



## AAC Publications

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### **Doug Walker, 1950 – 2015**

**AAC President Doug Walker was killed on December 31, 2015, by an avalanche on Granite Mountain in the Cascades. He was a climber, entrepreneur, philanthropist, devoted husband, and father. His death leaves a huge hole in many hearts.**

Doug was born in South Carolina, and he learned his deep love for wild places at his family's mountain cabin. He and his wife, Maggie, came to Seattle in 1972, where he attended graduate school in mathematics and the Cascades fueled his interest in climbing.

In 1981, Doug and his partners started the computer software company Walker, Richer & Quinn (WRQ). Over 25 years it grew to more than 600 employees. Doug was proud of creating a company that many former employees still call "the best place I ever worked."

After retiring from the software business, Doug threw himself into philanthropy and nonprofit leadership. He was board president of the AAC, a past chair of the REI board and the Wilderness Society governing council, and served on the Sierra Club Foundation Board. In Seattle he co-founded Social Venture Partners and was former board chair of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center.

Doug strongly believed that to ensure protection of our wild lands the conservation movement needed to attract younger, more diverse members. His personal crusade to get everyone he met outdoors meant not just youngsters from the climbing gym but also new employees at his company, fellow board members from his philanthropic endeavors, and his daughter Kina. He had an uncanny ability to pick a climb that was a stretch for his partners and challenge them to step up to their next level.

Doug volunteered for the Seattle YMCA's Bold & Gold program to teach rock climbing and soon discovered that permit issues on federal lands made it impossible for the Y to take inner-city kids to local crags, whereas private school programs were able to do so. This issue of access and equity became Doug's major focus, and he worked tirelessly on this problem for many years. One result was announced at the AAC's national banquet, just two months after his death, when Doug's good friend, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, announced the "Walker Permit." This order expedites the permit process to allow disadvantaged and under-resourced youth to access America's public lands and waters. The web of people and organizations that Doug inspired carry on his access work.

Doug climbed iconic mountains around the world, such as the Matterhorn and Ama Dablam, and he loved road trips to the Bugaboos and the Winds, where he could move quickly and competently over mixed terrain. After retiring he worked hard on his rock climbing skills, both in and out of the gym. It pleased him to find that even in his late 50s he could improve. Yet he was more driven by a sense of adventure than by a desire to do ever more difficult climbs. Just as he loved enlisting people in his business and philanthropic projects, he truly loved introducing people to the mountains.

– Craig McKibben

## Images



Doug Walker.



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Doug Walker in Yosemite Valley.

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