

= Mauricio González @-@ Gordon y Díez =

Mauricio González @-@ Gordon y Díez , Marquis of Bonanza (18 October 1923 ? 27 September 2013) was a Spanish sherry maker and a conservationist . Most of his life he worked for the family company , González Byass , where he increased its exports to a worldwide level . His family estate was located in the wetland region called Doñana in southern Spain and was threatened by drainage efforts in the early 1950s . González @-@ Gordon with the help of researchers and international support managed to preserve the site , while at the same time donating some of his family land to the conservation effort . Afterward , González @-@ Gordon became one of the founders of the Spanish Ornithological Society in 1954 . His conservation efforts for Doñana culminated in the creation of the Doñana National Park in 1969 . The area was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994 .

= = Early years = =

González @-@ Gordon was born in Hampton Hill , London , United Kingdom , as a son to a Spanish family with Scottish descent rooted in the Clan Gordon . His parents were Manuel María González @-@ Gordon and Emilia Díez Gutiérrez . Mauricio , whose father was known as the ' Pope of Sherry ' , was the second of a total of four children . One of his ancestors , John David Gordon of Wardhouse , had moved to Jerez de la Frontera in the 18th century and started trading in sherry . At the time of his birth , González @-@ Gordon 's father Manuel was the chairman of González Byass and was actively promoting the brand in the United Kingdom . During his youth González @-@ Gordon was raised as a bilingual , being fluent in both Spanish and English . González @-@ Gordon moved to Jerez de la Frontera at age three to go to school in Spain . He was homeschooled by private tutors and attended La Salle Buen Pastor college . He later attended the Instituto Padre Luis Coloma . His primary studies were followed up by economic studies at the Jerez College of Commerce , where he licensed as a teacher of trade . He passed the final period of the Spanish Civil War in 1939 working in an airplane factory , helping construct Polikarpov planes for the aerial forces of General Francisco Franco . He attended the University of Seville and graduated in Chemical Sciences in 1946 .

= = González Byass = =

González @-@ Gordon worked most of his life for the family company González Byass , which specializes in making sherry . He was the fifth generation of the family to chair the company . While working for the firm he was involved in the making , tasting and commercialisation of sherry and in later years he also helped the company expand into producing brandy and several sorts of wine . Immediately after he finished his studies in 1946 he joined the business and started at the bottom with the picking and crushing of grapes . During this time he also learned about the solera system , which is used to age different type of liquids . His interest in oenology had only developed after visiting California the year he graduated . He visited California after previously being sent to New York by boat with twelve containers of wine . In 1955 he founded the first research center for viticulture and winemaking in Spain by establishing one at González Byass . For twenty years he was occupied as head of wine selection at the company . González @-@ Gordon also served on the board of González Byass beginning in 1961 , and was president of the company between 1993 and 1999 . During this period González @-@ Gordon managed to expand the business by exporting all over the world , including to the United States , United Kingdom , China and East Asia . After his time as president he continued to serve as an advisor to his son , Mauricio Junior , who took over his position . Apart from his work at González Byass González @-@ Gordon also diverted some of his time towards the regulatory council of the sherry making industry , serving for 24 years .

= = Conservationism = =

González @-@ Gordon was involved with conservationism from an early age ; he was also an avid bird watcher and would become an ornithologist . His family estate was located in the Coto Doñana , a wetland at the mouth of the river Guadalquivir , near Jerez de la Frontera , in southern Spain . Here González @-@ Gordon became interested in the local ecosystem and invited European ornithologists to visit the area . When two Spanish ornithologists , Professor Francisco Bernis and José Antonio Valverde visited , González @-@ Gordon served as their guide . The González @-@ Gordon family saw that the wetlands were threatened by the planting of eucalyptus trees and large @-@ scale drainage plans proposed by the government . Mauricio , together with his father , asked Bernis to try and influence Spanish dictator Francisco Franco into abandoning these proposals . The trio wrote a memorandum which was presented to Franco himself by Mauricio 's father Manuel . By November 1953 , Bernis had finished a report on the value of the Doñana , which showed that the area had exceptional ecological value . The group sought international support for their goals and found it . The efforts of González @-@ Gordon to dissuade Franco exposed him to some danger , but the Franco government conceded and the drainage plans were aborted .

By 1963 an international organisation founded with the goal of protecting Doñana had purchased 7 @, @ 000 hectares (17 @, @ 000 acres) in the area . After winning their fight against the construction plans González @-@ Gordon , Bernis and Valverde wished to create a Spanish foundation for ornithology . The idea to start the organisation had already come up in their first meeting . In May 1954 they founded the Spanish Ornithological Society (SEO) in Madrid , which currently is the Spanish affiliate of BirdLife International . The trio had written the founding statutes among themselves . The organisation was supported by visits to Doñana of famous ornithologists as Edward Max Nicholson and Julian Huxley , with González @-@ Gordon guiding them around . He would also serve as chair of the board of SEO between 1966 and 1968 . The Doñana area was turned into Doñana National Park in 1969 . The González @-@ Gordon family ceded much of its land between Bonanza and Matalascañas for the creation of the national park . In 1994 the area was turned into an UNESCO World Heritage Site and currently measures 543 square kilometres (210 sq mi) . The park has a wide range of ecosystems and is especially important for migratory birds . González @-@ Gordon also wrote a translation of Roger Tory Peterson 's A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe in 1957 .

= = Personal life = =

González @-@ Gordon has been described as being proud of his Scottish heritage , which centred on the town of Huntly and the Clan Gordon . His personal clothing style reflected this ; he was noted for his tweed jackets and British clothes in general . He had been married to Milagro López de Carrizosa y Eizaguirre for 62 years before she died in July 2013 . The couple had two children , Bibiana and Mauricio , with Mauricio being the current president of the family company . During the three final years of his life González @-@ Gordon was in poor health and could hardly leave his home . He died on 27 September 2013 in his hometown of Jerez de la Frontera at the age of 89 . His family claims that the last thing he drank was a Tío Pepe , the most famous brand of the family business . His death occurred at the Asisa clinic where he had spent his last couple of weeks . The memorial service was held at the San Juan Bautista de La Salle church on 28 September .

Apart from his work at González Byass and his conservation efforts at Doñana he was also president of the local Red Cross organisation in Jerez de la Frontera , serving as its president for thirteen years , between 1974 and 1988 .

= = Honours and decorations = =

Mauricio González @-@ Gordon y Díez was Marquis of Bonanza , obtaining the title after the death of his father in 1980 . During the course of his life he received several honours and decorations :

Cross of Naval Merit with White Decoration awarded by the King of Spain for his dedication to sailing .

Knight of the Order of the Dannebrog awarded by the Queen of Denmark (1985) .

Member of the Gran Orden de Caballeros del Vino awarded by the British embassy in Spain .

Golden medal awarded by the Red Cross (1986) .

Golden medal of Oenologic Merit and Grand Cross of Agricultural Merit by Miguel Arias Cañete , Spanish Minister for Agriculture , Food and Environment (2011) .

In 2004 he received the Bernis Award for Ornithology from the Spanish Ornithological Society / BirdLife for his pioneering work and lifetime contribution to conservation , especially of Doñana . He was awarded the Premio Andalucía de Medio Ambiente , the Andalusian Prize of Environment , by the government of Andalusia in 2005 . In 2009 he was made hijo predilecto , favourite son , of the municipality of Jerez de la Frontera .