

OBITUARY

Candy kingpin Forrest Mars Sr. dies

Eccentric billionaire who was 95 created beloved M&Ms

By Mary Jo Patterson

STAR-LEDGER STAFF

Forrest Mars Sr., the eccentric and reclusive billionaire who created M&Ms and transformed his father's business into one of the biggest candy companies in the world, has died.

Sharon Heffelfinger, spokesman for Mars Inc., at company headquarters in McLean, Va., confirmed the death and said only that he died of natural causes Thursday night in Miami. He was 95.

She said no further information would be released, a statement in keeping with the privately held company's reputation for secrecy and desire for a low profile.

The company was started in 1911 in Tacoma, Wash., by Mars' father, Frank, inventor of the Milky Way.

After a falling out with his father, Forrest went to Europe and started his own business. In

1964, he bought the candy company his father had founded and merged it with his own.

Today Mars Inc. has 30,000 employees. M&M/Mars, the company's U.S. candy division, is headquartered in Hackettstown. A plant there employs 1,500 workers and produces half of all M&Ms manufactured in this country.

M&Ms, a cross-generational favorite, may be the country's most beloved candy. In 1995, when the company conducted a voter poll on



PHOTO BY MESHAN NALTCHAYAN

Forrest Mars Sr. with daughter Jacqueline Mars Vogel from a photo in the book "Crisis in Candyland" by Jan Pottker.

The Star Ledger: July 3, 1999

NAME: Forrest E. Mars, Sr.

DATE OF DEATH: July 1, 1999 [in Miami Florida] (Date of Birth: March 21, 1904)

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