

So much has changed since Caldwell himself competed in the 1952 Olympics, where a lack of television coverage required family and friends seeking results to await the newspaper the next day.

"That was back in the dark ages," he says only half-jokingly. "When I was racing, nobody knew much about cross-country, and people hardly knew we were there. Everything is much, much better than it used to be. All this ease of communication has helped."

Caldwell has helped, too—by turning his lowest point of adversity into a lifetime of achievement.

Some Vermonters may remember his Oslo Winter Games as the ones where Rutlander Andrea Mead Lawrence became the only U.S. woman to win two skiing gold medals. But while the late female legend experienced the thrill of victory, Caldwell felt the agony of defeat.

"I was on the combined team—cross-country and ski jumping—but I was poorly prepared."

Born in Detroit in 1928, Caldwell had moved to Putney with his family in 1941. When his high school needed a cross-country racer for the 1946 state championships, he strapped on his sister's wooden alpine skis. Continuing on to Dartmouth College, he borrowed his coach's slats before the school bought him a pair.

Caldwell tried out and made the 1952 Olympic team. But knowing little about proper training, he toured too many Norwegian bakeries beforehand. The onetime 145-pound athlete weighed 170 by the time he dressed for his event. But that wasn't why he needed help buttoning his shirt—his shoulders ached from falling so often in practice.

The rest is history—just not Olympic history.

"That really inspired me to help better prepare athletes so they wouldn't be so flummoxed, overwhelmed and thoroughly thrashed."

Caldwell started by coaching at his alma mater, the Putney School, where he worked with such up-and-coming skiers as Bill Koch, the first U.S. Nordic athlete to win an Olympic medal (silver in 1976). That, in turn, led him to help the American team in a succession of Winter Games.

Off the job, Caldwell befriended Brattleboro publishers Stephen and Janet Greene.

"They said, 'Are there any books on cross-country?' I said no."

Soon there was one—his simply titled "The Cross-Country Ski Book"—which he updated until its eighth and final edition in 1987.

Caldwell also nurtured the sport by helping found the New England Nordic Ski Association and by forging a family with his wife, Hep, and their four children: Tim competed in the Olympics in 1972, 1976, 1980 and 1984. Peter raced undefeated in college. Jennifer made the U.S. ski team. And Sverre coached the Americans in 1988 and fathered the latest generation of family champions, Sophie.

John Caldwell has been waking in the dark the past two weeks to drive to Putney's Caldwell Sport—owned by his nephew Zach, who's assisting U.S. skiers in Russia, and wife, Amy—to watch live Sochi races that, because of the time difference, have started as early as 4:15 a.m.

"I'm a Luddite," he says, "but I emailed Sophie before the sprint and said, 'Go fast.'"

Caldwell then cheered her sixth-place finish (the best U.S. women's Olympic cross-country result ever) before, a week later, she ended up eighth in the team sprint.

Seen the way skiers collapse after a race? "I joke with them, 'Are you suffering?' I spell and say it 's-u-f-f-a-h.' It sounds masochistic, but that's the way it is. When you

do it you hurt, but you feel great afterward—like when you stop hitting your head against the wall. All of us must be nuts, but it's a lifestyle, a culture."

It's the same for the spectator back home. "It takes me a long time to recover from these early mornings," the grandfather says.

Even so, after rising this past Wednesday before dawn, Caldwell still stayed up for his weekly 7 to 10 p.m. bridge game. Then on Saturday, he was set to watch grandson Patrick, a freshman at Dartmouth College, compete in the Eastern Intercollegiate Ski Association championships in Middlebury.

The grandfather of 10 still takes a turn himself. But the cross-country pioneer says he's going downhill fast—as an alpine season pass holder at Stratton.

"A guy who's 88 and I go over together. It's slow getting the strength back. I got a new hip in May and two new knees in October. I have a plastic heart valve and fake shoulder, too."

So goes life. So much "s-u-f-f-a-h-ing." So much satisfaction.

"I'm bionic—and still plugging along."

TRIBUTE TO DR. ROBERT LARNER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, those who call the Green Mountains home know that Vermonters value hard work and community in equal measure. The two often go hand in hand when individuals give back to the institutions and communities that played roles in their success. Today I am honored to recognize both an outstanding individual and an exceptional institution for their respective roles in supporting the future of medical excellence in Vermont.

Dr. Robert Lerner and his wife, Helen, recently donated \$66 million in a bequest to the University of Vermont, UVM, medical school, which has since been renamed in honor of the 1942 alumnus. The Robert Lerner, M.D., College of Medicine at the University of Vermont will continue to provide a first-class medical education while encouraging groundbreaking research in the medical field, from cancer to infectious diseases, to neuroscience and beyond.

Born in Burlington's Old North End in 1918, Robert Lerner is the youngest of seven children, and the only one among his siblings to go to college. He attended the University of Vermont after receiving a scholarship for winning a Statewide debate competition and finished his undergraduate studies in just 3 years. After completing college in 1939, he pursued his medical degree at the UVM College of Medicine and graduated in 1942. Dr. Lerner then served in World War II before settling in southern California to establish his own medical practice.

Though he remained in California for many years, the Vermont native credits his home State's flagship university for providing the education he needed to succeed. To ensure that future generations also receive a similar experience, regardless of personal finances, Dr. Lerner and his wife have made a number of generous contributions to his alma mater. For example, the Lerner Scholars Program has created a

culture of giving by encouraging alumni to support current and future medical students. In 2012, the Larners contributed \$300,000 for the purchase of five cardiopulmonary simulators for the UVM/Fletcher Allen Clinical Simulation Laboratory. These are just some of the contributions that in 2013 led the university to recognize Dr. Lerner with the UVM Lifetime Achievement in Philanthropy Award.

It is through the generosity of Vermonters like Dr. and Mrs. Lerner that ensure bright futures for Vermont's students and the patients they ultimately will serve. Combined with the excellent education offered by the University of Vermont, the Larners' contributions create opportunities for first-class physicians and researchers who will undoubtedly go on to transform the medical field.

RECOGNIZING CONCEPT2 OF MORRISVILLE, VERMONT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Vermont's business landscape boasts dozens of cutting-edge startups and successful small ventures. True to this entrepreneurial and independent spirit found throughout the Green Mountains, Concept2, based in Morrisville, VT, has once again put our small, rural State on the world stage.

Concept2 is a manufacturer of rowing equipment, founded in 1976 by two brothers, Dick and Pete Dreissigacker, dedicated to the sport of rowing. There, they first designed and started selling composite racing oars. Many years and many innovative models later, these Concept2 products have become an integral presence in the rowing community and have unmistakably changed an international sport.

Propelled by these lightweight, Vermont-crafted Concept2 oars and sculls, 32 Olympic rowing teams recently brought home medals in the summer 2016 Olympic Games regatta in Rio de Janeiro. Bob Beeman of Morrisville was sent to Rio as a representative and on-site technician for Concept2. As a trusted and true employee, Beeman, too, was recognized with a medal and certificate from the International Olympic Committee for Concept2's continuous and fair support of the athletes and their equipment.

With a nod to Vermont's core values of ethical business standards and giving back to our communities, the mission of Concept2 is to support the international rowing community and create equal opportunity for all. Regardless of nation or team flag, the crew has worked with rowing teams from around the world to combine Concept2 technology with human skill and training. Characterized by honesty, fairness, and integrity, these values of Concept2 embody the true Olympic spirit to level the playing field and allow the best team to win. As Vermonters, we are proud to see such a passionate and committed company rise to the global platform and help