



J. Halsey Gulick 1899 – 1980

J. Halsey Gulick, educator, public servant, and outdoorsman, was devoted to organized youth camping and particularly to camps in Maine. He was one of the first camping leaders to call attention to the value of youth camps to the economy of the state.

In the fall of 1934 Gulick was elected President of the New England Camping Association which was the start of many years of volunteer leadership in camping's professional organizations including the Maine Camp Directors Association. In 1982, the Maine Camp Directors Association created the Halsey Gulick Award to recognize other leaders who have given distinguished service to the camping movement in Maine.

Mr. Gulick was one of very few independent camp directors of his day to reside in the state of Maine. As the son of Dr. Luther Gulick, founder of the Luther Gulick camps, he was part of a very small group to be educated with the idea that conducting recreational summer camps for children was a bona fide role for a professional educator. Halsey's parents, Dr. and Mrs. Luther Gulick, were pioneers of the camping movement. They began the first camp at Gale's Ferry, CT., in 1888. That camp was continued in 1906 when they began the Luther Gulick Camps in South Casco, Maine on Sebago Lake. Luther Gulick died during the summer of 1918 due to a strenuous winter of investigating overseas work of the Y.M.C.A. Mrs. Gulick carried on the camps until her death in 1928 at which time Halsey became director.

Halsey Gulick was educated at the Ethical Culture School in New York, Phillips Exeter Academy, and Princeton University, graduating in 1923. He taught physical education at Lehigh University from 1923-1927 and at Princeton from 1928-1929. Mr. Gulick headed the physical education department at the Fessenden School for Boys in Massachusetts from 1931-33. In 1933 he became the director of the junior division of the Mary C. Wheeler School in Providence.

In 1935, Gulick was appointed Headmaster at Proctor Academy in New Hampshire where he served with distinction for 17 years. In 1953, he left the independent school to devote his full time to the Luther Gulick Camps. Mr. Gulick had many interests including all forms of outdoor sports like swimming, fishing, motorboat racing, and skiing. In 1931 he was married to Dorothy Merrill, from Washington, D.C. Together, they directed the camps until the late 1960's, when they turned the day-to-day operations over to their three daughters.

Halsey's daughter Louise Van Winkle and her husband, Davis Van Winkle, directed Camp Wohelo, the Luther Gulick Camps for over 34 years. They served as Directors Emeriti until 2023, until the time of Davis's death. Louise continues as Director Emerita.

Their children Heidi and Mark, and Mark's wife Quincy, are now the Directors of Wohelo. There are over 5000 alumni of the camps. Many of the older generation of campers and parents have known all members of the Gulick Family.



The Halsey Gulick Award

The Halsey Gulick Award was first presented in 1982 by the newly formed Maine Youth Camping Association to recognize those people who have distinguished themselves by giving unselfishly of their time, energy, and resources to improve organized youth camping in Maine.

Recipients are selected by their colleagues in camping for their record of public service to the camping movement in Maine. Anyone may recommend candidates for the award. Candidates need not be members of the Maine Youth Camping Foundation dba Maine Summer Camps (formerly MYCA) and their contribution to Maine camping may not necessarily be related to leadership roles within the Association. The award is normally presented at the annual summer meeting of the Maine Summer Camps.

The Maine Youth Camping Foundation dba Maine Summer Camps

Maine Summer Camps is a membership organization for camp directors, staff, parents and supporters of camping and outdoor adventure programs for children and youth. It is dedicated to quality youth camping experiences for children of all ages from all parts of the world.

The Foundation also provides education and training programs for both professional and volunteer leaders of the more than 200 camps in Maine. It conducts a Junior Maine Guide program in cooperation with the Maine State Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Foundation leaders provide counsel and support in the development of a State of Maine Program for Trip Leader Training and Certification.

Membership dues, along with contributions and grants provide the resources for the programs of the Foundation. The organization is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. Volunteers, under the leadership of an elected board of directors, conduct programs and activities of the foundation.

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