

# 2018 Canadian Ski Hall of Fame Inductee Biographies



## **Thomas Grandi**

Born Dec. 27, 1972  
in Bolzano, Italy.

A 4-time Olympian and a member of the Canadian National Ski Team for 14 years. Grandi's career was highlighted by two World Cup giant slalom victories in Alta Badia, Italy and Flachau, Austria in 2004. His Alta Badia win was the first ever by a Canadian male in a technical event.

He holds the men's record for most Canadian championship titles (11) and finished his career with nine World Cup podiums, third most among Canadian men.

He retired after the 2007 season and after a brief comeback attempt to make the 2010 Winter Olympics, he decided his commitment to his family outweighed his desire to continue racing. He served as president of Alberta Alpine and is in the Banff and Alberta sports halls of fame.

Grandi is married to Sara Renner, who won a silver medal in cross-country skiing in the 2006 Olympics in the team sprint with Beckie Scott. The couple have three girls: Aria, Gabriella and Maya, ages 11, 7 and 5.

They own and operate the Paintbox Lodge, a

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boutique hotel in Canmore, Alta. Thomas and Sara recently took ownership of Talus Back Country Lodge and are looking forward to welcoming guests. Thomas is an ACMG certified ski guide and will be taking skiers into the backcountry in winter or hiking in the summer.

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## John Kucera

Born Sept. 17, 1984,  
Calgary, Alberta.

John's career is credited with the accomplishment of knowing he achieved 2 firsts for Canada in Alpine Racing.

Born in Calgary, John's parents fled communist Czechoslovakia in 1981. He started skiing at 18 months old and never looked back. He started with the Calgary Alpine racing group and later joined the Nancy Greene race program at Mount Norquay, Alberta.

When he hit FIS, the money wasn't always there, and John's parents struggled to afford the cost of ski racing. When other kids were staying in hotel rooms, the Kuceras were camping in ski hill parking lots in their RV. One summer, John wrote almost 1000 letters to sponsors to continue to race. Hard work led him to a place on the Alberta Ski Team and eventually to the Canadian Alpine Ski Team from 2002 – 2014. John competed in all five (5) disciplines but he excelled at Downhill and Super G. The challenges he overcame as a young racer prepared Kucera for the tests he would face as a national team skier trying to establish himself on the world cup circuit.

John made history on the world cup stage in 2006 at the age of 22. claiming Canada's first men's world cup win on Canadian soil, taking gold in the Super G at Lake Louise. John cemented his place as a medal contender that year, claiming 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Super G at Val Gardena.

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In the Torino Olympics in 2006, John competed in the Downhill, Super G and Combine. He finished top 30 in all three disciplines.

In 2009, John made history again in France by winning Canada's first men's World Championship title in the Downhill passing rivals Bode Miller and Hermann Maier. He credits this win to having the right track, the right conditions and the right time in his career.

As part of the Canadian Cowboys including teammates Erik Guay, Manny Osborne Paradis and Jan Hudec he set an example and a standard for generations to come.

Following his story book season (2009), Kucera suffered a broken tib-fib in November. In 2010, during his return to snow program, John was forerunning a race when he came out of his binding and crashed. His leg was broken again. In 2011, John suffered multiple bulging discs in his back. Following a 3-year hiatus from racing due to injury, John returned to Lake Louise in 2012. That race was considered a courageous comeback by many. John finished 14<sup>th</sup> in the Super G that year and proved to the world that he could compete with the world's best, even after so many injuries.

Unfortunately, Kucera's was forced to announce his retirement in 2014 due to vestibular neuritis – an inner ear condition causing dizziness and nausea.

Upon John's retirement from competitive ski racing, he joined the coaching staff of Alpine Canada, looking to share his knowledge and experience with Canada's next top ski racers.

John was name Alberta Male Athlete of the year in 2006 and 2009 and he was inducted to the Alberta Sport Hall of Fame in 2017.

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“I love the sport and I’ve always had a huge appreciation of what coaches do. That probably started with Jason Lapierre,” Kucera said of his former coach, who tragically passed away in 2006. “I’d like to be the role model and mentor he was for me.

“You have to work hard, you have to stay determined, you have to overcome obstacles, but once you do get there and look back on the hard road you had to take to get there, I think you have a different appreciation for it. It wasn’t something that was handed to me, I had to work for it, but it’s something I am really proud of now that I look back at it” – John Kucera

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## **Robert (Swabber) Swan**

Born Feb. 26, 1943 in Winnipeg, Manitoba

Swan competed in the 1964 and 1968 Winter Olympics.

One of the original members of Canada's national ski team when it was solidified in Nelson, B.C., in 1964, where he spent five years. Swan focused almost entirely on the technical events, especially the slalom.

He was the 1962 Canadian junior slalom champion and had five top-10 finishes in slalom and giant slalom on the World Cup circuit in 1967 and 1968.

He was on the national team until 1968 and then competed on the pro tour. He won three U.S. Masters championships and eight Canadian Masters Championships.

Swabber, as he was known to his teammates back in the '60s, has been skiing almost every day of every winter since he was a teenager growing up near Ottawa.

He and the others didn't know it at the time but as they were racing down the slopes achieving what were at that time spectacular results, they were carving the way for the legendary Crazy

Canucks Ken Read, Steve Podboski and others, as

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well as creating the building blocks for the future of alpine ski racing.

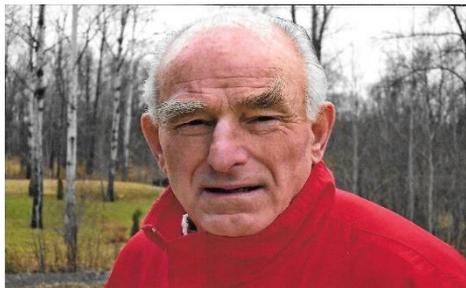
Swan's passion, some would say unordinary, with ski racing has led him down a different path than his teammates. While many of his teammates became successful business people, Bob Swan never left the ski hills.

Bob enjoys the quiet of his cabin in the woods which he built himself near Salmo BC. On his 13-acre property, he sets up a slalom course in the winter, so he can practice his technique. He enjoys hiking up and then racing the 15 second course.

Happiness has always been the key to life for Swabber. A simple life and enjoyable with his long time lady friend Margaret Thast who he has been with for over 30 years.

Today, Swan at 75 years of age still trains and races.

# 2018 Canadian Ski Hall of Fame Inductee Biographies



## **Martin Hall**

Born Sept. 3, 1937.  
Upper Darby, Penn.

Hall coached the U.S. cross-country ski team (1968-1978) and the Canadian team (1982-1992). He elevated both programs to world-class levels and developed two outstanding skiers, one in each country – American Bill Koch who won a silver medal in the 1976 Olympics and Canadian Pierre Harvey who scored Canada's first three (3) World Cup cross-country victories in 1987 and 1988.

Martin Hall stands out through his achievement in progressing our cross-country Sport and Science program to a higher standard. He definitely was the right coach for the right time for Canada. Also, noteworthy was his layout and design of Thunder Bay's facilities and trails for the 1995 FIS Nordic World Ski Championships.

Hall was a disciplinarian as a coach and an innovator with waxing techniques. He published a book, *One Stride Ahead: An Expert Guide to Cross Country Skiing*.

Opinionated and controversial, he caused an uproar at the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary when he accused the Russian team of doping.

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Hall skied for the University of New Hampshire before turning to coaching. He spent eight years as head

coach of the Bowdoin College Nordic program, 2000-2008 before retiring.

Inducted to the US Ski Hall of Fame in 2018.

# 2018 Canadian Ski Hall of Fame Inductee Biographies



## John Fry

Born Jan. 22, 1930,

Montreal, Quebec.

Journalist and author, Fry was editor-in-chief in New York City of SKI magazine from 1964 to 1980, founding editor of Cross-Country Ski Magazine (1982) and of the New York Times-owned Snow Country Magazine (1988 to 1999).

Fry raced in Quebec through his college years, is a member of the Red Birds Ski Club, graduating from McGill University in 1951. Fry invented the FIS (International Ski Federation) Nations Cup, awarded annually to the country compiling the most World Cup points.

He also created NASTAR (National Standard Ski Race), a system to rate the ability of recreational skiers, which came to be adopted in other countries, including Canada. He is the author of the award-winning *The Story of Modern Skiing*, the revolution in technique, equipment, resorts and competition that transformed the sport after World War II. He has written extensively about Canadian ski history.

He was the only person elected to the U.S. Ski Hall of Fame in 1995. He received the FIS Journalism award in 1999, and Lifetime Achievement Award of the North American Snowsports Journalists Association in 2005. He was elected to the

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Laurentian Ski Hall of Fame in 2016. He is the long-time and current chair of the non- profit International Skiing History Association.

Fry lives in Katonah, New York and he is still an avid skier.

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## **Russell Goodman**

Born May 5, 1953,  
Montreal, Quebec.

Goodman competed on the national team for seven years, 1968 to 1975, and for a 3-year period, was Canada's top slalom skier.

In a period when Canada's focus had turned to speed, he bucked the trend and finished 10<sup>th</sup> in slalom at the 1974 world championships. In the World Cup era, this was the best ever Canadian slalom result at the world championships, a result that was only bettered 31 years later by Thomas Grandi at the Bormio "worlds". Goodman left the national team in 1975 to return to McGill University.

In his post-racing career Goodman became heavily involved in volunteering. For more than three decades he worked at creating and organizing elite racing programs, raising funds, sponsoring athletes and running races. He was a founder of Club Elite Tremblant, a Nancy Greene level club that has consistently fed the Mont-Tremblant Ski Club with youngsters who have ultimately progressed to the Canadian and Quebec Ski Teams. Goodman is especially proud of his wife, Sarah, and their three children – one of whom, Anna, became Canada's top-ranked slalom skier before a succession of knee and hip injuries ended her World Cup career.

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He and his wife Sarah currently sponsor a Canadian U- 16 team that competes at a top-level international race in Europe every year. They not only make a financial contribution but they also couple accompany the team as volunteers and mentor the kids to offer assistance.

Goodman is still an avid skier, hitting the slopes with Sarah about 85 times last season.