Where and when X lived: E

What X’s specialty was: E

How X learned his specialty: E

Contributions to CS: E

Technical background: E

X’s personality: E

Tells an interesting story: E

Writing mechanics: G+

E = Excellent

G = Good

MN = More Needed

W = Weak

M = Missing

Very interesting and well researched paper! I learned a lot from it.   
See other comments below

**Mike Lazaridis: Farmer of the Blackberry**

In the ancient city of Istanbul, on the 14th day of March 1961, Mihal "Mike" Lazaridis, the son of Greek parents, was born. Little did they know that their child would be known as the "father of the smartphone" (and little did they know what a "smartphone" was) They could not have imagined that their son would be a philanthropist, corporate investor, and the founder of a multibillion dollar company whose flagship product would be named after a fruit, the Blackberry. At the age of five, the Lazaridis family moved to Windsor, Ontario. As a child, Lazaridis developed a natural interest for science. He won an award for reading all the science books at the Windsor Public Library. In his spare time, Lazaridis and his friends, most notably, Douglas Fregin, would build rockets and radios in his basement, and the group of friends would also win local science fairs. In high school, his teachers would allow him to use their classrooms to work on his projects (radios and circuits). In 1979, he enrolled in the electrical engineering program at the University of Waterloo. Lazaridis chose engineering as his career path because he believed that the knowledge of science encourages people to make the world a better place. He was inspired by his teacher, Mr. Micsinzki, who told him: "Don't get too hooked on computers. Someday the person who puts wireless and computers together is really going to make something." With this thought in mind, he entered university wanting to invent a revolutionary product. After successfully completing most of his program, General Motors approached him with a contract of $600,000 in order to develop a network computer control display system. Lazaridis accepted the proposal and dropped out of university only two weeks before graduation. Lazaridis, alongside Mark Barnstijn and Doug Fregin, used the money from the GM contract, a government grant, and a loan from his parents, to establish Research In Motion (RIM).

At first, RIM developed barcode technology for film. However, large amounts of their profits went towards wireless data transmission research, which led them to establish wireless point-of-sale terminals. RIM wanted to be able to send data from point A to point B, wirelessly and securely. In 1992, Lazaridis teamed up with Jim Balsillie, a Harvard grad, and both became co-CEOs of the company. The combination of Lazaridis' technical expertise (circuitry), and Balsillie's business background led Blackberry to success. Their first product was the RIM 950, a two-way pager that had wireless Internet and email. This device showed the world that it was possible to be connected to the Internet without a wire or cable. RIM's vision of quick, easy, and secure wireless data transfer started to become a success. In 1999, the first device with the Blackberry name launched, the BB 5810, a pager device that was able to receive phone calls. Lazaridis and RIM wanted a cell phone to contain all the necessary tools for the public i.e. a mobile computer. As the years progressed, more features were added such as cameras, and GPS navigation. These additional specs to the cell phone started to make them "smartphones". RIM held the name for the most secure mobile platform on the market. A strong demand from the corporate and business world elevated Lazaridis and RIM to new heights. Large amounts of data (text messages, emails, photos) could be sent from point A to point B securely, without any compromise. This worked by encrypting and compressing the data being sent on the sender's phone, and the data transfers to the recipient's phone and becomes decrypted and uncompressed when they view it. In fact, all traffic between the device and the server are encrypted and compressed. Lazaridis is famous for discovering a way to send data wirelessly and effectively as well as being one of the pioneers of the smartphone, a product that is in the hands of more than a billion people today.

Unfortunately, in 2012, Lazaridis stepped down as CEO and in 2013 he retired. Lazaridis and RIM were not able to adapt quickly and effectively when new products came to the market such as the iPhone and Android phones. The underestimation of their competitors was the cause of RIM’s decline. Outside the world of RIM, Lazaridis' notable achievements include being the founder of the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics and the Institute for Quantum Computing, both at the University of Waterloo.

Lazaridis is currently the managing partner at Quantum Valley Investments, a company he created alongside Doug Fregin after they retired, where he passionately pursues and carries out the funding for quantum computing ventures. Despite, the massive amount of wealth he lost following the decline of RIM, Lazaridis continues his philanthropic work in Waterloo by donating millions to hospitals and universities. Lazaridis is a man who continues to invest in the future in order to make the world a better place. As a child, little did he know that he would one day be donating millions of dollars for science, and little did he know that he would read every single science book at the local library.