

Healthy workout wear isn't a stretch

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At his New Orleans-based tasc Performance company, Tulane alumnus Al Andrews shows pride in the brightly hued full line of active apparel that is made of a fabric derived from bamboo, organic cotton and just a touch of Lycra. The former Green Wave basketball player is a member of the [Tulane Athletics Hall of Fame](#). (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

After being in the apparel industry for 40 years, Al Andrews may be about to score a lifelong dream of having his own renowned brand.

“Since I was a little boy with a newspaper route, I always wanted to start a company from the ground up, create something people wanted, have a national brand,” says

the Michigan native who came to Tulane University on a basketball scholarship, graduating in 1967 and earning a law degree in 1971.

For 20 years, Andrews was president of Resilio sportswear, a division of Wembley, the New Orleans-based company that was known for its neckties. Then, he launched his own sportswear company, Bayou Sport.

For Andrews, it's all about the fabric. He saw the emergence of "technical, performance fabrics." But when he purchased some of the polyester workout wear, he hated it. It wasn't comfortable, it stuck to the skin during exercise, and after sweating it stunk.

Two years of research and development with a colleague in India led to a patent-pending process to produce BamCo, a fabric derived from bamboo, organic cotton and just a touch of Lycra.

His family's sportswear brand, [tasc Performance](#), is growing exponentially, selling now in all 50 states and five foreign countries including at the [Tulane Bookstore](#) on the uptown campus.

"Inherently, [bamboo](#) wicks moisture, has 99.9 percent U.V. protection, dries quick," says Andrews. "We had the "wow" factor with it. It's the first fabric in my long career in the apparel industry that there's a positive emotional response from the consumer when they touch it."

Stephanie Wagstaff, who began working at tasc as an intern and earned a master of science from the Tulane School of Medicine, adds: "Microbes don't grow on our fabric. Some Staphylococcus species actually prefer to grow on polyester!"

Wagstaff adds, "This [tasc Performance wear] is all I wear. It's really soft and comfy. And it doesn't [stink](#)."

I've seen a lot of trends over the years. Some skyrocketed while some didn't. Al Andrews, CEO and chair, tasc Performance