



## Upper Peninsula Sports Hall of Fame

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Jeannie Thoren didn't start out to save the world. She just wanted to be a better skier. But along the way she found herself revolutionizing the thinking of an entire Industry.

Thoren, member of the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame in Ishpeming MI, member of Colorado Snowsports Museum and Hall of Fame, and named among the 100 most influential skiers of the last century by SKI Magazine, now has yet *another* honor to add to her lengthy and impressive resume! She will be inducted into the Upper Peninsula Sports Hall of Fame on May 10<sup>th</sup>. She is one of ten inductees.

Reservations for Thoren's induction into the 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Upper Peninsula Sports Hall of Fame Banquet are now being taken. The induction ceremony will be held at the Island Resort and Casino in Harris, Michigan located 15 miles west of Escanaba. Banquet reservations are \$40 per person. The evening begins with a social hour at 5:00 (all times Eastern) followed by a brief introduction and meal at 6:00 p.m. The induction ceremony follows dinner. For more information or to reserve a seat, please call or text Council member Anne Okonek at 906-280-2587 or email her at [anneokonek@gmail.com](mailto:anneokonek@gmail.com). **The deadline for making reservations for seats is April 23<sup>rd</sup>.**

Jeannie Thoren is known and respected around the globe as the catalyst for women's specific, ski related, anything. She is a Marquette Michigan native who spent most of her life on Alpine skis. She not only became a celebrated athlete in her own right, but also an accomplished equipment designer who revolutionized women's ski equipment. Now living in Duluth Minnesota, Thoren has a reputation for being determined, having developed that stubbornness growing up a Yooper. She learned integrity, resilience, a strong work ethic, and to help others in need from her hard-working Scandinavian parents Betty and Rolly Thoren. Jeannie loved winter, but as the middle of nine children she didn't learn to ski until she could buy her own lift tickets to Cliffs Ridge (now known as Marquette Mountain). At age 13, she earned \$1.50 a mass by playing the organ at St. Peter's Cathedral with which she purchased season passes at Cliffs Ridge. It was money well spent because by the time she was 17 she earned a spot on the 1964 Central U.S. Ski Association Junior National Ski Team. She learned to ski and race under the tutelage of the legendary Sepp Hoedlmoser and won many medals and trophies during her years at Cliffs Ridge.

After graduating from Northern Michigan University, she chose to leave her beloved U.P. for steeper runs, turning to washing dishes to pay to pursue her passion in Switzerland before landing in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and Sun Valley, Idaho. As a competitor, she found that to perfect her own skiing technique she needed to make some serious adjustments to her ski equipment. And while doing that, she realized that other women skiers were experiencing similar issues.

Thoren is credited with changing the way the downhill skiing industry thinks about female skiers. In 1978 she began espousing the “Thoren Theory” which stated that “women are not small men, so they need equipment designed specifically for them.” In 1978, she brought her ideas to the SIA Las Vegas Ski Show and was greeted with total disbelief. But she started making waves in the industry.

In 1984, Thoren outlined the Thoren Theory in an article entitled “The Woman Skier” that appeared in five issues of Ski Magazine. It was those articles that lead to her developing a women-specific ski with a forward binding location in 1986 for Blizzard Skis of Mittersill, Austria. More than twenty years later she was still innovating, working with Dynastar in Chamonix, France to create their Carve Ski, named Ski Magazine’s 2007 Gear of the Year. For 15 years Jeannie and her husband Tom Haas crisscrossed the country hauling a 28-foot trailer loaded with 100 pairs each of the latest models of boots and skis for women of all ages. They were legendary for their Women’s Ski Equipment Clinics at ski areas large and small from Lake Placid, New York to Mount Bachelor, Oregon (with stops along the way including Pine Mountain, Michigan!). In 2009, Jeannie and Tom opened the Jeannie Thoren Women’s Ski Center in Vail, Colorado, believed to be the first women’s specific ski shop in the U.S. Now happily retired and still a proud Yooper, “Mean Jean the Ski Queen” lives in Duluth, Minnesota.

Over the years Jeannie has been featured in various industry-related magazines and holds numerous awards for her achievements, including being named one of the 100 most influential skiers of the last century by Ski Magazine. In 1994 she was a charter inductee into the Skiing for Women Hall of Fame for Skiing Magazine. Her induction was in Vail CO. In 2014 she was inducted in the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame in Ishpeming, Michigan. In 2022 she was inducted into the Colorado Snowsports Museum and Hall of Fame. In 2014, she received the Alumni Achievement Award from Northern Michigan University.

Jeannie Thoren has been a woman on a mission. She has lived an incredible life but more importantly has made a powerful impact on the sport she loves most: Alpine Skiing. Her contributions to that sport, and to the world will be celebrated once again at her induction into the Upper Peninsula Sports Hall of Fame. Please join us in celebrating this incredible pioneer who had the courage to insert herself into an industry resistant to considering differences in the female form. She was a crusader for women skiers everywhere.

The remaining nine UPSHF Class of 2025 inductees are James “Jamie” Angeli (Iron River), Nick Baumgartner (Iron River), Rachel (Folcik) McClure (Carney-Nadeau), Lesley (Noel)

Delvaux (Escanaba), Jeff Olson (Ishpeming), Denise Porath (Escanaba), John Prokos (Escanaba), Dave St. Onge (Ishpeming) and Barb Sickler (Lake Linden-Hubbell).