

Orbit Phil Knight: The Co-Founder of Nike and His Visionary Spirit



Orbit: Phil Knight: Co-Founder of NIKE

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

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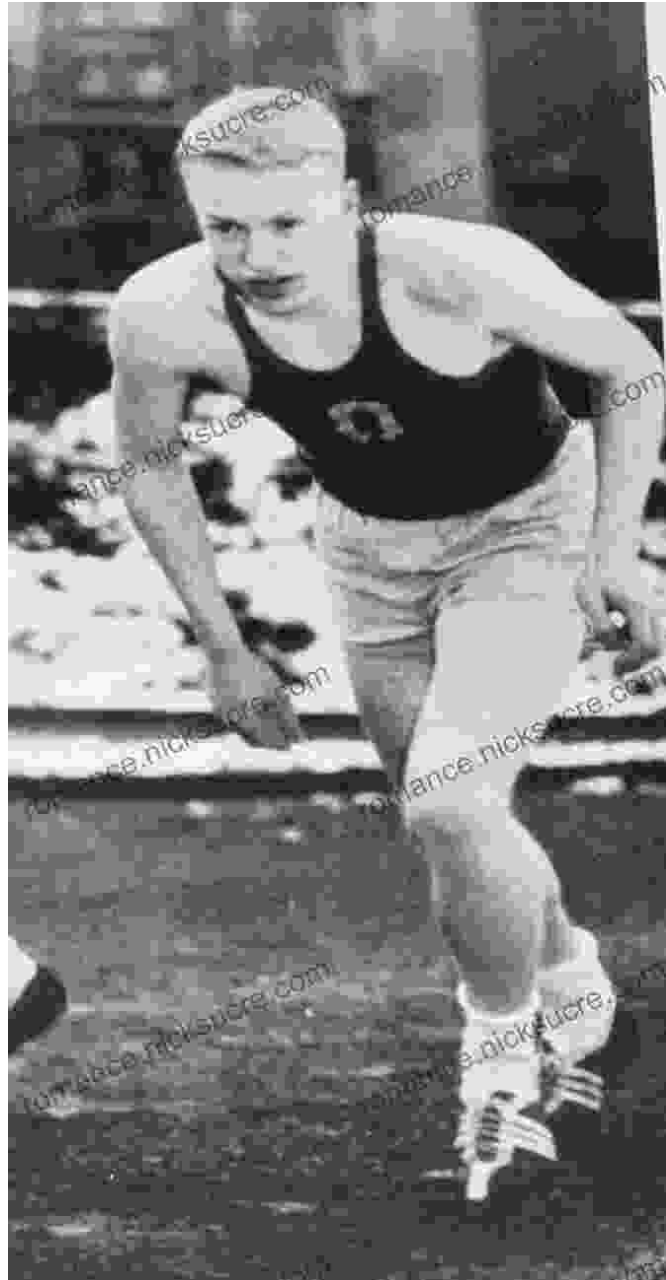
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Early Life and Influences

Phil Knight was born on February 24, 1938, in Portland, Oregon. His father, William W. Knight, was a lawyer, and his mother, Lota Hatfield Knight, was a homemaker. Knight grew up in a middle-class family and attended Portland's Lincoln High School, where he excelled in track and field. His early influences included his father, who instilled in him the importance of hard work and perseverance, and his track coach, Bill Bowerman, who encouraged him to push his limits and strive for greatness.



The Birth of Nike

After graduating from the University of Oregon with a degree in business administration, Knight worked for several years in the shoe industry. In 1962, he traveled to Japan and was inspired by the quality and low cost of Japanese running shoes. He teamed up with Bowerman to import these

shoes to the United States, and in 1964, they founded Blue Ribbon Sports, which would later become Nike.

Knight and Bowerman started their business out of the trunk of Knight's Plymouth Valiant. They sold shoes at track meets and out of the back of their cars. In 1971, they changed the company's name to Nike, after the Greek goddess of victory, and introduced the iconic Swoosh logo. The company quickly gained popularity among runners and athletes, and by the 1980s, Nike had become a global sportswear powerhouse.



The iconic Nike Swoosh logo, designed by Carolyn Davidson in 1971.

Innovation and Expansion

Throughout his career, Knight has been known for his innovative spirit and his willingness to take risks. He was one of the first to understand the importance of marketing and branding, and he invested heavily in advertising and celebrity endorsements. Knight also pushed the boundaries of shoe design and technology, working with athletes to develop new and innovative products.

Under Knight's leadership, Nike expanded into new markets and product lines. The company acquired Converse in 2003 and Hurley International in 2002, and it launched the Nike Pro line of athletic apparel in 1999. Nike also became a major player in the digital space, launching its e-commerce website in 1999 and acquiring the fitness tracking company Strava in 2020.



Legacy and Impact

Phil Knight retired as CEO of Nike in 2004, but he remains the company's chairman emeritus. He is widely regarded as one of the most successful and influential business leaders of all time. Knight's unwavering belief in the power of sports and his relentless pursuit of innovation have left a lasting impact on the world of sports and business.

Knight is also a generous philanthropist. He has donated millions of dollars to support education, sports, and health-related causes. In 2016, he and his wife, Penny, pledged \$500 million to the University of Oregon to support the construction of a new athletic facility. Knight is also a major supporter of the Oregon Health & Science University, where he has donated funds to establish the Phil and Penny Knight Cardiovascular Institute.



The Phil and Penny Knight Cardiovascular Institute at Oregon Health & Science University.

Phil Knight's journey from a track and field athlete to the co-founder of Nike is a true rags-to-riches story. His vision, perseverance, and innovative spirit have made Nike one of the most successful and influential companies in the world. Knight's legacy extends far beyond the sports industry; he is also a generous philanthropist and a role model for entrepreneurs and business leaders around the world.



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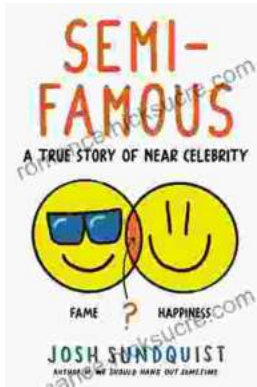
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