

NATIONAL
SKI AREAS
ASSOCIATION



For Immediate Release

CONTACT: Geraldine Link
NSAA Public Policy Director
glink@nsaa.org
720-963-4205 (mobile)

NSAA Honors Peter ‘Mongo’ Schory with Industry Impact Award *Ski industry veteran makes lasting imprint on snow safety*



LAKESWOOD, Colo., January 23, 2019—The National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) has presented the Ski Industry Impact Award to Peter “Mongo” Schory for his significant contributions to snow safety over a long and successful career. NSAA gave the award to Schory today during the Western Winter Conference and Tradeshow at Snowbird Ski & Summer Resort, Utah.

Schory, the director of winter operations at Snowbird and the chairman of the NSAA Explosives Committee, is well deserving of the honor. In various leadership roles with Snowbird, Wasatch Powderbird Guides, the NSAA Explosives Committee, and the Avalanche Artillery Users of North America Committee (AAUNAC), Schory set the bar high in the avalanche mitigation and snow safety arena over his 47-year career.

Schory will retire from Snowbird this spring, where his everyday presence will be missed by his co-workers and colleagues, including Dave Fields, president and general manager at Snowbird. “Mongo’s impact on safety in snow science, helicopter skiing, and the operations at Snowbird are immeasurable, but most of us who have the good fortune to work alongside Mongo would

agree that the impact of his friendship is even greater,” Fields said. “His commitment to his work and those with whom he works is unparalleled. I consider myself lucky to have been mentored by Mongo, and will try to pass along a little bit of what he’s taught me to future generations of the Snowbird family.”

Schory grew up in Colorado, one of four brothers in a family that owned a ski shop in downtown Boulder. With easy access to ski gear and lift passes, he began to ski as a small child. Sibling rivalry, a competitive nature, and innate athletic ability led him to quickly master the finer points of the sport at a young age. By the time he was 18, he had become the youngest person ever hired by Vail Ski Resort to teach skiing. His ski instructor career was cut short, however, when he joined the Army in the late 1960s and served two tours of duty in Vietnam. When his time in the military was over, he made what was to be the pivotal change in his life, and moved to Utah’s Little Cottonwood Canyon.

In 1972 Snowbird hired Schory as a ski patroller, launching what was to become a truly remarkable career. As Snowbird Resort averages 500 inches of snowfall a year, Schory gained tremendous experience in avalanche control work during his tenure there. His longtime co-worker and friend Liam Fitzgerald reflected recently, “Peter possessed an uncanny ability to accurately and quickly evaluate his surroundings. Whether this was a gift he was born with or a talent he developed in the jungles of Vietnam is unclear, but it gave him the capacity to make observations of subtle changes in slope angle, terrain, wind loading, and other avalanche ‘intangibles’ in a way unlike anyone else I have ever known.”

Schory relinquished his job as Snowbird ski patroller in 1974 to become the lead guide for Wasatch Powderbird Guides, one of the pioneer heli-skiing operations in the U.S. He then split time between Powderbird and Snowbird’s snow safety department. This back and forth experience over a decade provided him with an uninterrupted sense of snow and avalanche conditions—an invaluable asset when it came to fulfilling his responsibilities. In the 1980s and beyond, Schory ran Snowbird’s snow safety department and served as Patrol Director at the same time, positions that are typically filled by two different people. In 2011, he was appointed winter operations director at Snowbird.

“Snowbird and the entire ski industry have benefitted from Peter’s expertise and dedication to snow safety,” said Kelly Pawlak, president of NSAA. “The ski experience in the West wouldn’t be what it is today without his and other snow safety pioneers’ longtime dedication and service,” said Pawlak.

Schory served as chair of the NSAA Explosives Committee from 2014 to 2019, providing leadership and accountability that greatly improved the ski industry’s relationship with government regulators. He served on the AAUNAC executive board for nine years and received the Doug Abromeit Memorial Dragon Slayer Award in recognition of his service and contributions.

Schory's appreciation of the risks that professional patrollers take every day, and the fact that they are people who have families—parents, spouses, and children—provides the foundation for his tireless dedication to employee safety. Bob Bonar, former president and longtime leader of Snowbird added, "During our tenure over 45 years at Snowbird, no single person has contributed more to Snowbird's excellent on-mountain safety record than Peter, especially in the avalanche control area. We operate in a canyon with significant avalanche dangers, and are very appreciative of everything Peter has done to promote the safety of our guests and avalanche control workers."

For his important role and legacy in snow safety, NSAA is proud to present Peter "Mongo" Schory with the 2019 Industry Impact Award.

THE NATIONAL SKI AREAS ASSOCIATION (NSAA) IS A TRADE ASSOCIATION REPRESENTING THE INTERESTS OF 300+ SKI AREAS, THEIR OPERATORS, AND INDUSTRY SUPPLIERS. FORMED IN 1962, THE NSAA SUPPORTS MULTIPLE INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS FOR MEMBER AREAS, INCLUDING GROWTH, SAFETY, AND SUSTAINABILITY, FROM ITS LAKEWOOD, COLO. HEADQUARTERS. LEARN MORE ABOUT THE NSAA'S MISSION AND PROGRAMS AT NSAA.ORG.

#