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**Necrology Ferdinand Rüesch-Ebnetter**

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**Ferdinand Rüesch-Ebnetter, founder of the engineering company Gallus Ferd. Rüesch AG and of the international Gallus Group based in St. Gallen, died in St. Gallen on 9 September 2010, aged 86, surrounded by his family.**

Ferdinand Rüesch was born in 1924 into an entrepreneurial family. He began his professional training as an apprentice mechanic in his father's workshop, which manufactured machines and scales, carried out maintenance work on printing machines and acted as the calibration centre for the canton. After completing his military service, and active service during the Second World War, he spent two years at the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce (Business School) in Neuchâtel. In 1949 he graduated from the Cantonal Technical College in Burgdorf as a mechanical engineer (Ing. HTL). After gaining practical experience with a number of English printing machine manufacturers, the young engineer joined his father's business where he worked in Sales and was also involved in the assembly and commissioning of machinery in America.

Probably the most influential event in his professional career was meeting Stanton Avery. Rüesch recognised the potential of Avery's inventions in the field of self-adhesive materials and, when he took over his father's business in early 1953, began constructing reel-fed machines for self-adhesive labels. In 1957 he introduced the prototype of a translative machine system, precursor of the Q 33 (later the Gallus T 180), which was still being sold until the mid-1990s. The features which were his top priorities back then, namely modular construction and a high technical standard, are still the defining characteristics of Gallus products today, and they set the benchmark for the whole industry. Partnerships with major EDP companies resulted in the prototypes, LK 11 and LK 18, of systems for manufacturing printed and pre-stamped punch cards that were sold all round the world. With the Gallus V 330, Gallus A 160, Gallus R 160, Gallus R 200 and Gallus R 250 machine systems for making self-adhesive labels and similar products, the St. Gallen company established itself as one of the world's leading providers of reel-fed label-printing machines.

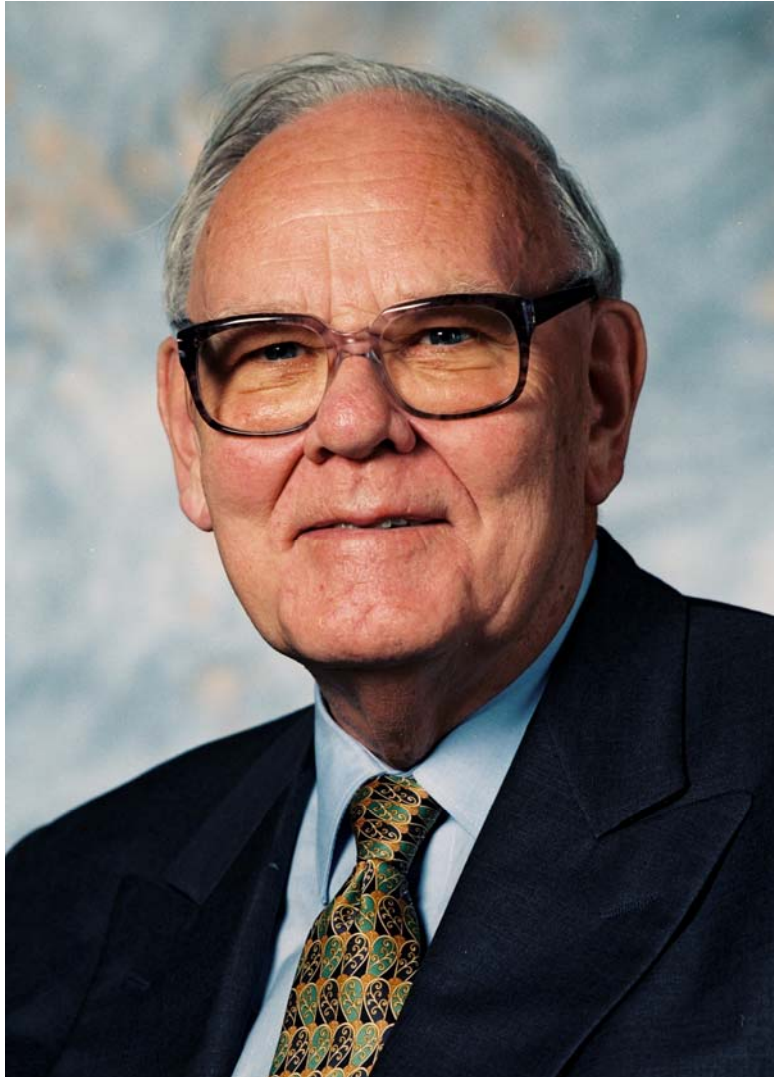
Under the aegis of Ferdinand Rüesch, developments were made which led the way for the whole industry, such as in translative and variable web feed systems, flat-bed and semi-rotary die-cutting

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units and the rotary screen printing system RSS, where he turned a laboratory model into a high-specification, high-quality printing system with its own stencils; the RSS opened up new ways for label-printers to use screen printing. – In 1993, his life's work was honoured by the Labelex Exhibition Group and Labels and Labelling International when he was awarded the title "Man of Achievement". This brought him full circle: Rüesch was only the second person to receive this award, the first being Stanton Avery.

Ferdinand Rüesch was an entrepreneur through and through. He would have a vision and commit himself enthusiastically to realising it, and in most cases he was extremely successful. He was not interested in status symbols, preferring instead to invest in product development and production systems that would help his companies to progress. He caused a sensation with his successful attempts to drive forward computer-aided design and production. By achieving a hitherto unheard-of level of integration, from digitisation of the design elements through CAD design to NC programming, productivity reached new heights. Flexible manufacturing systems, where control of all the parameters relevant to the manufacturing process was fully automated, completed the image of a company of the future. It is thanks to Ferdinand Rüesch's initiative and financial support that the CIM laboratory (Computer Integrated Manufacturing) at the St. Gallen Engineering College and the Institute of Technology Management at the University of St. Gallen (HSG) were founded. The two institutes honoured their benefactor by appointing him a lifetime Honorary Senator of the HSG and an Honorary Member of the St. Gallen Technical Education Association (GTA).

His former employees have lost their erstwhile leader, who put the preservation of their jobs before his own private interests and who was always there for them, even in difficult times – an entrepreneur such as is seldom found nowadays.



*Ferdinand Ruesch-Ebnetter, founder of the engineering company Gallus Ferd. Ruesch AG and of the international Gallus Group based in St. Gallen / Switzerland*

## **The Gallus Group**

The Gallus group is the world market leader in the development, production and sale of narrow-web, reel-fed presses designed for label manufacturers. Its folding carton business offers a range of wide-web, reel-fed presses and die-cutters for the cost-effective in-line production of folding cartons and cardboard products. The Gallus range of machines is complemented by consumables, local service and spare parts throughout the world. In 1999 Gallus entered into a cooperation agreement with Heidelberg Druckmaschinen AG, the world market leader for print and media industry solutions.

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Gallus employs 565 people, of whom 260 are based in Switzerland. The group headquarters is in St. Gallen.

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