

2023 GOVERNOR'S CUP TITLE SPONSOR

Dhu C. Thompson

Dhu Thompson knows the value of the Governor's Cup and the entrepreneur education opportunity it gives to college students — the entrepreneurs and business owners of the future.

Dhu has sponsored the Governor's Cup annually since 2005 because its rigorous academic requirements not only steer students toward thinking innovatively and creatively, they must also become immersed into the multi-faceted, real-world challenges of launching a startup or growing an existing business — challenges he knows very well.

Years ago, Dhu had an idea — to implement a business model of incorporating science-based sustainability practices into the recycling process that would bring value both to the manufacturer and to the environment. He had been working as a banking vice president in his hometown of Monroe, Louisiana, when he heard about an opportunity to acquire a controlling interest in a company, based in Stuttgart, that was attempting to recycle agricultural plastics.

Dhu and his wife, Mary Ellen, decided to go for it and moved the family to Stuttgart to build the company. Like many new entrepreneurial endeavors, the beginning was rough. A \$1.4 million loss was posted in the first year — and it would take three more years to realize a profit.

But, they persevered, building the company into what is now known today as Delta Plastics, which produces agricultural irrigation tubing for customers worldwide and is also one of the country's largest recyclers of heavily soiled and contaminated plastics. In 2010, Dhu and his team launched a new company, today known as Revolution. Revolution produces EPA-compliant trash can liners, made with up to 97 percent recycled content, for commercial and industrial clients who want to reduce environmental impact.

Today, Dhu is founder, past owner, and former chairman of the board of Delta Plastics and former owner and past chairman of the board of Revolution, having sold the companies in 2019. With Dhu's leadership, Delta Plastics took on title sponsorship of the Governor's Cup in 2018. After the sale, Dhu became the competition's sole title sponsor in 2020



and has generously continued in that role each year since. The cash prize pool for the 2023 competition is \$114,000.

In 2022, he and his alma mater, the University of Louisiana Monroe, launched "The Entrepreneurship Pelican Cup," the first statewide business plan competition for all Louisiana college students. The Entrepreneurship Pelican Cup will celebrate its second anniversary with its awards luncheon April 21 and will also feature live pitches from finalist teams.

Arkansas Capital is grateful to Dhu for his years of financial support and leadership. Please join us in thanking him for being a major force in giving students the ability to compete and to grow personally and professionally. Because of Dhu and others, they now have knowledge and skills that will serve them well into the future regardless of whether or not they launch their businesses.

But, should they get that new idea, they'll have more confidence to "go for it" — just like Dhu did years ago.