



Joe Franz

Franz Bakery

The life story of Joe Franz gives new meaning to the expression “born into the baking business.” Mr. Franz was born in July 1913 in a family living space located above the Franz Bakery in Portland, Ore. The bedroom in which he was born later became his office at the company.

During Mr. Franz’s 33 years running Franz Bakery, the company grew from relatively modest origins into the largest U.S. baking company in the West. It was for his achievements leading Franz that the American Society of Baking selected Mr. Franz for induction into the Baking Hall of Fame.

At the time of Mr. Franz’s birth, Franz Family Bakeries was still a relatively young company. The company was established in 1906 by Engelbert Franz and his brother Joseph. Nine years earlier, Engelbert, a 15-year-old boy in Rothsaien, Austria, wrote to an uncle who lived in Portland, asking for travel passage. In exchange Engelbert agreed to work at his uncle’s company, United States Bakery, to repay his debt. Because of a shortage of qualified employees at

the time, Engelbert’s uncle went along with the idea.

Over the next eight years, Engelbert worked for United States Bakery, repaid his uncle and sent for his brother Joseph. The two brothers branched out in 1906 with the purchase of a small bakery named the Ann Arbor Bakery. Within two years the brothers’ success allowed them to purchase United States Bakery from their uncle. They kept United States Bakery as a corporate name and the bakery became known as Franz Bakery.

In 1912, the company built a bakery in Portland at

FRANZ: BAKING FRESH FOR THE NORTHWEST



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2012 Baking Hall of Fame

Northeast 11th and Flanders, a plant that continues to operate 100 years later.

Engelbert's son, Joe, first began working at the baking plant when he was 14. He studied at the University of Oregon, the Dunwoody Institute and the American Institute of Baking and returned to the company in 1933 as a full-time employee. There Mr. Franz progressed from the bake shop to the sales department and was promoted to production superintendent. With his father's death in 1954, Mr. Franz took over as the head of the company.

While highly successful in building the company's presence in the West, Mr. Franz was described as "shy and quiet." He also was called a "leader and a pioneer." In background information submitted for Mr. Franz's nomination, three factors were cited as keys to the company's success. First was a commitment to quality products, quality ingredients and up-to-date technology at the company's baking plants. Next was an ability to attract top quality people. Finally, was the successful acquisition and integration of a number of other regional baking plants/companies.

The most important recruit of Mr. Franz's tenure was Bob Albers in 1975 from Continental Baking Co. as part of a succession plan the company said was key in allowing Franz to remain independent long after the majority of U.S. family-owned baking businesses either closed or were acquired by larger companies.

Franz was a significant acquirer during Mr. Franz's tenure, purchasing the Marx Bakery in Gresham, Ore.; Snyder's Bakery in Yakima, Wash.; the Smith Bakery in Salem, Ore.; the Langendorf Bakery in Portland,

Ore.; an Interstate Bakeries plant in Spokane, Wash.; and a Boge Bakery in Spokane.

While he may have been a shy man, those he worked with said he

made a powerful impression.

Steve Bradbury, general manager of the company's baking plant in Springfield, Ore., offered a description in comments at the Hall of Fame



FRANZ BAKERY HONORS ALL THE 2012 BAKING HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES.

We are especially honored with the induction of Joe Franz, who's greatness in the building of our company and contributions to the baking industry remain an inspiration today.



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WEST SINCE 1906

Franz was born in his parents' bakery in 1913. He worked at the bakery, in the same plant that would one day be the headquarters of the company, from 1954-1984. He would often joke, he did not go very far in life. But he did make a lot of dough!



GOOD YEARS

induction ceremony in March.

"He carried himself with a lot of class in our bakery, and when you met Joe, you knew you were talking to somebody who had a

purpose," Mr. Bradbury said. "Some of the things he believed in were exceptional quality, customer service and investing back into people's lives. We're still reaping the rewards

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of those standards. They still live on today."

Today, Franz supplies baked goods to the gamut of quick-service restaurants in the region it serves, many full-service restaurants and just about every supermarket in the Northwest, the company said. Its products are marketed under the individual bakeries' names, as well as brands such as Bay City, Seattle International, McKenzie Farms, Svenhard's, and Aunt Katie's. Because of continued growth in demand, the company recently built the new baking plant in Springfield, the first plant Franz built from the ground up since 1906.

Mr. Franz died in March 1988 at the age of 74.

Despite the headway achieved by the company in the years after Mr. Franz took over and when he was succeeded by Mr. Albers in 1986, the humble roots of a baking executive born in a room above the bakery still resonates today with the company's leaders.

"The neatest memory I have is that my office today is Joe's old office, the room where he was born," Mr. Bradbury said. "I think about that all the time."