



# Tribute to Louis Omer-Decugis

## 1944-2024

It is with great emotion and profound sadness that we announce the death of Louis Omer-Decugis on 13 February 2024, at the age of 79.

Honorary Chairman of Omer-Decugis & Cie since its IPO in 2021, Louis Omer-Decugis headed the family group from 1968 until the end of the 1990s, succeeding his father and becoming the fifth generation to lead the company, which was founded at Les Halles in Paris in 1850. Having just graduated from HEC and after completing his military service in the French Navy, during which he accompanied General de Gaulle on his state visit to Quebec, he was a witness of the “move of the century”, taking part in the transfer of the Group’s activities to the Paris-Rungis International Market in 1969.

An entrepreneur at heart and bold visionary, Louis Omer-Decugis helped the family-owned group achieve significant milestones throughout its history. These include moving into exotic markets, forging strong relationships with Côte d'Ivoire, and his commitment to helping the underprivileged, particularly children suffering from cancer in Africa.

Deeply committed to the long-term future and development of the family business, in 1978 Louis decided to focus on the newly emerging exotic fruit market. With characteristic boldness, he partnered with statesman Félix Houphouët-Boigny, father of the Ivorian miracle, thereby permanently linking the Group’s history with his own. Ahead of their time and driven by a shared vision of agricultural development and consumption through value chain integration, the two men joined forces to create SIIM (Société Internationale d'IMportation), which still runs the Group's tropical fruit distribution business in Europe. This partnership lasted until the Omer-Decugis family took control of the company in 1995 following the death of the Ivorian president.

Meanwhile, Louis continued to develop the family’s legacy wholesale business through BRATIGNY, a key player based in the main fresh fruit and vegetable pavilion (D2) in Rungis. It was also at this time that the family business became heavily involved in the sustainable development of the pineapple, banana, mango, coconut and green bean production and export sectors, mainly from Africa (Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Kenya) and later from Ecuador.

In 2014, when the Group created the Louis Omer-Decugis Corporate Foundation designed to perpetuate the philanthropic initiatives he had been spearheading for years, Louis naturally took the helm. His many journeys to Africa, especially Côte d'Ivoire, since the 1970s greatly strengthened his belief in the need to help the most disadvantaged population groups, particularly children with cancer. He became a Board member and staunch supporter of the Franco-African Pediatric Oncology Group (GFAOP) from its inception.

With the passing of Louis Omer-Decugis, Omer-Decugis & Cie has lost one of its leading figures. A business leader, he tirelessly shaped the family group over 56 years in the international fresh fruit and vegetable trade. A respected entrepreneur, he was recognised and loved by all for his strength of character, determination and deep sense of fairness, tolerance, and justice. Despite his reserved nature, his words were rare but always wise and carefully chosen, leaving a lasting impact on generations of partners, colleagues, employees, and friends who worked with him throughout his remarkable career.

When he handed over the company a few years ago to his son Vincent Omer-Decugis, now Chairman and CEO of Omer-Decugis & Cie, his aim was once again to ensure the continuity of the family group. The employees, the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors would like to pay tribute to him and express their gratitude for his contribution in making Omer-Decugis & Cie an international food group promoting healthy, diversified, and responsible food, respectful of territories and people.