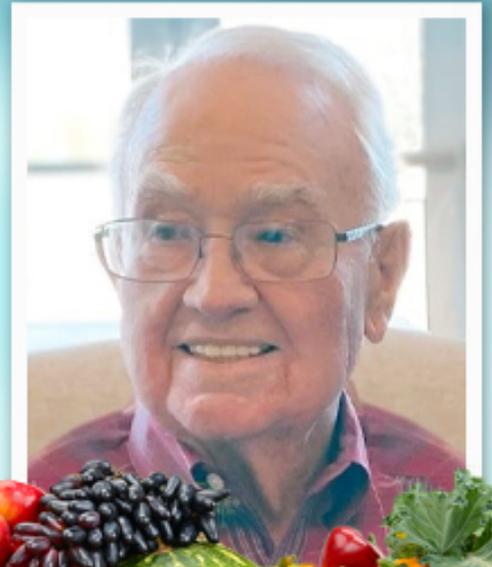

*In Memory of
Don Bowden*



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Don Bowden, guacamole pioneer, dies at 90

September 21, 2022

Don Bowden, a pioneer in the food industry and founder of Wholly Guacamole, died Sept. 14 at the age of 90. Mr. Bowden has been credited with leading the growth of the fresh scooped avocado and guacamole industry to where it is today by actively innovating and investing in the process of transforming raw avocados into fresh, packaged guacamole and avocado being sold in foodservice and retail.

Mr. Bowden was born in Fort Worth, TX. He is a graduate of Paschal High School, as well as TCU. Mr. Bowden founded the company that produced Wholly Guacamole in 1989. But his experience with avocados, and Mexican food in general, goes back over 60 years. He was a founding partner of Pancho's in 1966, then started Dos Gringos in 1972 and Mercado Juarez in 1982.

Mr. Bowden knew firsthand that using fresh avocados to make guacamole and other dishes was always challenging because of the fruit's short shelf life. He began importing fresh avocado pulp from Mexico, but he needed to find a method of preserving it while keeping the flavor and freshness top-notch without adding preservatives. He tried every way imaginable to package his guacamole, including freezing, heat pasteurization and canning it with vegetable oil. Mr. Bowden wasn't satisfied with the results because each of the processes changed the taste so that it no longer tasted fresh.

In the mid-1990s, when he learned of a new technology that uses high pressure to kill bacteria and preserve food, he gave it a try with avocados. The process called high-pressure pasteurization uses regular water to create pressure to protect the avocado product and reduce harmful organisms without changing the taste and using no chemicals. The process worked and coupled with vacuum-sealed packaging, the product is a 100 percent all-natural, fresh-tasting avocado and guacamole that can be refrigerated for weeks and frozen for months without chemicals or preservatives.

Mr. Bowden knew that while the process worked, the technology was new and expensive. So in 1996 he invested in himself and bought the world's first commercial high-pressure preservation machine, sight unseen, in cash. This move revolutionized the adoption and application of HPP in the food industry.

Fast forward to 2010 and Mr. Bowden's Fort-worth-based company Fresherized Foods became the largest HPP user among the world's food processors with established product lines like Wholly Guacamole brand Classic, Spicy Guacamole, Guaca-Salsa and Pico de Gallo Style items and 16-pound cases of Fresherized Avocado, Chunky Avocado and Halves for foodservice and select private label customers

In 2011, Mr. Bowden sold his business, Wholly Guacamole/Fresherized Foods, to MegaMex. The sale allowed more time to be spent on the personal mission of Mr. Bowden and his beloved wife, Linda: to use their resources to support what would end up being decades of deep involvement supporting positive and lasting changes to their north Texas community through service and philanthropic organizations, including the North Texas Community Foundation, Greater Keller Women's Club, Shriners Hospital, Victory Therapy Center, CRU, the Buckner Foundation, Baylor Scott and White Medical Center and The Bowden, a forward-thinking event venue dedicated to supporting their community in Keller. Also, Mr. Bowden donated a distribution and fulfillment center that helped create the Community Food Bank, which supports the community in and around downtown Fort Worth.

In 2018, Mr. Bowden jumped back in the fold with Fresh Innovations LLC, where leaders in the

avocado and guacamole industry are dedicated to bringing innovation back to the produce category. Up until his death, he was actively involved in the business and in the creative development of new products for the brand ¡Yo Quiero!.

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