

Jimmie Heuga Nomination

DAVID BRIERY

Nominated by:
Tom Pierce
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David Briery clearly embodies the spirit of the Jimmy Heuga award when seen through the lens of having “made a significant contribution to disabled skiing... and has been an inspiration to others.”

“Significant” could be defined by David’s 30+ years of dedication to bringing his love of snowsports to children (and children at heart) with disabilities. David has been instrumental in the success of the United States Adaptive Recreation Center (USARC), benefitting thousands of persons with disabilities since its inception in 1983. A ski club member, and a writer by profession, David joined the board of the then-California Handicapped Skiers Foundation (CHSF) in 1988, and wrote the initial and subsequent founding grants to the Amateur Athletic Foundation (AAF) that held surplus funds from the 1984 Olympics. As one former board member observes, David’s passion for CHSF was so apparent in his grant writing, that in their reply the AAF stated, “We are going to help you, but you haven’t asked for enough money.”

This acknowledgement of David’s vision served as validation of the importance of a program like the USARC, as did the accolades that poured in from participants and their families. Moreover, as the USARC increased its offerings during the winter, and then added a watersports program so its participants could continue to enjoy the mountains in the summer, it was clear this expansion would take additional resources, a task that David was ready and willing to accept. David “inspired others” to join in his love of bicycle travel, and founded October’s annual event known as the Peak to Peak Pedal, a yearly five-day, 342-mile cycling adventure between Big Bear Lake and Mammoth Lakes. The ride continues to this day, and has raised close to 1.5 million dollars during its run.

However, David’s worthiness for consideration of the Jimmie Heuga award cannot be boiled down to grant productivity or the success of special events. Rather, what truly qualifies him is the literal blood, sweat and tears he has shed during his interminable and unwavering commitment to ensure recreational access for the thousands of USARC participants who have taken tens of thousands of lessons over the years. His profound belief that a holistic life full of opportunity be available to all people is self-evident to anyone who has ever had the good fortune to share a few minutes with David.

While David retired from the USARC Board of Directors, he remains intimately involved with the Peak to Peak Pedal, and will celebrate a milestone birthday during the 21st iteration of the ride this year. As for anyone who thinks the Peak to Peak Pedal is beyond their ability, they need only to have David regale them with tales of his bicycle travels across the US, Europe, Vietnam, Russia, Croatia and beyond, while keeping pace with riders half his age. David is the personification of what it means to explore one’s potential, rethink what one believes possible, and continually reach for the horizon, only to continue toward the next horizon, and the next, all while encouraging others to do the same.

Ultimately, it is his sharing of that philosophy through his words and deeds that has resonated so deeply and affected so many people over three decades of service to the USARC. Whether serving as a dedicated board member bringing the USARC from its infancy to its leadership role today, or serving as a role model for breaking down barriers and redefining limits, David Briery has been and will always be the quintessential and worthy ambassador of the Jimmie Heuga award.



Photo courtesy Tom Pierce