Game of cubes

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Lumen, created by Tulane alumnus Luke Hooper, is a game with magical cubes that glow red, green and blue. The object is to connect four colors in a row. But there's a hitch. As the player rotates the frame, the colors change across the board, making winning a difficult feat. (Photo from Lumen)

When Tulane University alumnus Luke Hooper entered his wireless game Lumen into the 2018 Edison Awards competition – which honors the most innovative new products, services and business leaders in America – he did so knowing that his chances of winning were probably nil.

The game wasn’t on the market and all he had to show was a prototype. Still, he thought, the exposure as well as feedback from some of the top innovators in the country could prove invaluable.

Hooper and his New Orleans-based product design company Factor 10 received that and so much more. They were awarded a bronze medal in the “high tech games” category.

> “I always wanted to build and invent things, and engineering was a way to do that.”
> — *alumnus Luke Hooper*

[View a video showing how the game works.]

Lumen, which Hooper hopes to launch in 2019, is billed as “the world’s first game to capture the true magic of wireless power.” It has a board, a spinning frame and magical cubes that glow red, green and blue. The object is to connect four colors in a row. But there’s a hitch. As the player rotates the frame, the colors change across the board, making winning a difficult feat.

“We put together our entry rather quickly,” said Hooper. “Compared to the resources behind some of the other winners, it was astonishing that we were recognized by experts in the field.”

Hooper has been inventing things as long as he can remember. As a child, his favorite toys were tool sets and Legos. “I was always into building,” he said.

A native of Oklahoma, he took his passion to Tulane, where he received a bachelor’s degree in biomedical engineering and later a master’s degree in mechanical engineering. During his senior year, he invented a game called Khet, or chess with lasers, which won 13 product design and toys awards.

These days, Hooper gives back to Tulane through speaking engagements, serving as an adviser for MakerSpace and mentoring students who participate in the Novel Tech Challenge. In 2017, he received the Tulane School of Science and Engineering’s 2017 Outstanding Young Alumnus of the Year Award.

“I had a wonderful experience at Tulane,” he said. “I always wanted to build and invent things, and engineering was a way to do that.”