

Lifetime: William Lowell Putnam III

From Wikipedia:

“William Lowell Putnam III [1] (born 1924) is an alpinist, author and retired broadcasting executive. He is also sole trustee of the Lowell Observatory, a private astronomical research facility; the son of Roger Putnam and a member of the once-prominent Lowell family of Massachusetts.[2] [3]

“Over several decades beginning in the 1940s, Putnam made many first ascents and difficult exploratory expeditions centered in the Selkirk Mountains of British Columbia.[4]

“After serving as the American Alpine Club guidebook editor for western Canada beginning in 1957 and subsequently in other capacities, Putnam was the club's president from 1971-73. Related to these activities, Putnam was U.S delegate to the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (or UIAA) for 30 years, and for much of this period also represented Canada.

“The construction of three mountain cabins in western Canada now operated for the public by the Alpine Club of Canada was spearheaded and completed by Putnam. One of these accommodations, in the northern Columbia, or Selkirk Mountains, was renamed the Bill Putnam Hut in 2002 by the Alpine Club of Canada to recognize his contribution to Canadian mountaineering.[5]

“Putnam studied geology at Harvard University and later was founder and chief executive of the Springfield Television Corp. (Massachusetts), a company which he sold in 1984. During World War II, he was wounded in combat. [6][7]

“Among his books are A century of American Alpinism, as well as K2: The 1939 Tragedy, and a biography of Swiss-Canadian mountain guide Ed Feuz (the last two together with Andrew J. Kaufman) as well as A Yankee Image: The Life and Times of Roger Lowell Putnam.”

Since his arrival in Flagstaff a quarter century ago, Bill has been a steadfast and passionate leader at Lowell and an avid contributor to the local arts scene.

Since his becoming Trustee, Mr. Putnam has helped return Lowell to a state more in concert with Percival Lowell's vision for the Observatory. He increased the attention and effort given to the Observatory's outreach programs, including enhancing our visitor facilities and programs on Mars Hill, including the construction of Steele Visitor Center in 1994, for example. He and former director Dr. Bob Millis also had the vision for Lowell in the 21st century, turning an idea for a next-generation telescope into reality with the Discovery Channel Telescope. His stewardship has allowed Lowell (and thus Flagstaff) to remain top-of-mind in the astronomical world, continually attracting the best and brightest talent that

produce groundbreaking research results. He has also helped make Lowell a potent brand regionally and nationally. The partnership with Discovery will make Lowell and Flagstaff even more known worldwide, with up to 1.5 billion subscribers learning about Lowell and our community. His leadership led to Lowell being named one of the world's 100 most important places by TIME Magazine.

Bill is also a leader in the arts, contributing as an underwriter and gala supporter for the Flagstaff Symphony, contributing funds and clout to attract the radio variety show "A Prairie Home Companion" to Flagstaff, his continued support of KNAU (including their classical music service) and supporting various other arts charities locally and regionally. His passion for the arts is unwavering and contagious, and he invests his own time and funds into local charities like few others do. He does this so humbly that it is sometimes hard to realize just how much he gives because he does not always seek recognition. I highlight his relationship with the Symphony because he is very open about his love of this entity.

Much, much more can be said on Bill. A simple Web search for the man will show you he is exceptional and one of our community's most distinguished citizens.