

WILLIAM LEWIS RUDOLPH

William Lewis Rudolph was born on December 6, 1919 in a rural area near Haitz in Marshall County, Kentucky. He was the third of five children. Vernon Carver Rudolph was the oldest, then Orvis who died in infancy. William Lewis was next, and Mildred Louise, and Ernest Wallace. His father Plummie Harrison Rudolph owned a small farm and also operated a general store catering to farmers and selling anything a farmer needed from sugar and flour to plows and seed and harness. He also operated a huckster wagon serving people in isolated sections. His mother, Rethie Nimmo Rudolph was a well-liked woman, devoted to her friends and family. She died in 1950.

Lewis finished grade school in Haitz, and had one year of high school in Aurora, about six miles from his home. He did not particularly like school and preferred working on the farm. As a lad he had many odd jobs to do around the farm, such as hoeing corn. His father believed in keeping the boys busy and when there was nothing else to do he had them move a stack of lumber from one location to another, counting the number of pieces in the stack. Lewis says that stack was moved many times during his boyhood days. His recreational interests were hunting, fishing and basketball.

In the early 30's, the depression years, Plumie Rudolph sold farmers on credit. The farmers were not able to pay, and he eventually lost his general store. He did some road work for awhile, and finally went to work for Ishmael Armstrong, a brother-in-law, who operated the Krispy Kreme shop in Nashville. The family, of course, moved to that town.

In 1935, Plummie purchased the business from Armstrong who went back to Kentucky. With the help of his two older sons, he managed to repay his loan and put the business on a paying basis. Vernon, the oldest son, who had been working for his uncle Ishmael, worked in sales; and Lewis,

who was 16 years old at the time, started working in production. Here he laid the foundation for becoming one of the finest production men the company ever had. It was said he could walk into a shop and at one glance tell whether the doughs were being rolled too thick.

In 1937 Lewis married Jeanne Fisher in Franklin, Tennessee. He was 18 years of age and at that time was assisting his father in the management of the shop. That same summer, his older brother Vernon who had always wanted a Krispy Kreme Doughnut shop of his own, opened a shop on Main Street in Winston-Salem, N.C. in July. When Rex Gordon, one of the boys from Nashville who had been working for Vernon, returned to Nashville in the latter part of 1937, Lewis came over for several months to help manage the shop. Afterward he returned to Nashville.

When his dad purchased ^{the} Knoxville shop in 1939, Lewis, then 20 years old, leased the Nashville shop. This was his first venture on his own. He operated this shop until 1947 (with the exception of the short time he was in the service). When the corporation was formed in 1946, he had been active in the doughnut business ~~twelve~~ ^{two} years and was proprietor of the Nashville shop.

After the corporation was formed and plans made to open a mix department, Lewis moved to Winston-Salem. This was in 1947. At that time he had been married ten years and had three children. He and Charles Curtis, who was the secretary/treasurer and office manager, worked together to convert the original Krispy Kreme formula (the wet mix formula) into a dry mix. Lewis managed this department and was also purchasing agent as well as being a vice president of the corporation and a member of the Board of Directors. During the early years of the corporation Lewis assisted in upgrading doughnut equipment, and was also instrumental in arriving at the design of the doughnut cutting table.

The building on Ivy Avenue for housing the mix department was ready for occupancy in 1948. A 2-1/2 ton truck was purchased, and R.L. "Bobby" Templeton hired to operate the truck and deliver the mix. The first batch of mix went to Alexandria, Va., and Lewis rode with Bobby.

In 1958, Lewis purchased the Nashville shops and became a Krispy Kreme associate. He moved back to Nashville to supervise construction of a new shop at 1201 Gallatin Road, which opened in December of that year. In the salesroom, the coffee bar was built in two sections with a total of 16 stools, and ^{there were} two 6-foot showcases. The five Nashville routes operated from this location. The West End shop had been closed in the late summer, and the shop at 381 LaFayette Street made doughnuts for retail and all the special order doughnuts.

In 1961 Bill, Lewis' oldest son who had graduated from Florida State College, Department of Baking Science and Management, came to work with his father. Actually Bill had been exposed to the doughnut business from the time he was twelve years old. He bagged doughnuts, two to the bag, and placed the bags in cardboard boxes, at the Winston-Salem shop. When thirteen he was mixing doughs by hand and cranking cake doughnuts out on the machine in use at that time. During the ensuing years after school and during vacations he worked at various jobs in the Krispy Kreme offices, in the mix and shipping department, the equipment department and the laboratory. He also ran a route out of the Winston-Salem shop. In fact he did everything except cut doughnuts by hand. He also had some side jobs while still in school, such as stock boy in a grocery store, salesman in a shoe store, and selling clothing.

After graduation Bill started in production at the Gallatin Road shop. When D.F. Whitley died in 1962, Bill managed the LaFayette Street shop.

In 1961 the continuous yeast doughnut equipment was installed in the Gallatin Road shop. This was the second piece of continuous equipment installed, the first being in the Norfolk shop.

Two years later, October 20, 1963, the new Krispy Kreme shop on West End Avenue was opened. This shop was constructed according to the new Krispy Kreme standards, and the continuous yeast doughnut equipment installed. This made three shops for Lewis in Nashville. Business was growing, and there was need for a sales manager. Ralph Martin was hired to fill this job.

In 1964 Bill Rudolph began experimenting with frozen doughnuts, using a commercial upright freezer and placing the doughnuts in local markets to ascertain what the future possibilities would be. He wrote a detailed manual on his methods, experiments, and experiences in the frozen doughnut field. He had built the foundation for what was to be a very profitable and big business.

In 1966, Lewis remodelled the Gallatin Road shop to conform with the standardized Krispy Kreme shops, the exterior having the green tile roof, revolving Krispy Kreme oval, plate glass windows on red brick base, etc. Coffee Bar and salesroom were completely refurnished. An addition was built on the left side and on the back of the building which more than doubled production and storage space. A conveyor system was installed for all automatic equipment which consisted of two doughnut operations, one 400 dozen per hour and one 600 dozen per hour, and the automatic fried pie equipment. Other additions included bulk shortening, walk-in cooler, two more offices, lunchroom and steam room.

In August of 1968, another shop was opened at 408 Thompson Lane. This now made four shops for Nashville. Extruder type automatic doughnut equipment was installed. The volume of business was five times that when Lewis took over the Nashville shops in 1958.

In November 1969, a satellite shop was opened at 5th and LaFayette Streets, replacing the 321 LaFayette shop which was forced to close due to the new interstate highway going through the area. The old shop closed on December 30, and the new satellite opened January 1. This shop had the standard type Krispy Kreme salesroom and exterior. In back of the salesroom was a processing room, racks, two tables, ice-maker, and nook for a desk.

By 1970, fried pies and honeybuns were being made at the Gallatin Road shop. Honeybuns were first made with the use of attachments fitted on the doughnut cutting table. Nashville was the first place where honeybuns were made by this method. In 1971, Nashville started making fried pies under the Redi-Made label on the Krispy Kreme continuous fried pie equipment.

In 1974, Lewis doubled the size of the Gallatin Road shop to accommodate the frozen doughnut operation. A year later the 1000 dozen per hour yeast doughnut equipment was placed in this shop and was used for the production of doughnuts for the frozen line.

In the Bicentennial year, 1976, the salesmen painted one of the trucks red, white and blue, with a galaxy of stars running from the bottom to the top on the sides of the vehicle. The lower half of the truck was blue, the upper half white, and the roof red. The bowtie was red as was the KK oval, and the word "Doughnuts" underneath was in blue. A bicentennial symbol under the above gave a finishing touch to the truck. Each salesman used the truck for two weeks on his routes.

In the autumn of 1976, the new large building housing continuous equipment for making yeast doughnuts, both for frozen and regular retail and routes, was opened. The frozen doughnuts were made under the name of the Tennessee Doughnut Corporation. Lewis worked closely with the contractors and architects in designing this building for the ultimate in efficiency and with space for future growth.

Lewis has made great strides in the industry from the days of 1935 when he started working for his father in the first Krispy Kreme shop in Nashville. The growth of the business is due, he says, to the interest, loyalty and work of his employees. There are three employees who have more than 20 years of service: Fred Woodard, 25 years; John Moss, 21 years; and William Love, 21 years.

Lewis has four children, all grown; William Eugene "Bill" who is in the business with him; Joyce Marie; Randall Lewis, a practicing dentist; and Retha Ann. There are five grandchildren.

Plumie H. Rudolph, who had retired to his farm in Kentucky in the late 40's, died in February of 1968 at the age of 75. Vernon Carver, president and chief executive officer of the Krispy Kreme Doughnut Corporation, ^{August} died in 1973. The sister, Mildred Louise, died in May of 1962. The youngest member of the P.H.Rudolph family, Ernest Wallace, died in March of 1974. This leaves Lewis the only living member of the family.

-by Louise S.Joyner

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