

Sweet success

Graduate heads up ice cream corporation

By Gary Campbell

For Doug Ducey, Oct. 3 presented a sweet opportunity to return to his alma mater.

Ducey, a 1986 finance graduate and CEO of Scottsdale-based Cold Stone Creamery, was on campus to officially open the company's newest franchise in the Memorial Union. It is a store location that combines the company's future with Ducey's past.

"Our goal is to be the ultimate ice cream experience in the country," he said. "Being here in the MU, certainly makes it even more special to us."

As Cold Stone's president and CEO since 1997, Ducey has laid out a plan to expand the number of company franchises to 1,000 by the end of 2004. To date, there are 30 stores open in the Valley, 280 open overall and another 300 are franchised and under development in 31 states. The ASU location is the fourth for Tempe, which hosted the company's original store.

The company was honored Sept. 18 by the ASU College of Business' Center for the Advancement of Small Business with the 2002 Spirit of Enterprise Award. The award is given annually to honor a successful and vibrant spirit of entrepreneurship by the center.

Looking back to his time at ASU, in addition to the strong foundation laid through his coursework, Ducey can point to several experiences that have helped shape his career.

One of those experiences came in his various roles as a student leader. As a member of Pi Kappa Alpha, Ducey served in several capacities, including time as the group's rush chairman, recruiting new members. He said the idea was not only to find people, but to find those with similar interests who would be compatible with the organization's standards.

"That's very much what I do now," he says. "In finding franchisees, we are looking for people with strong entrepreneurial skills, people who want to be the best, people who can bring out the best in others and people who want to win as a team."



Tim Trumble photo

Doug Ducey, 1986 finance graduate is now CEO of the Scottsdale-based Cold Stone Creamery.

After graduation, Ducey joined Proctor & Gamble, where he quickly worked his way up, eventually landing in charge of the west coast division. One of his primary missions was to move Folgers Coffee off the grocery store shelves and into restaurants.

At the same time, Ducey was able to watch as another coffee retailer, Starbucks, revolutionized an entire market category. It is a process Ducey plans to emulate with Cold Stone.

"That is what we want to do with Cold Stone," he says. "Folks aren't just looking for ice cream, you can find it anywhere. Yet everywhere we go, we are finding magical results. We've taken a category and we turned up the intensity on it."

ASU Senior Vice President and Secretary of the University Christine Wilkinson says the intensity that has made Ducey a success in business also applies as a supporter of the university and a role model for future ASU graduates.

"Doug was very involved as an undergraduate student leader and is still a strong advocate of the university," Wilkinson says. "We have always believed that actively engaged students will become wonderful role models and ambassadors for the university. Doug is certainly a great example of that."

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