feet. Still too young to be a competitor, Bernard was a regularly featured exhibition jumper at most major regional jumping tournaments, including The Masters Tournament at Lake Placid, NY, The Winter Carnivals at Brattleboro, VT, Salisbury, CT, Lebanon, NH, Rumford, ME, and The Internationals at Berlin, NH not to mention trips to Canadian tournaments with his father and uncles.

His successes continued in high school under coach Ernie Dion and Al Merrill, both future inductees into the National Ski Jumping Hall of Fame. As a freshman, he was selected to the USEASA Junior National Team placing 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Junior Nationals. In 1957 he was invited to Lake Placid, NY to perform exhibition jumping on the 70-meter Olympic Jump. The following year he was selected to attend Pre-Olympic Training. In 1959, Bernard won the prestigious Winged Ski Trophy Tournament at Brattleboro, VT then flew to CA for the Olympic tryouts. Unfortunately, on his 3<sup>rd</sup> ride he fell and broke his neck. After a year of recovery, he joined the Army and was on the Army CISM ski team in Europe. Returning home, he continued to win major tournaments in the Northeast. In 1966, his ski career ended after a fall breaking both wrists.

As an extraordinary coach Bernard knew all the issues to help develop athletes' as he could see it, feel it and knew how to address and convey it! His love for the sport, the kids and his infectious smile produced more than its fair share of prospective Olympians in the 1960's, 70's, and 80's. He gave above and beyond to his students to help them achieve their best. Bernie also welcomed anyone to Lebanon Hills and shared his vast expert knowledge of ski jumping to those seeking advice while on the hill for practice or competition. As he traveled to tournaments all around the Eastern US he was always available to provide hillside advice to competitors who sought him out regardless of their club affiliations.

As a judge Bernard's contributions to the sport of ski jumping spanned the globe. He honed his skills whenever and whenever he could for more than 20 years at local ski clubs, high school tournaments, intercollegiate, regional, National and Canadian tournaments. He achieved the ultimate judges' goal of becoming a certified FIS judge and was invited to officiate World Cup events on some of the biggest and best ski jumps and tournaments in the world, e.g. Ski Flying at Copper Peak MI and in Czechoslovakia, Norway, Germany, Finland, and Sweden.



Bernard Dion passed prematurely on July 7, 2015. At his death he was an active member of The Gunstock Mountain Historic Preservation Society involved with the plans to redesign and revitalize the Torger Tokle Memorial Ski Jump in Gilford NH to its former glory and beyond.