

# Age not a detractor for 90-year-old SLT resident



Ken Myron does not let age dictate what he does.  
Photo/Jessie Marchesseau

**By Jessie Marchesseau**

Skiing isn't necessarily for the young, just the young at heart. And at 90 years old, South Lake Tahoe resident Ken Myron still qualifies.

Though we had never met in person, when I saw the small-framed man at the bottom of Heavenly's tram with bright orange skis and a patch on his jacket reading "90+ Ski Club," I knew I had found my ski buddy for the day.

On the ride up, Myron explained that he didn't even take up skiing until he moved to Lake Tahoe from San Diego in 1989. He

was 64.

"My wife thought I was crazy," he recalled. But that didn't stop him.

At the age of 73 he skied Gunbarrel 20 times nonstop. At 75, he skied more than a million vertical feet at Sierra, an accomplishment for which, as only the third person to do it that season, he was awarded a free plane ticket to anywhere in the U.S. He continued to rack up about 40 ski days a year until, at 87, injuries started to put a damper on his ski time.

"I think anything he does, he does according to his personality," said Vince Lancey, a friend and ski partner of Myron for more than 25 years. "He does it to the Nth degree. Just 110 percent."

We picked a sunny spring day to explore the mountain together, taking several hours to do what I like to call the Heavenly lift tour. Making our way from California to Nevada, we skied Powderbowl, Canyon, Sky, Comet, Dipper and back again.

Myron was happy to act as tour guide, leading us down mostly groomers. He stopped skiing trees and bumps 13 years ago, he explained, after going blind in his right eye. That seemed like a good idea to me, and I was more than happy to stick to the main runs.

On the lift rides, Myron shared stories about his life, his family, skiing and weight lifting. All are obvious passions of his.

He still remembers his first day skiing. He went to Kirkwood with two of his sons who promptly took him up Chair 11 and over to a black diamond run with the theory that he was a good water-skier, so he would surely be good at this, too. The elder Myron stubbornly removed his skis and walked most of the way down. However, he was not deterred. Once at the bottom, he

got on an easier chair where he met a very nice, and experienced, 6-year-old (he'd been skiing since he was 3 and was quite confident in his abilities). The boy became Myron's first ski instructor. They met up each morning for the next four days. He would follow the boy around the mountain, attempting to emulate his every move.

This style of learning became a habit for Myron. Even today he likes to pick out good skiers on the hill and follow them, trying to ski how they ski. He is especially keen on following ski patrollers.

Lancey said they would frequently watch skilled skiers from the chairlift and analyze their techniques. Both being beginners at the same time, Myron and Lancey were constantly looking to improve their skills, often taking turns following each other down whatever line their partner chose.

"He is fearless. Still is that way," Lancey said. "What he attempts to do even now is amazing to me."

Lancey attributes some of his own skiing abilities to following his fearless friend around the mountain.

Myron still displays that same old fearlessness and drive to improve. Twice during our ski day, he found himself on the snow. He just got back up again, brushed off the snow, laughed and kept on going.

"I didn't plan on going on my butt," he said on the final chair ride of the afternoon. "But it reminded me: don't lean back, gotta lean forward."

He's had some dramatic crashes over the years, suffering a couple of concussions and partially tearing his ACL. Once he was hit from the side and completely knocked out at Sierra, only to wake up later in the hospital with a \$43,000 bill and a story about a helicopter.



Staying active is important is important to Ken Myron. Photo/Jessie Marchesseau

But he has more good stories than bad. Like the time he was getting on the chair at Sierra and a “little cutie” rode up on her snowboard and gave him a high-five. He asked if she would like to ski with an “old guy” (he was maybe in his 70s at the time). The pair took a run after which she said to him with an air of surprise, “You ski fast!” After another run she invited him to join her in the halfpipe, an offer which he graciously declined, and the two parted ways. That “little cutie” was a young Jamie Anderson.

Myron has acquired plenty of ski buddies over the years, some close to his own age, others younger. He sometimes skis with his daughter, Sandy, who also lives in South Lake, or his three sons or grandchildren when they come to visit. He also spends plenty of time skiing on his own, enjoying the fresh air, the scenery and the general physical exertion of the sport.

“Being active has kept me alive,” he said.

And skiing is only part of his workout regime. In the summer,

you'll find him swinging away at Bijou Golf Course. He also lifts weights at Sierra Athletic club three to four times a week, and is adamant that it's an important part of a healthy lifestyle for anyone. He could leg press 950 pounds until he was 78, and can still curl 70 pounds "no problem."

He often takes his wife, Irene, to the gym with him, too. The couple will be celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary this May. She has been with him from their native Canada, down to Southern California and up to Tahoe. They still reside in the house their sons built for them 20 years ago.

His sons, daughter and grandchildren are the only thing Myron likes to talk about more than sports and fitness. He exudes a genuine pride in his family and their respective accomplishments, careers and successes.

We ended our day on the mountain as many ski buddies do: rehashing the day's adventures and telling stories over pizza and sodas, agreeing to do it again soon.

"I don't think I've ever known anyone quite like him," Lancey said.

Neither have I.