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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Second Annual Bill Johnson Vertical Challenge for Brain Injury Awareness  
Saturday, January 22, 2005

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Bill Johnson Vertical Challenge for Brain Injury Awareness will be held on January 22, 2005 at the Cranmore Mountain Resort, North Conway, NH. Check out our website: [www.billjohnsonverticalchallenge.org](http://www.billjohnsonverticalchallenge.org) for more information, registration and pledge sheets.

The Vertical Challenge will have many story and photo/video opportunities. Bill Johnson will be skiing and interacting with the crowd during the event. He is also available for phone interviews prior to the event. We would be happy to coordinate an interview with Mr. Johnson and a member of your sports department at your convenience. Please give Erin Hall or Geri Holdsworth a call @ 603-225-8400 for further information regarding this opportunity. We have also included a bio with this correspondence regarding Bill Johnson for your review.

**William "Bill" Johnson**

William Dean Johnson, "Bill," Born in Los Angeles, CA, March 30, 1960.  
5'10", 200 lbs.  
Divorced and eligible with two sons Nicholas 12 and Tyler 10.

Hobbies: Skiing, Golf, computer games (solitaire, pinochle, cribbage, bridge, etc.)

Bill began skiing at the age of seven in Boise, Idaho. During that first year, his family recognized his ability. At age 9, he moved to Brightwood, Oregon where he continued his pursuit of skiing on Mt. Hood as a member of local NW ski clubs. Traveling by car and supported by family funding, he hit every race that he could get to on the amateur circuit. Following graduation from Sandy High School, Bill entered Mission Ridge Ski Academy in the State of Washington while attending Wenatchee Valley College. At that time he entered selected invitational US Ski Team Divisional events.

In 1980 he traveled to New York where he competed in the downhill and won his race, qualifying for a spot to forerun the Lake Placid Olympics downhill. The next day he was rushed to a race in Canada at the request of the US Ski Team, and was later officially accepted onto the team. He fit into a spot as a member of the Europa Cup Downhill Squad and competed on that circuit.

His Olympic Gold was won at Sarajevo, Yugoslavia in 1984; following his worldwide television announcement during the days of delays saying that he was going to win.

That season he also won World Cup Races in Wengen, Aspen and Canada.

His career covered a decade, while on and off the US Ski Team.

Following his divorce and separation from his children, he found that what he knew best and could do best was ski. He returned to the slopes with a coach and was making an attempt at a return for another Gold Medal. While training and preparing, he entered competition only to have a horrific fall at Big Mountain in Montana, and suffered from a traumatic brain injury in March of 2001. The accident left the right side of his body in a weakened condition.

On December 14, 2002, while still recovering, Bill lost his balance on a patch of ice and broke his left hip. He had been attending the Hartford Disabled Ski Event in Breckenridge as their host all week.

Bill's Championship Achievements:

- 1st American to win a Europa Cup Downhill
- 1st American to win a Europa Cup Combined
- 1st American to win a World Cup Downhill
- 1st American to win an Olympic Gold Medal in Downhill
- 1st American to be twice National Downhill Champion
- 1st American to win the Aspen World Cup Downhill
- 1st American to win the Whistler BC World Cup Downhill
- 1st American to be Ranked #1 F.I.S. Men's Downhill Champion

Bill accomplished what no other American had accomplished in an arena totally dominated for decades by Europe's finest competitors.

Bill's personal quest for competitive excellence is a classic storybook journey of one individual's efforts to overcome insurmountable odds and challenges to become virtually "America's Best."

He was and is presently involved with the Special Olympics, and many others disabled programs, as well as the Brain Injury Association of America and its many affiliates to raise awareness of their many efforts.