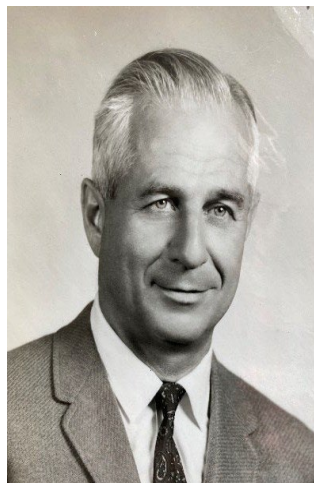




EDWARD PETSONK

Ed Petsonk was excited when he came through the door of his Altoona home. The gregarious electrical engineer announced to his wife and 4 kids, “We just bought a mountain.” The year was 1961. The Mountain was Blue Knob, nestled between Harrisburg and Pittsburg in the heart of the central Pennsylvania Alleghenies. It had been 10 years since Ed had been hired to build a high



priority Air Force Radar Base on the 3,1020-foot peak of the imposing hill during the height of the “Cold War”. By 1960, the base had been abandoned and Ed had become an ardent outdoor and recreation enthusiast. Skiing became a big part of the family life. As the Petsonks traveled to western Pennsylvania ski areas, they saw the possibilities in their own backyard. When he heard the property bordering the now shuttered base was for sale, Ed had a vision. He bought it and began assembling the team to develop a full- service winter-sports resort on Pennsylvania’s 2nd highest mountain. He brought together ski veterans who excelled in organizing ski schools, management operations, snowmaking teams along with Blue Knob was the highly lodging and dining facilities. A key player in his plan for Blue Knob was the highly regarded Pennsylvania Secretary of Forests and Waters, Maurice Goddard. Goddard was the leading voice for the development of the State Park system. With his

support, Ed was able to lease state land on the mountain. The federal government helped with access to radar base land and important Economic Development loans. The project was off to a flying start.

The Blue Knob slopes and facilities opened in 1963 and since then have grown with the sport to add snowboarding, tubing, public school education programs, Special Olympics, competitive skiing and jobs. As Ed’s friends and family members would often say, “Blue Knob provided the Altitude, Eddy provided the attitude. “Sadly, Edward Petsonk passed away in 2009. His legacy is the hundreds-of thousands who thrived on his mountain landmark, a lasting memorial to a man of towering vision.

