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2024 Aspen Hall of Fame Banquet Sold Out

Live Stream of the Event Planned

(Aspen, CO) The Aspen Hall of Fame banquet and induction ceremony at the Hotel Jerome is sold out but the public is invited to enjoy the evening via a live stream on YouTube.

“We’ve enjoyed an overwhelming response to our event this year and we’re looking forward to a festive evening at the Hotel Jerome on April 14th,” said Aspen Hall of Fame President, Pat Bingham. “We hope that inductee friends and family members wherever they may be who cannot join us in person can enjoy the evening online.”

The live stream will be available on YouTube’s Aspen Hall of Fame Channel which can be accessed by simply searching for Aspen Hall of Fame on YouTube. The live stream is scheduled to begin at 6 pm on Sunday, April 14th.

The live stream may also be viewed in the Limelight Inn bar area, courtesy of the Aspen Skiing Company, beginning at 6pm on April 14th.

The three individuals who will be inducted into the Aspen Hall of Fame include: Charlie Hopton, Mike Kaplan and Mary Ryerson.



Charlie Hopton Photo - Doug Dolginow

Charlie Hopton - Charlie Hopton is one of those people who landed in Aspen in the early 60's with little more than enough loose change for a beer at the Jerome Bar in his pocket. It just so happened that Aspen's intrepid Dutchman, Jack de Pagter was the bartender. The next thing you know, Jack took Charlie under his wing and introduced him to the likes of Fred Braun and Ralph Melville among others. It was among this band of mountaineers, skiers, family men and entrepreneurs that Mountain Rescue Aspen was conceived. Charlie has been involved with Wilderness Workshop and the Independence Pass Foundation since their inception. He also helped establish the management plan for North Star Nature Preserve. Charlie has long been an avid outdoorsman and he regularly leads trips to Kazakhstan with his business there called Kazakh Trading Company/ Kazakh Adventures.

Charlie was born in Pennsylvania in 1937. His humble beginnings, during which his family struggled during the Great Depression to provide for him and his 3 siblings, instilled in Charlie the urge to become independent as soon as he possibly could. After completing the 8th grade in 1952 Charlie enlisted in the Army and was quickly deployed to fight in the Korean war. His military experience inspired him to help create Aspen's first Veteran's services organization and help found the valley-wide Western Slope Veterans Association in Glenwood Springs.

In his early days in Aspen, Charlie worked as a carpenter, electrician, and plumber. One thing led to another and his hard work evolved into real estate. He was among the developers of the Meadowood subdivision with James Vandever and helped build the Prince of Peace chapel.

Between hammering nails, rock climbing and mountaineering and generally enjoying the hamlet of Aspen, Charlie met the love of his life Heather who was a waitress at the

Wienerstube in 1971. They became partners in local efforts to help preserve Aspen's wild places. Charlie was the director of the American Red Cross Safety Program from 1968 to 1975, and the Pitkin County Emergency Services Coordinator from 1968 to 1974; he was a founding director of the Aspen Ambulance Association and a member and pilot of Aspen Air Search and Rescue.

Charlie and Heather adored their Golden Retrievers and through the years made it a point to adopt Goldens from Golden Retriever Rescue of the Rockies. They were a team for their 30 plus years of marriage until Heather's untimely passing at the age of 63.

Not one to sit still, Charlie became involved in many local causes including the wilderness designation of the Maroon Bells, the preservation of the Buttermilk back bowls, and the "Save Hunter Creek" effort in the early 1980's. Another cause near and dear to Charlie's heart is the Aspen Buddy Program. Charlie has shared his gift of integrity, dedication, hard work, and love with a Little Buddy that he has mentored from the age of 7 to age 22.

One of Charlie's favorite pastimes is having dinner with friends. Until recently, Charlie could be found nearly every night at the popular local restaurant L'hostaria. Until it closed in 2021. Not one to lament the loss of yet another favorite local restaurant, Charlie can now be found at another much loved local haunt - Mezzaluna - or you just might find him walking along a mountain trail with his beloved companion Kate, a Golden Retriever of course, who appreciates a romp in the great outdoors as much as Charlie does.



Mary Ryerson. Photo courtesy of Ryerson family

Mary Ryerson - In her 45 years in community banking in Aspen she has secured loans for everyone from the 13-year-old buying his first bicycle to the young couple buying their first house. She has tirelessly volunteered in the community and has supported friends and neighbors in times of need, a skill she developed while navigating family tragedy and adversity of her own.

Mary was born and raised in the midwest where her family and schooling influenced her devotion to volunteer work and social activism.

Mary moved to Aspen during the 1977-1978 ski season to be with her future husband Loren Ryerson, whom she met in college. Loren was one of Aspen activist and super mom Phoebe Ryerson's six children.

After her arrival in Aspen, Mary quickly became involved with St. Mary's Catholic Church in Aspen where many well-known Aspen families welcomed her with open arms, including Hall of Famers the Stapletons, Callahans, Kelehers and Oakes whom she says made it possible for her to have intergenerational relationships that made her Aspen experience so much richer.

Mary played competitive soccer in Aspen for almost a decade and forged friendships that have endured over 40 years of joys and sadness. Tragically, in addition to Mary herself, six members of the coed soccer team have lost children creating an unbreakable bond that is unique only to those who have suffered a similar tragedy.

Mary's first job in Aspen was working for Bert Bidwell at The Mountain Shop where she witnessed regular "hosing of hippies" on the rock wall that surrounded his storefront. In search of a job that offered health insurance and stability Mary discovered community banking where she worked her way up from Teller to bank president over her 45-year tenure.

In addition to her day job, Mary has been busy behind the scenes volunteering for a number of local and statewide organizations. She volunteered with the Aspen Ski Swap, Aspen Ducky Derby, St. Mary's Catholic Church, and Kid's First. She promoted a ballot issue for a sales tax that supports employee housing and early childhood education and the bond issue to establish the Aspen Recreation Center. Mary was recruited to serve on Governor Romer's Committee for Early Childhood Care and Education. Along with her mother-in-law Phoebe, Mary founded the Aspen Child Care Center now known as the Early Learning Center.

As the mother of five sons, Mary has spent countless hours volunteering in Aspen schools in the classroom, as a Booster for athletic programs, and sports fan at her sons hockey, lacrosse and football games.

Mary co-founded the Aspen Grief and Loss group in the early '90's after the death of their 16-month-old son Johnny who died in a tragic accident in 1989.

In 2021 tragedy struck again with the death of Ryerson's son Loren Martin. His death led her to the Chris Klug Foundation promoting organ and tissue donation. Loren was a tissue and cornea donor.

It hasn't been all work and no play for Mary Ryerson. She is proud to have been a fan of the Grateful Dead - a Deadhead - since high school and she has been known to enjoy a glass of wine or two with her soccer teammates.



Mike Kaplan Photo courtesy Aspen Skiing Company

Mike Kaplan - Mike led Aspen Skiing Company for nearly two decades, deepening the connection between company, community, and the environment.

Mike was raised in the suburbs of Chicago, far from the mountains, but his father was a fanatic for winter sports and they traveled to the Rockies, mostly to Taos, to ski every winter vacation. He spent weekdays running slalom and GS under the lights at the 250 foot high Wilmot Mountain, Wisconsin. In pursuit of his ski racing career, Mike attended the Stratton Mt. School,

later attending college at CU, where he skied on the B Team and spent winter breaks training at Aspen Highlands.

Armed with a degree in International Affairs, Mike became a ski bum for a winter and headed to Taos, where he learned the every aspect of the ski business.

Mike was a ski instructor in Taos when he met and married his wife Laura. They moved to Colorado in 1992, where Mike earned an MBA at the University of Denver. He landed a job in Aspen, where their old friend from Taos, Henry Hornberger, was the Aspen Mountain Ski School Director.

Working his way up to VP of Mountain Operations, Mike enthusiastically supported the effort to open Highland Bowl and Deep Temerity, among other on-mountain improvements.

Mike's tenure as President & CEO of Aspen Skiing Company from 2006-2023 spanned the sale and re-acquisition of Snowmass Base Village, the Great Recession of 2008 and the Covid 19 pandemic. Under his leadership, SkiCo became known as a global leader in environmental sustainability and boldly advocated for a carbon free economy while modeling solutions such as the coal methane project in Somerset. He pushed the traditional boundaries of business engagement on social issues after the 2016 presidential election with the locally published Op Ed "We're Still Here" and the 2017 Wall Street Journal Op Ed about the importance of Mexican Tourism. Thanks to the Crown Family, the mountain experience saw continuous investment and improvements. Mike oversaw the development of Snowmass Base Village (new restaurants and terrain including Burnt Mountain), the upgrading of Buttermilk lifts and base area and the Hideout children's Center, and the completion of the Aspen Mountain Master Plan, enabling top-to-bottom snowmaking and the Hero's terrain and lift, as well as the establishment of Aspen Highlands as a top resort in North America. Mike dedicated himself to community engagement, serving on the boards of AVSC, Aspen Community Foundation, and many committees, including the Aspen Airport Vision Committee. He also worked closely with Alta, Palisades, and Jackson Hole to create the Mountain Collective Pass, which ultimately led to the creation of the Ikon Pass and Alterra Mountain Company in partnership with KSL Capital Partners.

Mike and Laura have been married for over thirty years and they raised four kids in the Valley who all participated in AVSC and graduated from Aspen High. Mike's passion for the sport, the community, and the people he worked with never wavered and is second only to his love for his family and his sincere appreciation to Jim Crown for his loyal support, guidance and friendship.

About the Aspen Hall of Fame

Since its founding in 1986/87, the Aspen Hall of Fame has honored more than 100 community members for their lasting contributions. Its mission is to recognize and honor individuals who have embraced the spirit of Aspen with their significant and lasting impact on the community by demonstrating excellence and leadership in areas

including civic activities, culture, sports and philanthropy, and who inspire the next generation to follow in their footsteps.

The Aspen Hall of Fame is a nonprofit organization, dependent upon donations for its continued existence. Donations keep the annual banquet affordable for all who wish to attend and support the making of the documentary videos. Contributions may be made at www.aspenhalloffame/donate.

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