



## Class of 2023 Inductee Biography Ed Choate

### SUMMARY:

#### **Professional Contributions and Recognitions in the Workplace & Industry:**

- President & CEO of Delta Dental of Arkansas July 2000 – January 2022  
Company accomplishments under Choate's leadership:
  - company more than quadrupled in revenue, net assets and membership
  - more than \$20 million donated by the Delta Dental of Arkansas Foundation to provide dental care for underserved Arkansans along with statewide oral health education and preventive services including fluoridation of 34 water systems benefiting over 600,000 Arkansans
  - named Arkansas Business of the Year 2013
  - named Best Places to Work in Arkansas for ten consecutive years 2013-2022
- Multiple swift promotions for exceptional work at companies such as Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield, CoreSource, CNA Health Partners, and NovaSys Health Network
- 2003 Oral Health Humanitarian of the Year
- 2006 Arkansas Business Executive of the Year
- 2021 Business & Professional of the Year award
- Recognized as a Board Leadership Fellow and earned Directorship Certification from the National Association of Corporate Directors
- Board governance education programs at Harvard University and Stanford Law School Director's College

#### **Community Service & Recognitions:**

- Trustee and past chairman of the Baptist Health Board of Trustees
- Former chairman of Fifty for the Future and the Delta Dental Plans Association Boards of Directors
- 2007 Distinguished Alumni of Southern Arkansas University (SAU)
- 2010 Rotarian of the Year by the Rotary Club of Little Rock
- 2011 inductee SAU Sports Hall of Fame
- 2020 Vision Award from World Services for the Blind
- 2021 Paul Harris Fellow - Rotary Club of Little Rock
- 2022 inductee SAU Business Hall of Fame

### FULL BIOGRAPHY:

Ed Choate is the retired president & CEO of Delta Dental of Arkansas after having served in that position for 21 years, from July 2000 – January 2022. Prior to joining Delta Dental, he worked for 20 years in the employee benefit and managed care industry in leadership roles at Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield, HealthScope Benefits and NovaSys Health.

Ed began his career in the insurance industry in 1980 when he joined Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield. He began as a group service representative followed by group sales then received a promotion to account executive. After 23 months with the firm, Ed was promoted to regional sales manager for eastern Arkansas responsible for three offices and eight sales/service representatives. After five years with the company, he was promoted to director of marketing responsible for statewide sales and account management for all group health insurance, HMO and ASO plans as well as all group life insurance programs.

In 1990, Ed joined Burgett & Dietrich (now HealthScope Benefits) as vice president and was later promoted to senior vice president. He was responsible for all sales, account management for this emerging managed healthcare firm. During his time there, the company was acquired twice which led to company name changes (CoreSource and CNA Health Partners) reflecting its new owners. During nine years with the company, they developed and managed more than 130 customized provider networks in 30 states for their mostly Fortune 1000 customer base and provided self-funded claims administrative services for many of those firms.

In 1999, Ed became president & CEO of NovaSys Health Network. His primary role was to restructure the company strategy and improve financial performance. Both were accomplished in less than 12 months through the dedicated work of the company's leaders along with two members of the board executive committee, John Glassford and John Ryan.

In 2000, Ed was presented with an exciting opportunity to join Delta Dental of Arkansas as president & CEO. During his time there, the company more than quadrupled in revenue, net assets and membership. Delta Dental provides dental and/or vision benefits to more than 4,000 Arkansas employers and their more than 2.3 million members nationwide. Perhaps the most significant accomplishment was more than \$20 million donated by the Delta Dental of Arkansas Foundation to provide dental care for underserved Arkansans along with statewide oral health education and preventive services including fluoridation of 34 water systems benefiting over 600,000 Arkansans.

Accordingly, Delta Dental received many honors including, in 2013, being chosen as the Arkansas Business of the Year (tier III) and being selected one of the Best Places to Work in Arkansas for ten consecutive years (2013-2022).

Some of the honors Ed received are: In 2003, he was named the Oral Health Humanitarian of the Year. In 2006, he was named Arkansas Business Executive of the Year. In 2007, he was selected as a Distinguished Alumni of Southern Arkansas University (SAU). In 2010, he was named the Rotarian of the Year by the Rotary Club of Little Rock. In 2011, he was inducted into the SAU Sports Hall of Fame. In 2020, he was presented the Vision Award from World Services for the Blind. In 2021, Ed received the Business & Professional of the Year award and was named a Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Club of Little Rock. In 2022, he was inducted into the SAU Business Hall of Fame.

Ed has served on a number of business and civic boards of directors. He is currently a trustee and past chairman of the Baptist Health Board of Trustees, a former chairman of Fifty for the Future and the Delta Dental Plans Association Boards of Directors. He attended board governance education programs at Harvard University and Stanford Law School Director's College. Ed is recognized as a Board Leadership Fellow and earned Directorship Certification from the National Association of Corporate Directors.

He earned the following professional certifications: Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU), Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC) and Registered Health Underwriter (RHU). He obtained a B.B.A. from Southern Arkansas University in 1975 and a B.S.E. from SAU in 1977.

Ed and his wife, Marilyn, live in Conway, AR and have been married 46 years, have two married children and five grandchildren. They are charter members of Woodland Heights Baptist Church in Conway where Ed is an adult Sunday School teacher and serves on the Strategy Committee.