

IN MEMORIAM



Robert Jay Evans
July 17, 1925-April 20, 2018

Introduction
by
William T. Endicott

Jay Evans was the first coach of the U.S. Whitewater Team, from 1969-1972. In that capacity he coached both slalom and wildwater for the 1969 and 1971 World Championships and then slalom at the 1972 Olympic Games, where Jamie McEwan won a Bronze Medal in C1.

Jay was my coach and I owe him a lot. So does competitive whitewater racing in this country, which is why I wanted to establish this memorial to him. I hope that in the “remembrances” section at the end of this document, people will post their tributes to Jay.

In 1970 when I got into the sport of wildwater and slalom racing with my C2 partner, Brad Hager (now a professor of geophysics at MIT), we were living in Massachusetts and Jay, at Dartmouth, was the key person so far as the US team, which I

wanted to make, was concerned. Jay's son, Eric, was another contender for that team, but in another class, the K1 class, and became a friend. I want to thank Eric for providing material for this memorial.

I remember taking part in pool slaloms at Dartmouth that Jay organized and going to the Mascoma wildwater and slalom races in the early spring. After the Mascoma races, we'd adjourn to the Dartmouth Outing Club on the banks of the Connecticut River for a party. To this, day, whenever I smell wood burning in a small campfire where there is snow on the ground, I think of those days and Jay because we had such fires both at the races and at the club house to keep warm.

I was on Jay's 1971 US. World Championship team in Merano, Italy, and I remember escorting Jay to a "summit meeting" with the Soviet team because I could speak some Russian. Later, in 1988 when I organized a slalom exchange with the Soviets, the two leaders of the Soviet team were athletes I had met then.



1972 Olympic Slalom Team. Jay is front row second from right, Eric, Jay's son, on the left

In 1972, I was only an Alternate for Jay's 1972 Olympic Team, and as such was not scheduled to go to the Olympics. But Jay asked me to come and be his assistant at the Olympics and I jumped at the opportunity. I learned what the Olympics was all about through that experience and 20 years later I was able to put it to good use when I got back to the Olympics now as the head coach of the team myself, and we not only won the magical Gold Medal, we won a Bronze Medal and two fourth places.

Unfortunately, I gradually lost touch with Jay in the years after 1972. And it is only now in putting this memorial together that I realize all the things this remarkable man did in his life, which are reported below.

Jay did not suffer fools greatly and he was a disciplinarian of sorts. But I respected that and got along well with him. Later when I became coach of the team, I blended what I had learned from Jay and others into my coaching style. He was a great organizer and was good at setting a vision for the US Team and then motivating and delegating to others to help him reach that vision.

Before I end this section, I'll post a memo that Jay sent to us on the 1971 team because it illustrates a lot about Jay.

May 13, 1971

Memo #6

From: Jay Evans

To: The 1971 U.S. Whitewater Team

It is the time now to either fish or cut bait. As a member of the U.S. Whitewater Team from now until after June 23 you will no longer fit your training in and around other activities, but rather you will consider your training first, and then plan for other things if time and energy are available.

You have a distinct obligation to yourself; to your team-mates; to those volunteers on the Slalom Committee and the coaching staff who have been working hard over the past two years; and to the many hundreds of people across the country who have donated generously to the U.S.I.S.C.A. and to the Olympic Fund which is supporting you. We have all given 100% of ourselves -- we will expect no less from you.

Since the U.S. Team this year numbers 34 athletes, in order to be an effective force at Merano, instead of naming assistant coaches I shall appoint a Squad Captain from each of the five classes. These will be experienced, senior members who will act as an advisory committee in planning and carrying out each day's schedule and in working out any problems that arise. The Squad Captains will be given administrative assistants to help in such duties as shuttling, stop watching, and general support of the daily training program.

***** Policy Guidelines *****

- #1. Attendance at all practices and team meetings will be mandatory. Only the team physician can excuse you from an appointment. Report all injuries -- however slight -- to the team physician directly following practice.
- #2. We will use "Vince Lombardi" time, i.e. if a meeting is called for 7 P.M. you'd better be there and ready to go by 6:55!
- #3. Even the mildest form of boisterous or irregular behavior via alcohol and/or drugs is more than ample grounds for instant dismissal from the team.
- #4. No U.S. Team member will use tobacco while in uniform or in public.
- #5. Your relations with the townspeople of Merano will be impeccable, always keeping in mind that as a United States team member you are an ambassador of goodwill. All local laws and regulations will be cheerfully and scrupulously observed.
- #6. All contact with the local, national and international press, media, or even free lancers must be referred to John Wilson or Bill Riley. Individual team members will not talk to the press, magazines, radio or T.V. at any time without prior clearance.
- #7. International rules forbid your corresponding with race officials during the World Championships. If you have a question or a complaint you report this to the team manager.
- #8. The U.S. Team will be quartered at Hotel Rosengarten St. Georgenstrasse from the evening of June 9 through the evening of June 23. At least two meals per day will be taken there and team meetings will be held there. Be sure to check the team bulletin board at the Rosengarten frequently. You are responsible for all information posted there.
- #9. Personal Appearance. As a member of the U.S. Team receiving Olympic subsidy, you will be expected to be neat, clean, and well groomed at all times. There will be no place for slob or slovenly dress or appearance at Merano.
- #10. As in past years, this will be a cooperative effort. We have come together from 12 different states -- which is a beginning; keeping together is progress, and working together means success. Slalom specialists will be expected to help with wildwater and vice versa. This will be a Team effort.

Life of Jay Evans

Born Robert Jay Evans, he was called Jay by those who knew him. Jay was born and raised in Concord, New Hampshire. After graduating from high school in 1943 he served as a 2nd Lt. in the US Army Air Corps and was a Norden bombsight instructor. The Norden, used not only in WWII, but also in Korea, and Vietnam, allowed high-altitude bombing to be conducted with unprecedented accuracy, which not only ensured destruction of the desired targets but also minimized civilian casualties.

After World War II, Jay attended Dartmouth College on the G.I. bill and graduated in 1949. He took his junior year abroad -- very unusual then -- in Switzerland and studied at the University of Zurich. During his year in Europe, he rode his bicycle through six different countries while sharing his post-war cycling adventures with his hometown newspaper, the Concord Monitor.

Upon graduating from Dartmouth, Jay married Frances Maxfield, also of Concord, New Hampshire in 1949. Jay and Fran moved to Durham, New Hampshire while Jay studied for a master's degree at the University of New Hampshire. Upon receiving his degree in New England Colonial History in 1951, he began his career of teaching history.

Jay's teaching years included Bartlett High School, in Bartlett, New Hampshire, Pine Tree School in Center Conway, New Hampshire, Louisville Country Day school in Kentucky, Blue Ridge Country Day/Powhatan School in Boyce, Virginia, and the Shore Country Day School in Beverly, Massachusetts.

In 1962 Jay began working at the Dartmouth College Admissions Office. While there he was a long-time advisor to the Ledyard Canoe Club. This led to coaching the US Whitewater Canoe and Kayak Teams at the 1969 and 1971 World Championships in France and Italy, respectively. Then, he was named coach of the 1972 United States Olympic Slalom team, which competed on the world's first artificial whitewater course in Augsburg, Germany, part of the 1972 Munich Olympics, and the team won a Bronze Medal.

Jay wrote one of the first books on kayaking called "Fundamentals of Kayaking" and, later, "The Kayaking Book" published by Stephen Greene Press.

SIDEBAR - How Jay Evans got into whitewater and revolutionized the U.S. Team

Jay was always involved in the outdoors be it skiing, mountaineering, camping, or Outward Bound instructing, and this included whitewater canoeing in open Grumman's in the late 1950s in Virginia when he taught school there.

This transitioned to kayaks in the early 1960s in Massachusetts where he learned the Eskimo Roll by himself without instruction in a neighbor's swimming pool. In 1962 he moved to Hanover, New Hampshire to work for Dartmouth and immediately connected with the Ledyard Canoe Club. The whitewater slalom bug then ensued in

building home-made fiberglass kayaks with cloth decks. With Dartmouth students Jay and others started competing on the eastern whitewater circuit.

In the late 1950s and 1960s on the east coast slalom racing in canoes and kayaks was led by two groups. One group is what we can call the Scouting/Outing Club model: head to a river on a weekend, camp out, hang a few gates the next day, run a slalom, and then later in the weekend run the rest of the river in the same boat you raced in.

Then there was another group of older, white-collar professionals (often from the alpine ski world) who raced on weekends, often out of the same ski lodge they used in the winter.

Both of these groups were essentially weekend warriors. The idea of daily mid-week training sessions was not high on their agenda.

There were other groups, too, in Canada and the far west of the US but they were not as central to the US racing scene.

The first two groups really had their eyes opened when Paul Bruhin, who was a kayaker on the Swiss wildwater and slalom teams in the 1963 World Championships did an eastern tour as did Milo Duffek a few years later. Duffek was the 1955 Slalom World Silver Medallist and inventor of the Duffek stroke. Canoeist Natan Bernot from Yugoslavia who had been in the 1955, '57, '59, '63, and '67 World Championships in either C1 or C2, also toured.

Here's how Bruhin summarized for all three the US approach to whitewater racing at the time: "What to you is part-time recreation, in Europe is a full-time sport."

Jay picked up on this and when he got to Ledyard he changed this approach. He and his paddlers were athletes first, and the camping experience was secondary, almost irrelevant.

Under Jay, it was now the athlete/sport/training model rather than the camping/scouting model.

During several summers in the 1960's Jay was an instructor at the Colorado and Hurricane Island Outward Bound Schools.

Following his years at Dartmouth (1962-1974) He was the Director of Recreational Athletics at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts from 1974-1987.

Retirement years found Jay and Fran in Etna, New Hampshire and finally Concord. Well into his '70's Jay enjoyed organizing a total of 172 5K road races.

Jay and Fran, his wife of 68 years, had a son and a daughter, two grandchildren and two great grandchildren as well as several nieces and nephews.

REMINISCENCES OF JAY EVANS

ABBIE BINGHAM ENDICOTT. Wife of Bill Endicott, Administrative Assistant to Coach Jay Evans, etc.

I hadn't realized until this moment that without Jay's good-humored confidence in me, and the example he set of professional organization and purpose, I might never have experienced many of the highlights of my life with Bill in this fabulous sport.

I had the honor of being one of Jay Evans's volunteer Administrative Assistants when Jay was the US Team Coach in 1972. He described the job this way: "administrative assistants ... help in such duties as shuttling, stop watching, and general support of the daily training program."

Jay gave me a sense of professional responsibility on my journeys to Europe with my racing husband, Bill, for which I will be forever grateful.

Jay was so good-naturedly efficient and specific about each task he needed done, that my duties were clear and fun to pursue. They allowed me to get to know all the team athletes and volunteers, and to feel I was participating in a small way in their quests for success.

Jay was responsible for my being at the '72 Olympics -- the first Canoe Slalom Olympics in history! -- to help time and assist our Olympic athletes in Augsburg, Germany. Each practice session became more exciting as we could see particularly Jamie McEwan obviously peaking at the perfect moment. All of us leaped off the ground cheering when his Bronze Medal win was announced. It surprised the world; it was a headline story even in the German newspapers the next day, which heralded "Sensation durch McEwan;" and inspired a new group of athletes whom Bill was to coach to victory years later.

Jay had asked me to assist him at the Olympics even before Bill had raced in the 1972 team trials. When the Trials didn't go as planned and Bill was only an Alternate for the team and not scheduled to go to the Games, I thought our Olympic dream had died. Bill remained calm, and Jay was a prince. He said he still wanted me to come help, and he also wrote Bill asking him to be Jay's coaching assistant. We were going after all! We were thrilled! Yay Jay!!

This Olympic experience marked the beginning of our awareness that Bill might be able to make a far greater contribution as a coach than as an athlete. So Jay had a profound effect on our lives when Bill was US Team Coach for many years, author of several books on the sport, a founder and first president of the Slalom World Cup, and coaching consultant to athletes of many foreign countries over the years, including those

of Europe, Australia, Chile, China and Iran, all of which experiences Bill shared with me.

But Jay also helped me individually, tremendously. That Olympic experience with him, and Jay's trust in me gave me confidence to accept ACA Commodore Dusty Rhodes' appointment of me to be the US Representative on the International Canoe Federation's Promotion and Information Committee. Commodore Rhodes felt it was important for Americans to serve on international committees (which we need to do more of again today) and I was delighted to do so, as a volunteer photo journalist for the ICF.

Here again, I had an official position, like what Jay had given me, to help promote the sport -- and I could continue to deduct my travel expenses as contributions to the ACA! So I coordinated stories with US press, including starting the US Whitewater Team Galas and promotional events, not only to get team sponsors and raise funds for the US athletes but also to gain publicity for International Whitewater Canoe/Kayak competition.

When Canoe Slalom was dropped from the Olympics after '72, my work under Jay and on the ICF Committee for Promotion and Information gave me the confidence to form a Committee to Return Canoe Slalom to the Olympics in 1984. That effort did not succeed, but the work we did helped get us into the '92 Olympics, and then again into the 1996 Atlanta Games, after Slalom had temporarily been slated to be dropped after 1992.

What Jay did for me even helped my song-writing career! I wrote six RIVER SONGS during the '80s on our travels to rivers around the world. I also wrote the Anthem of the International Canoe Federation for World Championships opening ceremonies, hoping it would help promote a spirit of international friendship and excellence in our sport. This Anthem has been played at each opening ceremonies ever since 1989, when I wrote it for the first US Worlds. Twenty-five years later, in 2014, when we had another Worlds in the US, I was thrilled to be invited to come sing it live in Deep Creek, Maryland.

So Jay Evans played a huge role in highlights of my life. I am honored to recognize him now. I send my deep sympathy to our friend, his son Eric, and to those others who mourn his loss. I have the feeling Jay is soaring now. I am so grateful to have known and worked with him!

ERIC EVANS. US Team K1 team member and Jay's son.

In the late '50s or very early '60s Dad and I (about age 10-12 at the time) volunteered to be gate judges at the West River Slalom in Jamaica, Vermont. We camped out right next to the three gates we were to judge for two days. It poured rain the entire time. We never moved. I remember we fished Barb Wright out of the water after

she had capsized. I was somewhat puzzled at the time as to what attracted people to this endeavor.

In the early 1960s while working as the waterfront director of Camp Red Fox on Newfound Lake, New Hampshire Dad organized his first kayak slalom on a small stream running out of the lake. He used Clorox bottles tied to rocks on the bottom as gates.

Dad's first slalom kayaks were fiberglass bottoms with cloth tops. Later we learned how to attach a fiberglass deck to a fiberglass shell.

His first book was a small pamphlet called "Fundamentals of Kayaking" using his own drawings of stick figures doing various paddling moves. I think it sold for \$2 a copy in the mail. Trying to draw a sequence of a paddler performing the Eskimo Roll took some time.

For a few years prior to coaching the US Teams in 1969 and 1971, Dad was chair of the National Slalom and Wildwater Committee of the ACA. I remember Dad's Grunt-and-Groan Society in the winter of 1966-1967 where racers would mail him their workouts during the week and he would collate them and send them out to the entire group every Sunday by mail. Wick Walker would always check to see how many pushups Tom Southworth did the previous week and then write in one more for his tally for the next week.

Then there the Top Ten in '67 lapel buttons. The goal being to place a boater in the top ten at the Worlds in Lipno. Barb Wright did indeed finish 9th that year in K-1W Slalom using a tear-dropped flat-bladed paddle.

Dad slept in his VW bug at our campground on site at the 1969 Worlds in Bourg St. Maurice, France. He took the passenger seat out and slept on the car floor. Dad absolutely loved all the different people that a Worlds would attract from all the countries and would practice his German (rudimentary) and French (not very good) with coaches, athletes, and organizers alike.

In the early 1960s Dad would visit the Dartmouth hockey rink every few days in the winter to pick up broken hockey sticks that with a little paint would become slalom poles on the Mascoma River that spring. I think the first Mascoma slalom was in 1963 and consisted of three entrants; Dad, Al McKibben, and Brad Dewey. Maybe Chris Knight, too. One would run the course while another would follow on the bank with a stopwatch and clipboard and then reverse roles, etc.

Dad organized (Dad was more an organizer than a coach) a training camp on the remote Rapid River in Maine during the summer of 1966. There were no roads into the river: boats, gear, and people had to be shuttled in via a long ride on a motorboat...a string of 12-15 slalom boats towed behind.

Somehow Dad talked the Dartmouth swimming coach into letting us paddle on that sacred swimming pool two nights a week in the winter. Pool slaloms were conducted in February during the Dartmouth Winter Carnival in the 1960s.