

# Genia Fuller-Crews

## Freestyle Pioneer and Advocate for More Inclusive Recognition in Snowsports Keynote Speaker and Snowsports Builder Award Recipient

By Jane Wyckoff, History Chair

Genia Fuller-Crews has spent a lifetime dedicated to snowsports, making an indelible impact, not only as a pioneer leading to the development of new and exciting disciplines on the Olympic stage, but also as a pioneer in fighting for equal financial benefits and recognition for women in snowsports.

Considered one of the Legends of Freestyle Skiing with eight years of competition, Genia Fuller was an ambassador to the early years of “Hot Dog” freestyle skiing due to her smile, laugh and genuine love for the sport. Combining precision, versatility and a go-for-broke style, Genia Fuller dominated in all the events and served as a charismatic ambassador in freestyle’s formative years.

It all began on the ice, where at age two a precocious Genia was escorted around the rink of the Skating Club of Boston by Olympic Champion Tenley Albright. The mandatory school figures bored her, which led Genia at age 13 to the rope tows at the 200-vertical-foot Jericho Hill in Marlboro, Massachusetts. Her ascension as a skier was swift, finishing second in her first national junior freestyle contest when she was 16 years old.

Named Skiing magazine’s Skier of the Year three times between 1973-1978,



*Genia competing in Japan in 1977, where she took the All Japan Championships Title, which she did again in 1978 and 1979. Source: Track International*

Fuller’s career earned her numerous World Freestyle championships and titles. Her first title was earned in 1973 with her winning the Women’s National Aerial Title and 3rd overall at Sun Valley, Idaho. That same year she skied for Willy Bogner in the ski film “W.” The first competition of the 1974 season was at Waterville Valley, New Hampshire, and Genia won all three disciplines, as well as, the overall title. This has never been repeated by any competitor male or female.

In 1975, she won the overall Women’s Grand Prix freestyle title along with winning four of the six overall events. In 1976, she finished fifth overall, despite an injury-shortened half season and in 1977, despite only competing in three competitions, it was enough to move her overall ranking to fourth. In 1978 she was again on her form, winning the overall World Freestyle Championship title along with three out of five individual titles. Fuller became an innovator in pole-free ballet, touring Europe and Japan, sharing skills and knowledge with many upcoming young freestyler skiers. She performed in over 500 days of dryland ski shows.

All freestyle competition events today, whether on skis or snowboards, are rooted in what the pioneers of freestyle—the hot doggers—created in the 1960s and 1970s. The freestyle skiing competitions in the recent 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeong Chang, South Korea, all evolved from earlier versions of the various disciplines considered freestyle events. Today’s Olympic skiing and snowboarding freestyle events include aeriels, moguls, ski cross, slopestyle, and half pipe, but it wasn’t until the 1988 Olympics in Calgary that any freestyle event had ever even appeared in the Olympics. Genia Fuller was one of the pioneers and early notables of the grand era of true “Free” Style skiing.

Fearless both on and off the hill, she also led the effort to bring equal prize money to the women’s tour. She parlayed her skiing fame into high-visibility roles on television, with the Women’s Superstars, in the Battle of the Sexes, and in the ABC special, “The Lady is a



Champ,” which featured Genia alongside Billie Jean King and Chris Evert. At the height of her career in 1976 she signed new contracts with Colgate, ABC television, which earned recognition for freestyle skiing through media exposure.

Today, Genia Fuller-Crews is still involved in promoting and serving the snowsports industry. She was inducted into the U.S. Ski & Snowboard Hall of Fame in 2016 and currently serves on its Board of Directors. In 2019 she authored “The Women in Snowsports Industry Award” for the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame and serves as chairman of the program. She stated, “I know there are so many incredible women who have made huge contributions, yet never had their time in the spotlight!”

Outside skiing, Genia is an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and a CPR, First Aid, and EMT Instructor. She is well immersed in disaster teams and disaster / emergency preparedness activities for Ventura County, and lives in Simi Valley, California.

For those of us that had the pleasure of meeting Genia at our 2019 FWSA Annual Convention, when her friend Barbara Alley Simon received the Snowsports Builder Award, we noticed that she still has that same youthful smile, laughter and genuine love of snowsports. We are honored to have Genia Fuller-Crews join us for another FWSA Convention, here in Boise.