



## Pierre Simon Laplace

1749-1827

Pierre Simon, Marquis de Laplace, the famous French astronomer and mathematician, is credited with the transform that bears his name and allows us to further generalize the generalized phasor method to analyze circuits with nonsinusoidal inputs. Laplace was better known, however, for *Celestial Mechanics*, his master work, which summarized the achievements in astronomy from the time of Newton.

Laplace was born in Beaumont-en-Auge, in Normandy, France. Little is known of his early life other than that his father was a farmer because the snobbish Laplace, after he became famous, did not like to speak of his humble origins. Rich neighbors, it is said, recognized his talent and helped finance his education, first at Caen and later at the military school in Beaumont. Through the efforts of the famous physicist d'Alembert, who was impressed by his abilities and his effrontery, Laplace became a professor of mathematics in Paris at age 20. He was an opportunist, shifting his political allegiance as required so that his career successfully spanned three regimes in revolutionary France – the republic, the empire of Napoleon, and the Bourbon restoration. Napoleon made him a count and Louis XVIII made him a marquis. His mathematical abilities, however, were genuine, inspiring the great mathematician Simeon Poisson to label him the Isaac Newton of France.

(Source: D. Johnson, J. Johnson and J. Hilborn, *Electric Circuit Analysis*, Prentice-Hall, 1989)