BIOGRAPHY
OF FRANÇOIS MICHELIN
François Michelin was born on June 15, 1926. He was the son of Étienne Michelin and the grandson of Édouard Michelin, who co-founded Michelin et Cie with his brother André in 1889.

Fond of science, he studied mathematics before joining the Carmes factory in 1951, where he followed onboarding as an engineer. For two years, he was a shift employee, first as a worker in the Truck workshop on the Carmes site then as an operator for passenger car tires in Cataroux. He then trained with the salesforce, visiting dealers throughout France, and spent several months training in Italy at the Turin factory. Upon returning to France, he became shop manager for the Truck workshop at the Carmes site, then spent a year in Research.

On May 28, 1955, with this solid experience, François Michelin became co-Managing Partner of the Manufacture Française des Pneumatiques Michelin (MFPM) and the Compagnie Générale des Établissements Michelin (CGEM), alongside his uncle Robert Puiseux.

In October 1959, he became sole Managing Partner, then called François Rollier to work alongside him in 1966, followed by René Zingraff in 1986. In 1991, shortly before François Rollier retired, the co-Managing Partners asked Édouard Michelin, one of François Michelin’s sons, to join them at the head of the Company. Édouard Michelin had been working for the Company for several years, holding several positions, notably in France and in North America.
François Michelin strongly believed that the men and women of Michelin are the Company’s main asset. He made a point of getting to know employees, he ensured they thrived in their jobs and received adequate training, he fully trusted them to carry out their missions, giving them the means to fulfill their role. Throughout his life, he enjoyed touring shop floors and visiting the sales force, to talk with the people who design and manufacture the products or those who are in direct contact with customers. During his 50 years at the helm, everyone who met François Michelin or worked with him remembers a man who listened to others carefully, had exceptional analytical skills and used to say “become who you are”. François Michelin inspired dedication by sharing both successes and challenges and by giving people the opportunity to experiment: “if you can learn from a mistake, it is an opportunity to grow and make progress”.

“IF YOU CAN LEARN FROM A MISTAKE, IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GROW AND MAKE PROGRESS.”
In addition to understanding the value of the Company’s employees, François Michelin also had a thorough appreciation for the Company’s environment. For him, “The Customer is the true boss”. Customers are free to choose and validate the quality of our products or services. Customers ensure the Company’s long-term sustainability, and we must offer them “the best tire at the best price”. François Michelin provided the means to innovate and anticipate market demands throughout the world. “It was almost annoying how he always highlighted the customers and facts, but it established a genuine dialogue with everyone” says one of his former colleagues.

Under his leadership, the Group evolved from being tenth in the industry to becoming the largest tire manufacturer in the world. In the 1950s, in Europe, the Company benefited from a favorable economic context – in the 1950s and 1960s, car production in the European Common Market grew fivefold, and the increase was threefold worldwide. Thanks to the patented radial tire in 1946 (the famous “X tire”), Michelin fully leveraged this historic growth. In the 1960s and 1970s, as car performances improved more and more, the success of Radial tires kept growing and the range was extended: XAS in 1965 for top-of-the-range vehicles, then the ZX in 1967 and XZX in 1978. At the same time, the radial technology was adapted to other types of vehicles: it became available for trucks starting in 1952; earthmovers in 1959; agricultural equipment in 1978; aircrafts in 1981; and motorbikes in 1987. To better serve its customers, Michelin implemented an aggressive effort to equip its production facilities to manufacture radial tires, whether Replacement or Original Equipment, in an increasing number of countries.

Between 1960 and 1990, production was multiplied by seven and two new factories were built every 18 months. The construction of the factory in Bassens in 1964 gave Michelin the opportunity to implement original polymerization processes with synthetic rubbers. At that time, François Michelin decided to launch Radial tires to capture markets on the American continent. An agreement was signed with the distributor Sears in 1965 for sale of imported tires in the United States. That’s when a manufacturing plant was planned. Factories were built in Canada in 1971, followed by the United States in 1975 then Brazil in 1978. In full agreement with the French Finance Ministry, the creation of the Compagnie Financière Michelin (CFM) in 1964 made it possible to finance this development on a worldwide scale.

“The Customer is the true boss.”
François Michelin was passionate about technology and innovation; he was a true believer of “respect for facts”, and had a keen interest in all new scientific advances. As such, he initiated the creation of the Technology Center in Ladoux, near Clermont-Ferrand, in 1965. This 450-hectare site houses laboratories equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and test tracks for developing the tires of the future. Just like for plants, the Company implemented Research facilities worldwide. In 1977, two new sites were built in Laurens (United States) and Almería (Spain). These crucial facilities enabled the Company to push tires to the very limits of their performance levels in total safety. In 1988 Michelin became the first tire manufacturer to install a Cray X MP 14 SE super-computer.

Innovation goes hand in hand with quality, which is as important for drivers’ safety as it is for vehicle performance. For François Michelin, increasing production was only possible if the Company could guarantee quality standards and reputation. New quality control process (automatic and X-ray control) and operator accountability ensured that the most stringent conformity and regularity standards were met. Once again, the objective was to ensure customer satisfaction.
Michelin continues its development in Europe:

- 1960: Burnley (United Kingdom), La Combaude (Clermont-Ferrand, France), Joué-lès-Tours (France)
- 1963: Cuneo (Italy), Vannes (France)
- 1964: Bassens (France)
- 1965: Belfast (United Kingdom), closed in 1984
- 1966: Vitoria (Spain), Bad Kreuznach (Germany)
- 1969: Ballymena (United Kingdom), Golbey (Epinal, France)
- 1970: Aranda de Duero (Spain), Montceau-les-Mines (France), Cholet (France)
- 1971: Bamberg (Germany), Homburg (Germany), Treves (Germany), Alessandria (Italy), Fossano (Italy)
- 1972: Turin-Stura (Italy), Chantemerle (Clermont-Ferrand, France), Poitiers (France), Roubaix (France) closed in 1994, La Roche-sur-Yon (France), Dundee (United Kingdom)
- 1973: Aberdeen (United Kingdom) closed in 1986, Valladolid (Spain)
- 1974: Roanne (France)
- 1977: Blavozy (Le Puy-en-Velay, France)

Michelin takes its first steps in Africa...

- 1962: Port Harcourt (Nigeria)
- 1963: Hussein-Dey (Algeria)

...and begins to serve markets on the American continent.

- 1971: Pictou (Canada, Nova Scotia)
- 1973: Bridgewater (Canada, Nova Scotia)
- 1975: Greenville (United States, South Carolina), Anderson (United States, South Carolina)
- 1978: Spartanburg (United States, South Carolina)
- 1979: Dothan (United States, Alabama)
- 1981: Campo Grande and Resende (Brazil)
- 1982: Waterville (Canada, Nova Scotia)
François Michelin was a genuine visionary. He quickly realized that the scarcity of raw materials coupled with the ever-increasing number of vehicles in the world would require the development of more environmentally friendly products. With this in mind, he presented the first “Green tire” in 1992, after seven years of development. The product significantly decreased rolling resistance and was therefore more energy efficient. For a man of conviction such as François Michelin, this was a natural and responsible choice, despite the cost of industrialization. Following Michelin, other manufacturers gradually began to follow this path.

Michelin experienced difficulties due to the oil crises at the end of the 1970s. The Company had to restructure and reorganize; however, François Michelin remained confident in the Company’s strategy based on innovation. Despite financial difficulties, under his leadership, the Company maintained investments in research. He told shareholders: “The fact that our Company has managed to survive such a serious world economic crisis and resist fierce competition without losing market share is quite clearly due to our unparalleled technological advance”. The “radialization” of the world market continued and Michelin developed new ranges.

At the same time, the Group continued its international development. The Company’s first joint ventures were established in Japan and Thailand in 1988 and the acquisition of Uniroyal-Goodrich in 1990 increased the Group’s presence in the United States. François Michelin held the course, confident in the Company’s ability to overcome the difficulties it was experiencing. The end of the crisis was in 1994. The next year, the Group re-structured its organization by Product Lines and was looking to the future based on solid foundations. The new organizational structure was operational in 1996 and quickly proved its effectiveness as the Company gained market share.

As Michelin prepared to move into a new century for the second time in its history and as Édouard Michelin began to play a more active role, international expansion and innovation remained key priorities. The Company pursued its development in Eastern Europe and Asia with the acquisition of Stomil-Olszyn in Poland in 1995, Taurus in Hungary in 1996, a Chinese factory in Shenyang in 1996, Icollantas in Colombia in 1998, Shanghai Tires in China and the tire division of Tofan in Romania in 2001. The Company continued to innovate with the growing Energy tire range in both passenger car and truck. The Pax System offered new run-flat tire possibilities and the X-One made it possible to replace dual tires. Michelin produced the world’s largest tire (an earthmover tire with a 4.03 meter diameter) and enabled Concorde to fly again thanks to its NZG technology developed in less than one year. The Group also established several partnerships and joint ventures to accelerate its development in an increasingly competitive environment. In 1998, Michelin reasserted its commitment to sustainable mobility by launching the Michelin Challenge Bibendum. Its first edition was a great success as well as the subsequent events in different countries around the world.

“Our Company has an unparalleled technological advance.”
“AS A TRUE INDUSTRIAL LEADER, FRANÇOIS MICHELIN HELD THE COURSE FOR THE COMPANY, HAVING TO WEATHER SEVERAL DIFFICULT PERIODS.”

UNDER FRANÇOIS MICHELIN’S LEADERSHIP, the Group evolved from being tenth in the industry to becoming the largest tire manufacturer in the world. As a true industrial leader, he held the course for the Company, having to weather several difficult periods. He always remained true to his convictions. He embodied the values of the Company: respect for people, respect for facts, respect for customers, respect for shareholders and respect for the environment. François Michelin was a visionary, a man who looked ahead and made long-term decisions, enabling Michelin to sustain its growth. François Michelin entrusted the management of the Group to his son Édouard at the Shareholders’ Meeting in May 2002 where the Company paid a special tribute to the man who dedicated more than 50 years to drive the Company’s development.
**KEY DATES**

- **1926**: François Michelin was born in Clermont-Ferrand, the grandson of Édouard Michelin and son of Étienne Michelin
- **1951**: Joins the Carmes factory
- **1955**: Becomes co-Managing Partner with Robert Puiseux
- **1959**: Becomes sole Managing Partner
- **1965**: Creation of the Technology Center in Ladoux/Signature of the agreement with Sears
- **1966**: Calls on François Rollier to work alongside him as co-Managing Partner
- **1975**: First factory in the United States in Greenville
- **1986**: René Zingraff joins François Rollier and François Michelin as co-Managing Partner
- **1990**: Acquisition of Uniroyal-Goodrich
- **1991**: Before François Rollier retires, appoints Édouard Michelin as a co-Managing Partner
- **1996**: Global reorganization of the Company
- **2002**: François Michelin leaves his position as a Managing Partner
- **2015**: Passing of François Michelin