

## **A formative figure in the company's history: Roche Honorary Chairman Fritz Gerber dies at the age of 91**

Basel, 11 Mai 2020 - On May 10th 2020 Dr. h.c. Fritz Gerber died in his 92nd year. For more than two decades, he had shaped Roche's development into a leading global healthcare company in an exceptionally successful dual role as Group CEO (1978-1998) and Chairman of the Board (1978-2001). He remained closely associated with Roche throughout his life as Honorary Chairman.

Starting at the end of the 1970s, Fritz Gerber led the company from a difficult situation to new success. Under his leadership, Roche's Group structures were fundamentally renewed and decentralized– ranging from focusing on the core businesses to modernizing the capital structure. This created a fundamental change at Roche that still encourages entrepreneurial thinking today, and empowers employees to make their mark.

Fritz Gerber made numerous major acquisitions with intuition and a keen sense of when something is ripe. Roche still benefits today from his foresight in investing in biotechnology in the early 1990s when he acquired a majority stake in Genentech. Fritz Gerber led Roche to the global forefront of molecular and laboratory diagnostics with the acquisition of PCR technology and the takeover of Boehringer Mannheim. He laid the foundation for the accelerated development of personalised medicine, an area in which Roche is now a leader.

He was deeply convinced of the value of long-term thinking. Our company still benefits today from his courage to invest in biotechnology in the early 1990s when he acquired a majority stake in Genentech. He also led Roche to the global forefront of molecular and laboratory diagnostics with the acquisition of the PCR technology and the takeover of Boehringer Mannheim. In doing so, Fritz Gerber laid the foundation for the accelerated development of personalised medicine, an area in which Roche is now a leader.

The Faculty of Science at the University of Basel awarded him an honorary doctorate for his services to the development of biomedicine.

In addition to his entrepreneurial activities, Fritz Gerber was particularly committed to education and culture. In 1996 he played a major role in the founding of the Museum Tinguely by Roche. In 1999 he created the Fritz Gerber Foundation for Gifted Young People, which provides financial support for the education and training of young athletes, craftsmen and artists. Fritz Gerber was also active in the Paul Sacher Foundation for Contemporary Music, on the Board of Trustees of the Lucerne Music Festival and the Orchestra Academy of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

"It is largely thanks to Fritz Gerber that Roche found its way back onto the road to success at the end of the last millennium. He was deeply convinced of the value of long-term thinking, which still characterizes Roche today. He impressed me very much with his friendliness and Bernese charm, but also with his clarity and

consistency,' explained Dr Christoph Franz, Chairman of the Roche Board of Directors. "For 17 years, he even led Roche in a dual mandate with the Chairman's Office of the Zurich Insurance Company, which made him one of the most influential Swiss managers of global stature at the time. During this time he was a member of numerous other boards of directors, including that of IBM. His outstanding services to our company and the Swiss economy as a whole will be remembered. On behalf of the Board of Directors, the Corporate Executive Committee and all Roche employees, I would like to express our sincere condolences to his wife, children and relatives," Christoph Franz continued.

### **About Roche**

Roche is a global pioneer in pharmaceuticals and diagnostics focused on advancing science to improve people's lives. The combined strengths of pharmaceuticals and diagnostics under one roof have made Roche the leader in personalised healthcare – a strategy that aims to fit the right treatment to each patient in the best way possible.

Roche is the world's largest biotech company, with truly differentiated medicines in oncology, immunology, infectious diseases, ophthalmology and diseases of the central nervous system. Roche is also the world leader in in vitro diagnostics and tissue-based cancer diagnostics, and a frontrunner in diabetes management.

Founded in 1896, Roche continues to search for better ways to prevent, diagnose and treat diseases and make a sustainable contribution to society. The company also aims to improve patient access to medical innovations by working with all relevant stakeholders. More than thirty medicines developed by Roche are included in the World Health Organization Model Lists of Essential Medicines, among them life-saving antibiotics, antimalarials and cancer medicines. Moreover, for the eleventh consecutive year, Roche has been recognised as one of the most sustainable companies in the Pharmaceuticals Industry by the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI).

The Roche Group, headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, is active in over 100 countries and in 2019 employed about 98,000 people worldwide. In 2019, Roche invested CHF 11.7 billion in R&D and posted sales of CHF 61.5 billion. Genentech, in the United States, is a wholly owned member of the Roche Group. Roche is the majority shareholder in Chugai Pharmaceutical, Japan. For more information, please visit [www.roche.com](http://www.roche.com).

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