



SOUTHERN
OREGON
UNIVERSITY

Southern Oregonian

The Magazine for Alumni and Friends of Southern Oregon University

Winter 2000



Dan Henderson

on the shoulders of GIANTS

DAN HENDERSON, A MEDFORD native and 1984 SOU business graduate, is incredibly modest. When asked about receiving SOU's Distinguished Alumnus Award at the 1999 graduation ceremony, he admits to being surprised. "It was very nice to receive that honor," he says.

That honor, SOU President Steve Reno said in his tribute to Henderson, is reserved for the University's pacesetters. "The honor is given to one who has risen above the others through ability, commitment, vision, and sometimes, good luck."

Those qualities certainly contributed to Henderson's success, but he refuses to take all the credit. When asked about the more than fifty patents he has filed or pending, or about the success of his company, the Texas-based PhoneTel, Henderson defers to the late inventor Dr. Kazuo Hashimoto, whom he met in 1993.

"I can only stand on the shoulders of giants," Henderson says. "That's all I've done so far."

Henderson holds five patents in telephony and communications and plans to file up to fifty more later this year—many surrounding the technology used in caller ID. He met Dr. Hashimoto in 1993, after his own patent searches kept pointing him to the renowned inventor. "I was working on the basis for many of the current patents, doing patent searches, and I kept seeing his name. I called, and he wasn't in, and I left him a message—did you know he was known as 'father of the answering machine?'"

Hashimoto helped Henderson with one of his own inventions: a device to record a caller's name on phone pagers. A rapport developed between them, and Henderson became Dr. Hashimoto's apprentice, working with him on licensing, management issues, and new patent disclosures until Hashimoto's untimely death in August 1995.

Today, PhoneTel, which Daniel established with Hashimoto's widow, Mrs. Takako Hashimoto, owns approximately 200 patents, many the result of Dr. Hashimoto's work on the telephone answering machine.

The company's intellectual property is closely tied to communications, with fundamental patents in fax switching, fax-on-demand, paging notification, caller ID, voice messaging, cordless phones, and video reservation systems.

Last June, while Henderson was accepting the Distinguished Alumnus Award, PhoneTel was in dispute with many of the phone giants, including ATT and Lucent Technologies, over infringements on four of Dr.

Hashimoto's patents. "A number of companies are starting to recognize the value of Dr. Hashimoto's lifelong work, and I'm working hard to see that that happens," Henderson says.

While attending Southern Oregon State College (SOSC), Henderson worked as an intern in Sales and Marketing at IBM. "I gave seminars related to technology issues, and I sold Selectric typewriters," he recalls. He continued with IBM after graduation in 1984, moving with the company to Texas, where he began his own company, Innovad, in 1987. His first U.S. patent was on a programmable dialing system in 1989.

"Hashimoto, Edison—they were great inventors," Henderson says, once again deferring to others. Of his own work, he'll admit, "It's not an easy road. The hours are longer. The commitment is greater than people want to give. But I *love* what I do."

Henderson continues, "It's intellectually stimulating, and it's gratifying to see the germination of a hunch or a hypothesis take shape. To go from an amorphous idea to a patent, or from concept to the production and marketing of an idea . . . that's very, very satisfying."

When asked what advice he would give current college students, Henderson pauses. "I can only pass on advice given to me, and no fewer words were ever said with greater meaning. Before he died, Dr. Hashimoto told me, 'Work hard, build a broad base.' I think that really speaks volumes." ■

quote/unquote

. . . it's gratifying to see the germination of a hunch or a hypothesis take shape. To go from an amorphous idea to a patent, or from concept to the production and marketing of an idea . . . that's very, very satisfying.

DAN HENDERSON