



# **Paddling Against the Tide: The Story of Lincoln Canoe, an Entrepreneurial Saga**

*Sandy Martin*

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Sandy Martin grew up in a ski lodge in Vermont in the late 1940s and early 1950s. His parents are considered to be ski pioneers of the time. During those early years, he was exposed to the day-to-day activities of helping the family in this endeavor. It was at this time that the interest in being in business was sparked. When he was 10 years old, he started a ski boot polishing service for the guests that stayed at the lodge, which soon grew into waxing and repairing skis. He soon became interested in the fiberglass skis that were being tested at the Mad River Glen Ski Area. After finishing high school, he embarked on a plan to become a fiberglass technician. There were no schools that taught the fiberglass trade, so the decision was made to get a job in a fiberglass shop and start at the bottom. He deliberately changed jobs to learn the different processes used in fiberglass fabrication. As time went on, he studied with engineers designing products made of fiberglass. In this odyssey, it led him to learn about structural applications and applications with aircrafts, decorative work, boats, and radomes. One of the companies he worked for was Lincoln Canoe, which he became the owner of many years later. The knowledge he gained enabled him to design a special process to produce canoes and kayaks that were lighter and stronger than, and superior in construction to others in the marketplace. This process has been in use for over 30 years and has kept Lincoln Canoe in business where many other companies have failed. He bought the company after it had been in business for 30 years, becoming the tenth owner, and operated it for 20 years, selling it in 2009. This book describes his experiences.

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