

2005 SUMMIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

GLEN BOLES

CLIMBER, ARTIST

During five decades as a climber, while he was making 37 first ascents in the Canadian Rockies and summiting 525 peaks, Glen Boles kept meticulous notes on all his climbs. Written in five-year diaries in tiny, crisp notation, each day received five lines. Boles's records have since become a resource to other climbers looking for first-hand information on routes, conditions, and history.

An easterner who first came to Alberta in the 1950s with the New Brunswick championship curling team, Boles was hooked from his first climb, at Yamnuska on the eastern edge of the Rockies near Banff. "I was scared to death, but two weeks later I was back, climbing again," he says. He worked for more than 35 years as a planner and draftsman for the City of Calgary, using most of his spare time to knock off peaks throughout the western Canadian mountain ranges. Climbing with Don Forrest, Gordon Scruggs, and Mike Simpson, they called themselves the Grizzly Group, named for a close encounter with a bear north of Golden, B.C., in 1974.

An avid skier, Boles has long enjoyed cross country skiing, ski mountaineering, and downhill skiing over the years. He spent 13 years as a Canadian Ski Patrol and is now a member of the Ski Friends program at the Lake Louise ski area. As a climber and mountaineer, he and his friends would hike or fly into a base camp and spend a week bagging all the peaks in the area. One of the highlights of his climbing career was a week in the Great Cairn Hut near the base of Sir Sandford in the Selkirks, claiming that peak as well as Pioneer Peak, Adamant, and others in 1979.

After he retired in 1991, Boles decided to combine a love of drawing with his experiences in the mountains, using his expertise in drafting to create exquisite pen and ink drawings of his favorite peaks. Treasured by the mountaineering community, these drawings have become collectors' items. His artistic palette has since expanded to include watercolour and acrylic painting, and colour and black and white photography. He has also contributed to two books, *The Climbers Guide to the Canadian Rockies*, and *Place Names of the Canadian Alps*. A book of his black and white photography will be published in 2006.

"The mountains have uplifted me, and made me less complacent," he says. "They have given me freedom. I lived in an era when freedom in the Rockies was at its greatest. You could go where you wanted, camp where you wanted, climb what you wanted. I was very lucky."