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Popular instructor dies in copter crash

John Lancaster, who died last week, taught at Vail Mountain for ye

[Edward Stoner](#)
[Vail, CO Colorado](#)
February 21, 2007

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VAIL — Local residents are mourning a longtime Vail ski instructor who died in a helicopter crash last week in the Gulf of Mexico.

John Lancaster, 46, was piloting the helicopter Feb. 12 off the coast of Louisiana when it crashed during a landing attempt on a platform, according to news reports.

Lancaster was a ski instructor, supervisor and trainer at Vail Mountain for many years.

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“He was a really genuine guy that didn’t have a bad bone in his body, to be honest with you,” said Ben Boyd, who worked with Lancaster at the Vail Mountain and at the Beaver Creek Golf Course.

Chris Anthony, a longtime local and pro skier who also worked with Lancaster at the Vail Mountain, said he was really impressed that Lancaster chased his dream to become a helicopter pilot.

“It was amazing that in the middle of his life he picked up other goals for himself and them,” Anthony said. “A lot of people are scared to do that. He reached the pinnacle of the ski school world, and then sort of switched over and took a totally different route.”

Nate Goldberg, a fellow ski school supervisor, said he was also impressed with Lancaster’s decision.

“I thought, ‘What a bold move to follow your dreams like that,’” he said.

Tom Talbot, another fellow ski instructor, said Lancaster had a great, dry sense of humor and a great passion for skiing.

“I thought he was a class act,” Talbot said.

Franz Fuchsberger served on a ski instructor demonstration team with Lancaster.

“He was always out for excellence,” Fuchsberger said. “He was a very meticulous person, out for perfection.”

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Lancaster was working for Era Helicopters, flying a Eurocopter EC120B, according to news reports. He started working for Era last summer, the reports said.

A passenger, identified as David Thibodeaux, 33, of Abbeville, La., also died in the crash, according to news reports.

Representatives from Era could not be reached for this story.

Lancaster worked for Vail Resorts from 1983 until 2003, according to a spokeswoman.

Lancaster is survived by his wife, Lisa.

On the Web

A memorial site for John Lancaster is at www.johnlancastermemorial.com.

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