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Chicago Entrepreneur Honored as EIU's Business Alumnus of the Year

Oct-14-2005

Mark A. Dronen, president and CEO of GO! Products of Elmhurst, Ill., has been named the 2005 Distinguished Alumnus for Eastern Illinois University's School of Business.

He was chosen as this year's recipient based on both his accomplishments in his field and his service to the school.

Dronen, a native of Peoria, actively works in product and brand development on a variety of mobile applications, an emerging market that he both envisioned and developed. He has earned two patents and 19 registered trademarks for the GO! Products portfolio.

The company's most famous brand, the Grill-n-Chill ®, has been covered by every major television news network and prominently featured by HGTV, The Food Network and the Discovery Channel. The brand has been highlighted in a variety of print publications including the "Wall Street Journal," "Kiplinger's" and "Fortune."

Dronen has entered into a variety of marketing, promotional and licensing agreements with American Express, NAPA, Coors, Molson and "The Price is Right," amongst other prominent U.S. brands.

Prior to GO! Products, Dronen was the founder and president of DC Systems of Oakbrook Terrace, Ill.; DC Systems was a technology firm that provided solutions through its software, consulting and education divisions. Dronen guided the organization from its inception in 1987, and grew it into a multi-million dollar company employing more than 270 full-time employees over 15 years. The company serviced an international client base in a variety of industries including manufacturing, leasing, insurance, finance, health care and telecommunications.

In 1998, Dronen sold the software division with its suite of award-winning Call Center Solutions to Intervoice of Texas. In 1999, he sold the remaining professional services units to One, Inc. He remained in an executive capacity with One, Inc., until 2001.

Awarded the DuPage Area Association of Business and Industry's "Entrepreneur of the Year" award in 1995, Dronen was an active speaker on university campuses delivering speeches on topics concerning technology, entrepreneurship and continuing education.

Prior to his involvement with DC Systems, Dronen served as a systems engineer with Ross Perot's leading technology company EDS, where he focused on engineering and manufacturing systems. He is a 1984 graduate of Eastern, and holds a bachelor of science degree in business, having majored in computer management.

He has sat on the DuPage Cancer Society Board; the Senior Management Board of One, Inc.; the Dean's Business Advisory Board of Eastern Illinois University; and numerous educational and professional development boards.

Dronen is also one of the leading fund-raisers for the Multiple Sclerosis Society, and is the head football coach of the ICGS Varsity Knights. He and his wife, Melissa, have three children (Nicolas, Jack and Abby), and have lived in Elmhurst since 1989.



Mark A. Dronen