

## Dartmouth Icons and What We Can Learn From Them

By Bill Rich

### Two members of the Class of '39

#### Dick Durrance

How crazy is this? A boy is born in Florida, but his mother doesn't think the local schools are any good – and she has heard good things about the schools in Germany. So, she picks up her family and goes there. While riding the train, she sees a charming little town and says let's get out here! And, that is how the Durrance family ended up in Garmisch-Partenkirchen! The young boy hangs out with friends who like to climb mountains in the summer and ski in the winter. He becomes a German national champ and later one of the best skiers in the world. He is told that Dartmouth is the college to attend for a young man like him. A many times college and U.S. champ, Durrance was really the first American to excel on the world stage. But, you have to understand that skiing was different then. For the downhill, you had a start and a finish, but often no gates in between. Durrance would scope out the mountain and see where he might take a shortcut. Once, he intentionally skied off a cliff, did an unplanned flip and a half, and broke through the crust below with his head. He dug himself out, finished the race, and came in 14th. A short and stocky man, he would ski with his chin seemingly inches above his ski tips. His goal was to get down the mountain the quickest way possible. Because of his long US dominance and being the first to achieve International success, Durrance is the Man on the Medal of the US National Ski



*Dick Durrance*

Association. But, he didn't stop there. When the War broke out, he became an expert in designing equipment at Boeing. After the War, he became a pioneer developer and manager of many leading ski areas, including Alta and Sun Valley. He knew how to get something done and promote it, which is how he brought the 1950 FIS Alpine World Championships to Aspen, representing the first world championship to be held in the US and the first to be held outside of Europe. As his ski racing wound down, he became an expert photographer and created many beautiful ski documentary films. He blended comfortably with socialites who admired his mix of athleticism, accomplished talents, and arts – all on a world stage. What strikes me most about

this man is that he was a Free Spirit, was supremely confident, was personable and persuasive, and was an unusually creative and imaginative person. How fortunate it must have been for any of us who had the pleasure and honor of getting to know this extraordinary man! His son Dick carries forward his love of photography and sense of adventure (read further to see how!).

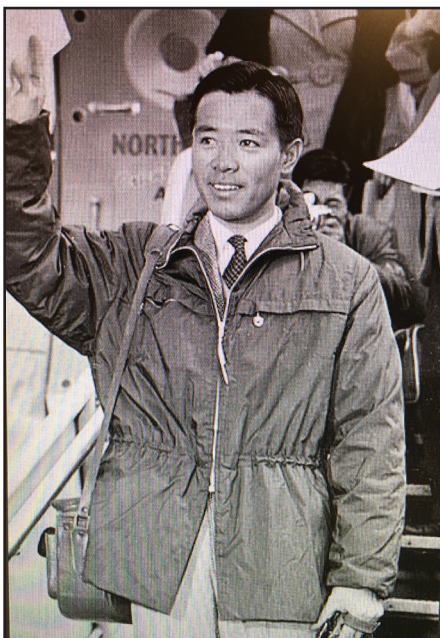
#### Howard (Chief) Chivers

Born into a family of educators, Howard Chivers was the son of Arthur, a Dartmouth biology professor, and the brother of Warren, the Headmaster at Vermont Academy. It is unclear if he learned first to walk or to ski, but like his classmate, Chivers became a leading US skier. Just as Durrance was the top US alpine skier for many years, Chivers was our top nordic ski racer. A February 6, 1937 New York Times article notes "Dartmouth Pride. The twenty-seventh Winter Carnival opens and Dartmouth earns a 'perfect score' as Chivers leads a 1, 2, 3 sweep in the cross country and Durrance wins the downhill and Francioli of the Swiss team finished second." Whereas Dick Durrance may have built a greater International reputation, Howie Chivers was content to focus more on North America. Leader of the 1939 best American cross country team ever assembled, Chivers (with Durrance) was a member of our strongest and internationally dominant 1940 US Olympic ski team (which was denied glory due to the cancellation of those Olympics). This team, by the way, our best ever, was essentially

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totally comprised of Dartmouth skiers! After the War, Chivers coached and taught at West Point and then ran the Ford Sayer ski program in Hanover. In 1948, he began managing the Keewaydin Canoe Camp in Temagami, Ontario, and in 1956, he was named the founding manager of the Dartmouth Skiway. In 1961, he bought Keewaydin, and all of the guides (except Nishe Belanger) sensed that Chivers was in a vulnerable financial position and immediately went on strike, demanding much higher pay. Reckoning that those demands would have bankrupted him, Chief fired all of the guides and was forced to find replacements in a few short weeks. Some of those striking guides later came back and asked to be hired at their original pay, but he told them to take a hike. (And, by that, he wasn't referring to a Freshman Trip!). Chief built Keewaydin Camp into the world's largest owner of wood and canvas canoes and significantly grew its enrolment. He retired after the 1974 season. In February 1984, he participated with speed and grace in a cross country ski race. Three weeks later, he died way too young of cancer from a melanoma he couldn't see on his back. Many of us knew Howie Chivers from the Skiway, and a few of us knew Chief from Keewaydin. Some of us even know how he lost a finger. He always struck me as a humble man with a quiet sense of humor. I witnessed his grace and kindness. When challenged, he could also be very tough. If Dick Durrance put American downhill skiing on the map, Howard Chivers put American cross country skiing there as well.

## Chiharu (Chick) Igaya '57



*Igaya at the airport*

In 1951, just a few short years after World War II and its significant hostilities between the United States and Japan, Corneilius Vander Starr encountered an enterprising young man in a Tokyo ski shop. Starr, known as Neil or CV, was the founder of American International Group (AIG), which built a huge and profitable business in Asia. Over the years, Starr placed some forty young men at American colleges and universities (many at Dartmouth), and these individuals often returned the favor by going to work at his company. Despite some concerns and reservations from friends and family—as it was only two years after the formal signing of the US—Japan Peace Treaty, Igaya ventured off to Dartmouth

in 1953. He wasn't too worried as he had encountered many Americans at the Oslo Olympics in 1952. In all, Igaya skied at three Olympics including 1956 in Cortina d'Ampezzo and 1960 at Squaw Valley. He won six American national college championships and five national championships winning at various times the alpine combined, the slalom, the downhill, and the giant slalom. Just as Dick Durrance had created a skiing style he called the Dipsy Doodle, Chick employed what he called the Cha Cha Cha. Ironically, after all of the greats who preceded him, when he won the silver medal in 1956, Igaya became the first Dartmouth skier ever to earn an Olympic medal. Back on campus for exams after his Olympic success, Chick was just one of the guys. When he returned to Japan, he was honored as a national hero! Since graduation, Igaya has been a leader in the insurance industry and for his native country in Olympic and other sports advocacy. He hopes to pin a medal on a Dartmouth athlete sometime at a Japanese Olympics.



*Igaya skiing on a roof*