



For Immediate Release

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Iditarod Announces 2026 Hall of Fame Inductees

Second Annual 'Legends of Iditarod' Gala to Celebrate the People, Dogs, and Volunteers Who Built The Last Great Race®

Wasilla, Alaska – The Iditarod Trail Committee is proud to announce the 2026 inductees into the Iditarod Hall of Fame. The second annual induction ceremony will take place at the Alaska Aviation Museum during the Legends of Iditarod Gala on Thursday, October 15, honoring the remarkable individuals, dogs, and organizations whose lasting contributions have shaped the history of The Last Great Race®.

Building on the success of the inaugural Hall of Fame in 2025, this year's class expands the legacy by recognizing excellence across multiple categories that represent every facet of the Iditarod story.

2026 Iditarod Hall of Fame Inductees

Founders Class

- **Dick Mackey** - A visionary behind the creation of the Iditarod, Dick Mackey helped turn the dream of a long-distance sled dog race into reality. His leadership and dedication to Alaska's mushing heritage helped establish The Last Great Race®.
- **Dick Tozier** - Dick Tozier was instrumental in organizing and promoting the Iditarod during its earliest years. His role as Race Marshal in the early years of the race helped build the foundation for the race and its lasting place in Alaska history.
- **Leo Rasmussen** - As a founding leader of the Iditarod Trail Committee, Leo Rasmussen helped shape the vision and organization of the race from Nome. His contributions were critical to establishing the Iditarod as an internationally recognized event.
- **John Norman** - John Norman played an important role in the formative years of the Iditarod, helping guide the development and growth of the race. His dedication helped establish a tradition that continues today.

Musher Class

- **Doug Swingley** - Doug Swingley became the first musher from outside Alaska to win the Iditarod, claiming championships in 1995, 1999, 2000 and 2001. His success and competitive drive earned him a lasting place among the race's greatest champions.



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- **DeeDee Jonrowe** - One of the most recognizable figures in Iditarod history, DeeDee Jonrowe competed for more than three decades and earned numerous Top 10 finishes. Her resilience, sportsmanship, and dedication to her dogs have inspired generations of mushers.
 - **Aliy Zirkle** - Known for her determination, consistency, and exceptional dog care, Aliy Zirkle earned multiple runner-up finishes in the Iditarod. Her competitive excellence and commitment to her teams made her one of the sport's most respected mushers.

Canine Class

- **Granite (Susan Butcher)** - Granite was one of the cornerstone leaders of Susan Butcher's legendary teams, helping power one of the greatest dynasties in Iditarod history.
- **Andy (Rick Swenson)** - Andy was one of Rick Swenson's outstanding lead dogs, demonstrating the intelligence, endurance, and leadership essential to success on the Iditarod Trail.

Volunteer Class

- **Cheryl Zachary** - For decades, Cheryl Zachary devoted countless hours to supporting the Iditarod through volunteer service. Her commitment behind the scenes has helped ensure the success of the race while embodying the spirit of volunteerism that makes the Iditarod possible.
- **Bob Sept** - Through years of dedicating his services as a volunteer veterinarian, and having served as the president of the Iditarod Board, Bob Sept has made a lasting contribution to the Iditarod. His time, expertise, care for the dogs and commitment reflect the spirit of volunteerism at the heart of the race.

Contributor Class

- **Iditarod Air Force** - The Iditarod Air Force is a remarkable team of volunteer pilots who make the race possible by transporting dog food, straw, veterinarians, race officials, supplies, and dropped dogs to remote checkpoints inaccessible by road. Flying through some of Alaska's most challenging conditions, these volunteers provide critical logistical support that has been essential to the success and safety of the Iditarod for decades. Their dedication represents one of the most unique and indispensable volunteer efforts in all of sports.

"The Iditarod has always been about far more than the race itself," said Iditarod Race Director Mark Nordman. "It is built on the vision of its founders, the determination of legendary mushers, the incredible canine athletes, and the countless volunteers and supporters who make this event possible



year after year. The Hall of Fame gives us the opportunity to recognize these extraordinary contributions and ensure their stories continue to inspire future generations."

The Legends of Iditarod Gala has quickly become one of the organization's signature annual events, bringing together mushers, volunteers, race officials, sponsors, and fans for an unforgettable evening celebrating the history and heritage of the Iditarod.

As a fundraising event, proceeds from the Legends of Iditarod Gala directly support the Iditarod Trail Committee's mission to safely stage the annual race, promote the highest standards of canine care, preserve the rich history of the Iditarod, and provide educational programming that connects students around the world with Alaska's official state sport.

The Iditarod Hall of Fame serves as a permanent tribute to those whose passion, perseverance, and dedication have made the race what it is today. By recognizing these remarkable individuals, canine athletes, and organizations, the Hall of Fame helps preserve the stories that define the Iditarod while inspiring generations to come.

Tickets for the Legends of Iditarod Gala are available now at www.iditarod.com.

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About the Iditarod

The Iditarod Trail Committee is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve the rich tradition of the Alaska sled dog and the Iditarod Trail. The organization is charged with coordinating the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, an annual long-distance sled dog race stretching from Anchorage to Nome for an approximate 1,000-mile journey through Alaska over the roughest, most breathtaking terrain in the world. For more information, visit www.iditarod.com.

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