

Freda Noble Wales

Inducted CSHF: 1985
Hometown: Quebec / Halifax, Nova Scotia
Date of Birth: 1921
Date of Death: March 11, 1982
Affiliated Discipline(s): Builder
Active Career Date(s): 1952 - 1975
FIS Code: n/a
Club: Wentworth Valley Ski Club

Born in 1921 in Quebec, Freda Wales was educated at McGill University, graduating as a Gold Medal winner and a degree in physical education. She served in the Canadian Women's Army Corps in WW II, served briefly with the federal Department of Health before moving to Nova Scotia in 1947.

A prominent figure in and enthusiastic supporter of a number of sports, "...she gave freely of herself in so many ways in her tireless effort to promote those activities in which she was keenly interested". Among those activities was skiing, a sport she had learned to love in her home province. At the time that she moved to Nova Scotia, the province had few followers of the sport and virtually no facilities to support it. In her unobtrusive way, Freda Wales set out to introduce the sport to the province, for which it has been said that she did more to promote and further both alpine and cross-country skiing in Nova Scotia than any other person.

Attracted to the potential of the Wentworth Valley, she participated in the founding of its first ski school in the 1952-53 season. In turn, people were attracted to the sport in increasing numbers such that, by 1960, the Wentworth Valley Ski Club had the financial means to purchase the property and build a ski lodge and ski tow. By this time, some of the first enthusiastic supporters had become instructors allowing the ski school to be enlarged. To accommodate the growing skiing population, the area was enlarged and new runs cut due, in no small part to the ability of Freda Wales to identify and approach potential benefactors. Further, with the help of racing families in other provinces, she organized the first alpine races in the Wentworth Valley.

There is little on record of her determination and lengthy efforts to convince government and private industry to help in the establishment of a ski area in the Highlands of Cape Breton. Nevertheless, she succeeded in her goal which eventually became the ski area of Cape Smokey with the best downhill terrain in Nova Scotia and the site of the first national ski race to be held in the province, an event also organized by Freda Wales.

She also organized ski school evening courses in Halifax that produced a substantial number of skiers who progressed to the challenges offered by Wentworth. During the winter months, much of her spare time was given to travelling to many part of the province organizing small ski clubs and encouraging them to organize competitive invitational events. People depended on her for her advice in the planning of ski programs, competitive events, ski school programs and ski shows. She took a leading role in fund raising and encouraging young competitors to travel to other provinces to participate in ski meets.

By the time Freda Wales joined the teaching faculty at Mount St Vincent University, skiing had become a popular sport both nationally and provincially which made her new goal of promoting Nordic skiing that much easier. Like alpine skiing, she organized cross-country ski meets and was directly involved in approaching landowners to convince them to allow cross-country trails across their property. Not surprisingly, her dedication came to the attention of the Canadian Amateur Ski Association (CASA) and she became one of the founding members of the CASA's Atlantic Division founded on March 11, 1962. Initially, she was Secretary-Treasurer of the Division, serving the Division for many years until, in 1975, she became President of the newly-formed Nova Scotia Zone as the CASA reorganized to become the Canadian Ski Association. At annual meetings of the national association she became well respected for her opinions and quiet but persuasive manner.

After her death in 1982, the Freda N Wales Memorial Scholarship was established to advance the development of outdoor activities and pursuits in Nova Scotia and as a tribute to her extraordinary contribution, not only to the alpine and Nordic disciplines of skiing, but also to no fewer than five other sports organizations she founded in Nova Scotia.