

# Vermont Ski Hall of Fame Inducts Billy Kidd and Warren Witherell

## Two Native Americans Honored as MVP's of Skiing

STOWE, Vt. – Oct. 28 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – A blanket of snow turned Vermont's Green Mountains white as Billy Kidd, the first American male to win an Olympic (silver) Medal in Alpine Ski Racing, was inducted into the Vermont Ski Hall of Fame at the Snowflake Lodge in his hometown of Stowe on Sunday. "Though not fully proven, it took the fearlessness of his Abenaki Indian and Pirate (Captain William Kidd) blood to break the glass ceiling," said fellow Olympian Suzy Chaffee, co-chair of Native Voices Foundation (NVF).



Send2Press® Newswire

Photo Caption: Warren Witherell (L) and Olympic skier Billy Kidd (Abenaki) at induction into the Vermont Ski Hall of Fame. Koasek Abenaki Chief Nancy Lyons (L) presented Billy with an eagle feather and Olympian Suzy Chaffee a hawk fan for doing wonders for Indian youth.

Governor Jim Douglas saluted the First Vermonters, the Abenakis, on their State recognition, and Billy for evolving into one of the most respected and beloved figures in the Ski World.

Earlier in the day at the VT Ski Museum, Nancy Lyons, Chief of the Koasek

Abenaki Nation, presented Kidd with an eagle feather, saying, "Billy is a hero and role model of the best way to lift the health and spirit of Indian youth whose Earth wisdom is critical to generations of skiers and people everywhere. And what a sense of humor!" Chief Nancy also presented Suzy with a red tail hawk fan for orchestrating this unprecedented bridge between the cultures.

**Billy Kidd merited the ultimate eagle feather for these contributions:**

- \* Founding in 1999, the "Ute Future Olympians" program at Steamboat (CO), where he is Director of Skiing – (Utes then saved their Opening!)
- \* Envisioning the Utes leading a Snowdance at Denver's SnowSports Expo (Nov), which resulted in 15 feet of early snow at Colorado ski areas that share skiing and snowboarding with the tribes.
- \* Inspiring the SnowSports Industries of America (SIA) to donate a half million worth of ski gear "to create a generation of Native Olympians."
- \* For that and helping inspire 60 ski resorts to share skiing with their tribes, their Elders, in turn, led snowdances/blessings that have saved ski areas in 10 states.
- \* This phenomena prompted the Ski Industry to create a partnership with the tribes to help "Keep Winters Cool."
- \* In 2005 Billy was elected Captain of the Native American Ski Team and suggested the successful launch of the Bid to create Native American Olympic Teams at the 2006 Torino Olympics.
- \* His leadership helped inspire sustainable sponsors to back the Indian Teams: SIA ("Sustainable Slopes Program), NativeEnergy.com, BioFuels Colorado and NuStevia. (See [www.SNOW-RIDERS.org](http://www.SNOW-RIDERS.org).)

**WARREN WITHERELL – FATHER OF US SKI ACADEMIES**

Warren Witherell was another popular honoree. This World Masters Waterski Champion turned ski racer, Warren pioneered US Ski Academies starting with Burke Mountain, north of Mt Mansfield. As Burke's Headmaster his staff went on to produce 38 brilliantly educated Olympians and spread the ski, as well as snowboard academies, across America.

At Chief Lyons' ceremony at the Museum, Witherell announced with pride, "I am Chirakowa Apache."

As a result of a pow wow among these leaders at the Induction, US Ski Academies are considering offering Indian scholarships to enrich the experience of their students, while creating more Billy Kidds.

"Thank you Creator and the Abenaki ancestors for the SNOW," said Chaffee at the ceremony. "They must be delighted about this Abenaki progress, including their spiritual leader, Spotted Eagle, leading the invocation. And as we

learned from the Western Indian Elders, whenever we thank Creator for snow, more snowblessings seem to follow.”

This Who’s Who of Skiing event was organized by Olympian Rosie Fortna, who founded the Abenaki Ski Program with the Olympic Cochran family and Cici Teague. Billy’s coach, Bob Beattie, and hero, Jimmy Heuga, who together won the silver and bronze at the 1964 Innsbruck Olympics, were some other superstars paying homage.

#### **About Native Voices Foundation (NVF)**

NVF is a Colorado 501(c)3 non profit partnership of US Tribal leaders, Elders and Olympians, like Billy and Prince Albert, whose mission is: “Through joyful unity of sport, education and health, helping heal Mother Earth for all our children.” More information: [www.nativevoices.org](http://www.nativevoices.org).

“Given the Global Warming Challenge, I honor the foresight of fellow Olympians for voting NVF a grant to help preserve skiing for all our children through the tribes, and Billy Kidd is the MVP,” said Chaffee. “I also salute Joe Jones of Rutland/Pico, our Abenaki coach who put five of us on the road to the Olympics, and my Olympic brother Rick, a Ph.D., who teaches the “Race to Save the Planet” course to corporations.”

\* Note: A portion of the cost of this news release distribution was donated to the NVF by Neotropo(R) and Send2Press Newswire.

News issued by: Native Voices Foundation

# # #

Original Story ID: (2158) :: 2006-10-1028-002

Original Keywords: Native Voices Foundation, Who’s Who of Skiing, Suzy Chaffee, Suzy Chapstick, Suze, Warren Witherell, World Masters Waterski Champion turned ski racer, Billy Kidd, VT Ski Museum, Nancy Lyons, Chief of the Koasek Abenaki Nation, first American male to win an Olympic Medal in Alpine Ski Racing, olympics, Native American, snow sports, skiing Native Voices Foundation