

A Century Worth Celebrating

Wednesday, April 8, 2015

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Nelson Bennett '40 spent his 100th birthday right where you would expect him to—at the White Pass, Wash., ski resort he helped guide and expand for many years. On Dec. 7, 2014, friends and family from as far away as New Hampshire gathered at White Pass Ski Area to celebrate with the skiing legend, U.S. Skiing Hall of Famer and Lancaster, N.H., native. One of the central figures in the winter 2011 *UNH Magazine* feature “Mountain Men,” Bennett served as a member of the famed 10th Mountain Division ski infantry, which was pivotal in clearing a route through the Italian Alps for the Allies during World War II. After the war, Bennett became something of a ski instructor to the stars, squiring the likes of Gary Cooper, Clark Gable, Esther Williams and Lucille Ball around the Sun Valley slopes. He returned to the Italian mountains with the U.S. alpine team for the 1956 Olympics in Cortina, serving as team manager, and he oversaw all the ski events for the 1960 Olympics in Squaw Valley, Calif. From 1960-1985, he served as general manager for White Pass. A decorated competitor known for returning to New Hampshire to race at North Conway’s Cranmore Mountain even into his late

90s, Bennett didn't take to the slopes on Dec. 7. But he did mark his milestone birthday with another favorite indulgence—a gin and tonic.

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