



PROFILE
DR. PAT LOUGHREY

COMPANY
CUISINE DE FRANCE

TITLE
ORIGINAL CO-FOUNDER



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PROFILE DR. PAT LOUGHREY



When Dr Pat Loughrey retired in 1989 from Batchelors/GreenIsle after many years at the helm, as Managing Director and then as Chairman, he could not have expected the wonderful adventure as an entrepreneur that lay ahead of him.

“At that time, I was just starting my tenure as President of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce. I decided that I would also become an investor in a relatively modest way in a number of start-ups across the food sector. In this way, I thought I could keep an active interest in business, which I had always enjoyed.”

When this change of direction was happening in Pat Loughrey’s life, Ronan McNamee, one of his previous colleagues, decided that he would take the opportunity provided by a major restructuring and change of ownership at Batchelors/GreenIsle, to also leave the company and make frozen croissants, having had a lot of bakery experience.

As often happens with those starting a new business, they look to friends and family for advice. Ronan McNamee was no exception. Pat Loughrey was delighted to support Ronan’s new venture as he had a high opinion of his ability, having recruited him into GreenIsle in the first instance.

“We initially approached what was then the IDA for support. Another bakery was the last thing they wished to grant-aid at that time as the bakery sector was having a torrid time and bakeries, both large and small, were closing down. They did us a favour in turning us down because we could source frozen croissants from France and concentrate on first developing the market. It turned out that there wasn’t much of a market for croissants but contact with those suppliers led us to other frozen bakery products.”

In the early stages of the business Ronan McNamee had a commitment to professional car rallying and he was abroad a lot. So Pat Loughrey had to commit himself full-time to



the start up process and upped his interest to 50% of the company, which they called Cuisine de France.

Having managed a company with 900 employees Pat Loughrey found it was not part of his skill set to know about PAYE records, VAT returns etc. He was lucky that his daughter Triona Byrne, a chartered accountant, was able to lend some support in the early stages and later as chief accountant and company secretary. Likewise, Ronan’s wife Jackie joined the company in its embryo stage and was invaluable.

The partners started in Santry with everything being leased or rented but growth was phenomenal and they moved within a short time to larger premises in Finglas. The brand was used on everything and a start was made on registering it in other countries. Their secure and growing market both in the Republic and in the UK encouraged them to plan a bakery in Tallaght, which became the best and most automated in Europe for making baguettes. And this time it was supported by the IDA!

While producing baguettes in Tallaght, they continued to import Danish pastries from Denmark, Kaiser rolls from Germany, Ciabatta bread from Italy and Croissants from France.

Within eight years of starting out, the business was sold to IAWS. Reflecting back now on those years, Dr, Loughrey remarks: “It was wonderful fun! I had more fun being an entrepreneur in my 50s and 60s than in all my years heading up a large food company.”

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