

The Center for New Ventures and Entrepreneurship 2015 Summit Award

Robert Gootee '73 is the CEO of Portland-based MODA, Inc., a leading health insurance company that serves the people in the great states of Alaska, Oregon, Washington, and California. MODA firmly believes in providing their clients with exceptional support for one of the most important decisions they will make for themselves, and their families. As CEO of MODA, Gootee places a strong emphasis on the significance of the company's employees. He is keenly aware of the fact that successful people lead to a successful company. Gootee sees the strengths of his team as one of the most important assets of MODA.

What is it about MODA that causes the company to rise above other health insurance providers?

Gootee: I believe we have instilled a spirit of entrepreneurship at MODA that sets us apart, along with people that have the ambition and passion to excel. It is always all about the people.

What is your number one priority as CEO of MODA?

Gootee: To provide people around me with the right plan and the resources to carry out strategies to implement that plan.

Healthcare seems to be an ever changing and, at times, controversial industry. Yet, MODA has been a strong and successful company for nearly 60 years. What do you believe has allowed MODA to maintain this level of success for 6 decades?

Gootee: Many things, of course. But the one thing that might not seem evident is that we have, and have had for a long time, an outstanding board of directors. Because of their leadership and stability, they have given me and my predecessors the ability to focus on the success of MODA.

How does it feel to be receiving the Summit Award for 2015? What does it mean for MODA to receive this recognition?

Gootee: It is, of course, a distinct honor. I have always tried to avoid personal recognition since I believe an important leadership attribute is to allow and encourage recognition to the team around you. But, to be recognized by the school that gave me a start in business, by the place I love and came

from, and to the company I have spent most of my career helping to build, is a profound honor.

When did you first become interested in entrepreneurship, and what is it about entrepreneurship that continues to motivate you to be involved in this field?

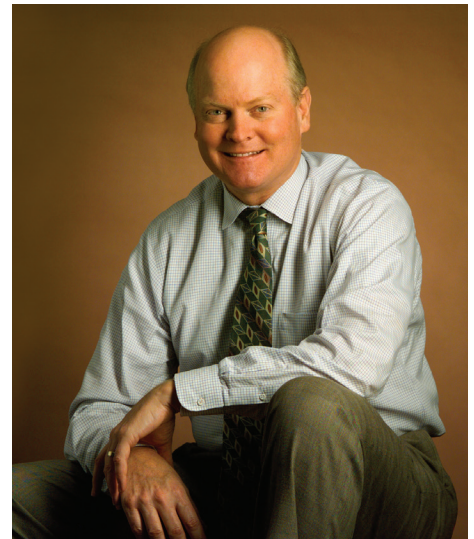
Gootee: Everything and everyone has to start from something. And those that start with practically nothing, entrepreneurs, provide most of the opportunity for jobs and wealth accumulation in our economy.

MODA places a particular emphasis on charity, volunteering, and giving back to the communities it serves. Can you tell me more about this service-driven aspect of the company?

Gootee: I believe you have to give back to your community, it is a core value of our company. I am involved and I ask our employees to be involved in our community. I also ask of them that they become leaders in the activities of their choice. If they do so, then we support them both with financial contributions, and with support of their time commitments.

What lessons from Texas A&M have provided particular value to you in your career?

Gootee: More than anything else I learned how to lead, which as much as anything means how you interact with those around you. Core values of Loyalty (to our heritage, to our friends), Compassion (to those in need), Stewardship (community, giving of yourself), Humility (others needs trump your own) and Love (family/A&M) all



either began or were nurtured during my time at A&M.

Last but not least, what was it about Texas A&M that made you decide to attend the University and become an Aggie? Do you have a particular tradition that is your favorite?

Gootee: Actually, I haven't ever thought about the question of why I made what turned out to be the most significant decision of my life. I didn't visit A&M before I arrived as a freshman, nor did I visit anyplace else. My fish ol' lady was a friend in high school and he was going there, and he suggested it to me so I just came along! Funny how things turn out! My favorite tradition...anything connected to the Corps of Cadets. I love everything about traditions surrounding the Corps, but particularly their passions for the university and commitment to our country.

The logo for MODA, Inc. features the word "moda" in a lowercase, bold, sans-serif font. Above the letter "a" is a stylized purple arrow pointing upwards.

Honoree: Robert Gootee '73
President & CEO

Location: Portland, Oregon

Industry: Insurance

Founded: 1955

Average Revenue: \$2,126,186,333