



2024 Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Awards

Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime, Biathlon, Master Skier,
and Community Ski Organization
Recognitions

Sunday, April 7, 2024
Vasaloppet Nordic Center, Mora, MN

Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Awards Program

2024 Minnesota Biathlon, Master Skier, and Community Ski Organization Recognitions

Minnesota Based Biathlon
High Achievers:
Annelise Baird, Eric Anderson

Minnesota Master Skiers:
Kathy Kelly, Pete Hawkins

Minnesota Community Ski Organization:
Northern Lights Nordic Ski Club

Recognition of past Lifetime Award Recipients

2006 Glen Johnstone
2007 Norm Oakvik
2008 Mike Marciniak, Anne Ryken
2009 Lars Kindem, George Hovland
2010 Bob O'Hara, Pat Lanin
2011 Bjorn Lasserude
2012 Jack Jeffery
2013 John Filander
2014 Emily Lanin, Bill Simpson
2015 Avho Taipale
2016 Bob Montebello
2017 Bonnie Fuller-Kask, Larry Myers
2018 Bruce Adelman, Darby Nelson
2019 Glenn A. Fuller, Roland Ring-Jarvi
2020 Paula Anderson, Gary Larson
2021 Dave Paulson, Mark Helmer
2022 Antonina Anikin, Jan Guenther
2023 Muriel Gilman, Dave Johnson

Recognition of Lifetime Legacy Award Recipients

2016 Nikolai Anikin
2016 Robin Baker
2016 Charlie Banks
2016 John Burton
2016 Earle Dickinson
2016 Tim Knopp
2016 Jinny McWethy
2016 Brother Charles Rademacher
2016 Toni St. Pierre
2016 Al Waverek
2016 Don Wolter
2023 Phil Zink
2023 John Dyste
2023 John Schmitt
2023 Norman Kragseth

2024 Lifetime Achievement Awards Kris Hansen, Nancy Bauer



2024 MINNESOTA NORDIC SKIING LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Kris Hansen

Kris was introduced to cross country skiing in eighth grade when her mom forced her to join the Stillwater High School team. Coach Bill Simpson welcomed her despite her 3-pin bindings, fiberglass skis, and skepticism. After following around talented teammates, Kris learned how to ski and earned a spot on Stillwater's varsity squad, contributing to five state team championship titles and clocking the fastest individual time at the State Meet her sophomore, junior and senior years.

During high school, Kris had the opportunity to race on the US World Jr team for two seasons and qualified to ski in Minnesota's FIRST Nordic World Cup races, a 5km and a 20km race at Giants Ridge in 1985. She doesn't remember what place she got in those World Cup races but knows with absolute certainty that she was much closer to last than to first.

Kris left Minnesota to ski for Williams College in Massachusetts, racing in NAAs and winning All-EISA honors. After earning a degree in chemistry, Kris moved west and earned a PhD in chemistry at the University of Colorado before returning to Minnesota where she married Peter Bohacek. Peter was new to skiing but an enthusiastic student and quickly became an excellent skier. After becoming parents, Kris and Peter seamlessly adopted the time-honored tradition of bribing their kids with hot chocolate to get them out on skis.

Upon returning to Minnesota, Kris started working at 3M. In a weird convergence of work and hobby, she developed the analytical tools and collected the data demonstrating 3M's global contamination of PFAS compounds. That work led to the company's decision to slow and then stop their manufacture of fluorochemicals and ultimately motivated FIS to ban fluoro-based ski waxes.

Kris coached at Stillwater High School, first as an assistant coach and then as a co-head coach from 1998 to 2022 working alongside Bill Simpson. Kris coached the girls' team, focusing on developing skills that can be obstacles to many young women: self-confidence, trust and collaboration, balanced nutrition and body image, strength and power, and the courage to self-advocate. Along with Simpson, she worked to create and maintain a culture that prioritizes process over results, encourages skiers to invest in the success of the team, and that acknowledges and values the contributions of everyone, not just the top finishers. During her time at Stillwater, the team was one of the largest girls' teams in the state. Kris coached multiple individual state champions and state championship teams, including Olympians Jessie Diggins and Sydney Peterson. Stillwater's coaches have always prioritized developing strong young people ahead of merely developing strong skiers.

While coaching, Kris started and led a free multi-day summer training program open to all high school skiers in the eastern Twin Cities. When Jessie Diggins generously agreed to do Q&A and strength sessions for teens, Kris organized and hosted the sessions and encouraged east-side skiers to attend. Besides high school coaching (from which she is now retired), Kris coached Minnesota Youth Ski League skiers for six seasons and now leads introductory cross country ski workshops for the Brave Bold Girls and Youth Advantage group in Stillwater. For all that Kris has done in support of Minnesota Nordic skiing, she is truly deserving of the Minnesota Nordic Ski Association Lifetime Achievement Award!



Kris Hansen, center top row, with her 2008 State Champion team

2024 MINNESOTA NORDIC SKIING LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Nancy Bauer



Nancy's ski career began in 1971 when she and her husband, Bill, purchased their first pair of Nordic skis and immediately took lessons from Norm Oakvik at a Northstar Ski Touring Club clinic. Most of her skiing was centered on the rolling hills of the Bauer Berry Farm and trails at Elm Creek Park. As their children grew, skiing adventures broadened to state parks and occasional citizen races. It was not unusual to bring home an age class trophy when all of her competition was still at home raising their children. The attraction to skiing intensified when the family purchased land to build a cabin only miles from the American Birkiebeiner ski trail, near the OO crossing.

The ski attraction continued to develop when her sons, John and Bruce, entered high school and began competitions in USSA races. Often there was a chance to enter the Senior division after the Juniors had competed. The Bauer's green Ford van with Peltonen stickers became a landmark in the parking lots at ski events. John's Nordic racing success led him to win two state high school titles and represent the USA in three winter Olympics.

Nancy was always game to volunteer at ski races and other ski events. Her volunteering efforts gave her the confidence to accept an offer to become the assistant coach for the Anoka High School Nordic Ski team in 1987. In 1990 she took over as head coach. Nancy was a pioneer in terms of being a woman head coach, when most all head high school Nordic coaches were male. She had several of her high school skiers qualify for the State Meet. Nancy took on leadership roles in the Minnesota State High School Ski Coaches Association including Secretary/Treasurer from 1994 -1999 and President from 1996 - 1997. Nancy had a key role in reintroducing separate classic races and equal distance competitions for boys and girls. She was inducted into the Association's Hall of Fame in 2002. Nancy said her greatest success was to act as a role model and inspire several of her former skiers to become coaches.

Nancy's participation highlights as a Nordic racer include the American Birkiebeiner, Norwegian Birkiebeiner, and Swedish Vasaloppet. She has also been a strong supporter of smaller races close to home. Nancy is an accomplished Master Skier and has skied in the World Masters Championships in various countries including France, Germany, Norway, and Finland. She shared that her favorite memory was skiing in the World Master Championships in Trolheim, Norway. The crowds were 10 people deep! Nancy also is a triathlete and has won her age group (70-74) in the Winter Triathlon National Championships.

Nancy, always the student, acquired her coaching certification from Hamline University and has spent many weekends at coaching clinics, sponsored by Team Birkie and Steve Gaskill. She credits Steve's mentorship for her approach to learning via games and fun challenges. When the USSA organization changed to more local governing bodies, CXC was born, and Nancy served on that Board of Directors from 2004 to 2008. She is still a supporter of CXC, and volunteers to coach beginners at the annual Turkey Birkie on man-made snow at the Birkie start. She continues her coaching certification which she uses to plan and implement workouts for her local Hayward women's ski group, called Ski and Tea.

Currently, Nancy and husband, Bill, reside full time in Wisconsin in the cabin they build in 1984. After all those intense years of berry farming and coaching in Minnesota, they love the slower pace of retirement. Part of her retirement time is now taken up by repurposing unused Birkie bibs into quality garments, bags, and home décor items. But Nancy never misses an opportunity to enjoy the north woods, summer and winter, with a large circle of like-minded outdoor enthusiasts. For all of her decades of service to Minnesota Nordic skiing as a volunteer, coach, ski organization leadership, and Master Skier Nancy is truly deserving of the Minnesota Nordic skiing Lifetime Achievement Award!

2024 MINNESOTA BASED BIATHLON HIGH ACHIEVEMENT

Annelise Baird



Annelise is 16 and is a sophomore at Brainerd High school. She started skiing shortly after her 2nd birthday and has been on skis ever since. Annelise has skied on the Brainerd varsity team for three years and has attended the last three state ski meets, along with four state meets in her other sports of track and cross country. Annelise has brought home three All State finishes, including two for Nordic skiing. Along with high school competition, she has been to Junior Nationals in Fairbanks, AK and Lake Placid, NY. Annelise has known longtime biathlon coach Bill Meyer for many years. He has always wanted to have Annelise try biathlon. She began training with Bill in summer 2022 and has been competing in biathlon ever since. Although she still prefers cross country skiing, the challenging nature of biathlon keeps her coming back. Her top biathlon results include a 5th and 6th place finish at the 2023 summer Nationals in Jericho, VT and two 8th place finishes at USBA Youth/Junior World Championships and youth Olympic games trials at Mt. Itasca.

When Annelise is not training, she can be found playing with her dogs, cooking good food and hanging out with her friends. She also really enjoys learning about the sport of cross country skiing and watching World Cup races. In her future, Annelise hopes to ski in college and is forever excited about where the sports of cross country skiing and biathlon might take her. Annelise's parents are Owen and Heather Baird.

Eric Anderson

Eric is a junior at Lake City High School. He is on the Nordic, cross country, and track and field teams. He has been skiing competitively since 7th grade. Eric was in Red Wing Nordic until his freshman year when he started skiing for Lake City Nordic. He has been going to the Wisconsin Nordic Ski Leagues State Meet competing as a guest since 7th grade. At the 2024 Wisconsin State Distance Championships he had a 4th place classic finish, and won the skate race, ending up 2nd for the overall distance weekend. Eric also trains with Minneapolis Ski Club and skis at JNQ races; he qualified for the 2022 U16 Championship, and made the 2024 U18 Junior National team.

Eric was introduced to biathlon during his 7th grade season when he connected with Holly Hanson with Bluff Country Biathlon due to persuasion from Audrey Lahammer and Jack Cashman. He then attended a novice race at Elk River later that year and has been involved since. Eric attended the 2022 US Biathlon Nationals at Lake Placid, NY and placed 2nd in the U17 Boys Pursuit race. The next year at the 2023 Biathlon Nationals in Casper, WY Eric placed 4th in the Youth Men's Sprint.



In the 2024 season Eric competed in the USBA team trials at Mt. Itasca. He had a 4th place finish in the 10K Youth Mens Sprint, and ranked 6th for Youth Men. He competed at the 2024 USBA Nationals at Fort Kent, ME. He finished 1st in Youth Sprint, 4th in Youth Pursuit, and 3rd overall. When Eric isn't training he enjoys spending time with friends, hiking or other outdoor activities. After high school he hopes to ski in college, although he is not sure where. Eric is thankful for the opportunities he has had so far and he is excited to continue training and competing in biathlon. Eric's parents are Jim and Christine Anderson.

2024 MINNESOTA MASTER SKIERS

Kathy Kelly

Cross country skiing is one of Kathy's favorite ways to enjoy the outdoors. She finds a soulful connection to being in the woods, in the wilderness, and amongst like-minded friends. She notes that she feels both joy and gratitude for such experiences.

Kathy started skiing in the early 1970's. Her first skis were a beautiful pair of Splitkein Bass turquoise skis (bought simply because they were turquoise!). She has been skiing ever since and has upgraded her skis several times, wishing she still had those Splitkein skis!

The North Star Ski Touring Club (NSSTC) has been a big part of Kathy's life, both on and off the ski trails. She learned to ski in the club, learned to race, met so many dear friends and have years of memories of great NSSTC trips. Kathy and her husband, John, organized and led many trips, taking club members to Silver Star, Methow Valley, Stokely, and Colorado as well as to Minnesota's many great trails. Kathy has served on the NSSTC Board of Directors several times including two years as President. She now serves as chair of the NSSTC Grant Committee, the purpose of which is to annually award grant monies to groups promoting and improving cross country skiing in their communities.



Kathy guiding (SFL) Lucas Rice

Following retirement, Kathy took on various volunteer commitments, two of which focus on cross country skiing. One volunteering role was at the Nordic Center at Snow Mountain Ranch/YMCA of the Rockies where she introduced folks to cross country skiing including giving lessons, and advising on equipment and trails for seven winters in the beautiful Rockies. For the past five years, Kathy has volunteered with Ski for Light (SFL) as a ski guide. SFL's mission is "to enhance the quality of life and independence of visually or mobility-impaired adults through a program of cross-country skiing". SFL accomplishes their mission with an annual one week international event where visually impaired skiers are paired with sighted guides that teach beginning skiing and coaching improvements in ski technique, while guiding on the ski trails. Kathy notes that serving as a sighted guide is an inspiring and fun experience! She is grateful for all of the wonderful Nordic ski experiences she has had and looks forward to more Nordic ski adventures.

Pete Hawkins

It was in the fall of 1976 that Pete discovered Nordic skiing by attending a North Star Ski Touring Club (NSSTC) event in Minneapolis. A crowd of over 300 attendees was there. Knowing no one, he almost left the meeting, but "Mother North Star" (Jinny McWethy) introduced herself and welcomed him, thus encouraging him to stay and learn more. That single encounter positively changed life forever for Pete and his family!

Soon, after a few ski lessons, Pete and his wife, Kathy, went on a weekend North Star ski trip to Itasca State Park and that awesome experience really set the hook for both of them. Just a couple years later, they bravely led a week-long ski trip to Mount Tremblant in Quebec and went on to lead scores of day and weekend ski trips along with a few more week long adventures. They also participated in and led numerous trail clearing trips.

Their most significant effort was 30 years of leading weekend ski trips to Suomi Hills and other ski venues in the Grand Rapids area. They hosted from 30 to 45 North Stars at a church camp on Deer Lake as the base for some incredibly beautiful and challenging skiing. There were many takers of the annual 40K "Death March" and Pete's happy to say that all survived!

Pete became deeply involved with the workings of the NSSTC, serving several years on the Board of Directors. He held numerous leadership positions including President. He was a volunteer at Hennepin Parks, gave ski lessons, and organized many ski swaps. Additionally, he was on a committee to draft a bill for the Great MN Ski Pass. In 2006, Pete was awarded the Tim Knopp Award, given for volunteerism in the NSSTC. Having known Tim personally, he felt very privileged to receive this award named after Tim, who was a true leader and visionary of the Nordic skiing community.

Pete's ski racing history is quite modest, but he did compete in several North Star VJC races, the full Birkie, the Mora Vassaloppet, a Superior Municipal Forest race, the Seeley Hills Classic, and the Engadine Ski Marathon in Switzerland.

On the family ski front, both of Pete's daughters love Nordic skiing and have passed that love to their spouses and children. They were both on the Irondale High School Nordic ski team and Pete served as a parent coach. All four of Pete's grandchildren were also on high school ski teams. Pete says that Nordic skiing has added an additional family bond that still keeps them all very close. Nordic Skiing has, and continues to, afford Pete a zest for healthy outdoor recreation that he still is enjoying as he glides into his 80's this year.



Minnesota Nordic Ski Association

Having formed in 2001 as a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and advancing the sport of Cross Country/Nordic skiing in Minnesota, the Minnesota Nordic Ski Association (MNSA) is now in its 23rd year of operation. MNSA's founding and primary focus throughout its history is to serve as the liaison organization between the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Grant-In-Aid (GIA) Ski Pass Program and ski clubs, trail organizations, cities, counties, and state parks that rely on GIA funding to maintain, improve, and groom the 93 public ski trails in the ski pass system. MNSA has had numerous accomplishments over 20+ years that has lead to the improvement and enhancement of the Ski GIA program.

In 2006 MNSA established the annual Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Award to recognize individuals who have contributed significantly to the advancement of Nordic skiing in Minnesota. In 2017 the award categories, Minnesota Based Biathlon High Achievers and Minnesota Master Skier were added. In 2024 MNSA added Minnesota Nordic Skiing Ski Community Excellence as an award category. Individuals, ski clubs, trail and race organizations, and ski retail interests are invited to join MNSA to help further the advancement of Nordic skiing in Minnesota.

MNSA wishes to acknowledge and thank the generous banquet donations from the following:

Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe • Geri Nelson • Solbakken Resort • 11 Wildflower Lane
Svert's Woods Mapleworks and the Ursa Minor Cabin

Current Ski Club / Ski Organization Membership in MNSA

- Bemidji Area X-C Ski Club
- Brainerd Ski Club
- Itascatur Club, Park Rapids
- Lake Country Nordic Ski Association, Cass County
- Nordic Ski Club-Central MN, St. Cloud
- Norpine Trail Association, Lutsen
- North Star Ski Touring Club
- Northern Lights Nordic Ski Club, Grand Rapids
- Sugarbush Trail Association, Tofte
- Vasaloppet USA



PO Box 8114 St. Paul, MN 55108
www.mnnordicski.org

Current Nordic Ski Business Membership in MNSA

- Leaning Barn Farm
- Revolution Bike & Ski
- 11 Wildflower Lane

Current MNSA Board

- Tolly Vollen
- Bruce Slinkman
- Deb Diggins
- Neil Franz
- Ken Jorgenson
- Greg Fangel
- Bob O'Hara
- Greg "Boomer" Moritko
- Arne Stefferud
- Kent Montgomery
- Brita Sailer
- Nicholas Culp
- Chip Green

Ryan Rodgers

Keynote Presentation for 2024 Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Awards Program



Ryan Rodgers' book *Winters Children: A Celebration of Nordic Skiing* came out in late 2021, published by the University of Minnesota Press. The *Star Tribune*, *Pioneer Press*, *Duluth News Tribune*, WCCO-TV, Wisconsin Public Radio, and other regional media outlets profiled the book. In 2022, the International Ski History Association selected *Winters Children* for both the John Fry Award of Excellence and the Skade Book Award.

The book stemmed from a *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer* magazine assignment about the rich ski history of Marine on St. Croix and Stillwater, an inquiry prompted by Jessie Diggin's first Olympic gold medal. While conducting interviews for the article, Ryan was struck by how individual stories crossed through generations and impacted others with clear causality. He noted that applying the same angled query to the entire state could make for an interesting book, a thought he shared with a primary source for the article, Stillwater ski coach Bill Simpson, who had a similar notion and referred him to an editor at the University Press.

As research for the book, he registered to classic ski the American Birkebeiner (he'd previously skated it) with the highly serious goal of beating the time of a world champion skier, a Norwegian named Torjus Hemmestveit, who had won the world's first ski marathon in the 19th century. Granted, Torjus used heavy, handmade wooden skis and a single, log-like staff, as did he later move to Minnesota to ski in his adopted nation's first ski league.

Ryan grew up in suburban Anoka, skiing in the Bill Koch Junior Ski League and in high school in the late nineties on Nancy and Bill Bauer's Nordic team. After starting college at the University of Minnesota Duluth, he dropped out to hike the Appalachian Trail, spending the next three winters working in factories to support subsequent hikes on the Pacific Crest and Continental Divide trails.

After resuming college in Minneapolis, he skied occasionally at Como Park, drove a UPS truck, graduated with an English degree, then worked for several years as a photographer with the University of Minnesota and later with a chain of community newspapers. In 2010 he moved to rural Osceola, Wisconsin, where his wife took a job. Ryan attended Hamline University for his Master of Fine Arts in creative writing and spent two years photographing the St. Croix River, often on backcountry skis, culminating in skiing 150 miles of riverway and a 2012 gallery show. His first daughter was born that same year, followed by a second a few years later.

Ryan's work has appeared in such places as the *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer*, *Backpacker*, *The Boundary Waters Journal*, and *Minnesota Monthly*. He and his family live in the woods just north of Duluth, a five-minute drive from the top of Lester Park's ski trails.

Welcome to the Vasaloppet Nordic Center Complex

The Vasaloppet and Mora community is very proud of this facility, which was built exclusively with private donations. Construction of this three-building complex began in 1999 with the building of the Nordic Center. The Nordic Center features a wax room, changing and shower areas as well as saunas. The Center also has a small kitchen and plenty of room upstairs and downstairs for events. After that building was completed, the "Garage" building was constructed and today serves as a garage for the Vasaloppet grooming equipment during the snow season and as a social facility for Vasaloppet events. The third building of the complex is a storage and maintenance building for Vasaloppet groomers and equipment. The Nordic Center serves as the focal point of over 12 kilometers of ski trails, which also includes three kilometers of lighted trail. Snowmaking efforts cover the trail system with manufactured snow for great season-long skiing. There is currently no cost for skiers to use the Center, which is maintained through skier donations, Vasaloppet funds, and volunteer labor. Thank you for attending this afternoon and we hope to see you next winter on the trails here at the Nordic Center. -Mora Vasaloppet USA