



**EPISODE 2 – The Agriculture to  
Academia: The Vast History of UT’s  
Research Park**

TRANSCRIPT

Welcome back to Research Park Chronicles! In the last episode we took a dive into what exactly a research park is, how it works within the university, and the wide range of partner organizations involved with the research park here at the University of Tennessee. The next step, and the subject of this episode, is how the research park came to be in the first place.

Join Rickey as he interviews a diverse spectrum of individuals at the university who are associated with the research park in many facets. They lead us on a journey from what the landscape along the bank of the Tennessee river was like thousands of years ago, to its evolution into a functioning farm, to the beginnings of the research park itself. We cover the significant influence of Dr. David Millhorn in establishing the park and making the park an innovative aspect of the UT and Knoxville community. Come along, and hear how the research park took on many forms across time in its path from agriculture to academia.

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**Rickey:** Hello, and welcome back to *The Research Park Chronicles*. I'm your host, Rickey McCallum, and throughout this podcast, I'm going to lead you on a journey through the gateway to collaboration. We talked about what a research park does in the last episode, and today, we're going to dive into how one came to be here in Knoxville, Tennessee, and what it's already accomplished. This modern research park at the University of Tennessee would have never been possible without the vision of one influential scholar. But more on that in just a minute.

To fully appreciate and understand UT's Research Park, it's important to start by looking back in time to understand the land's Native American roots. At one corner of the University of Tennessee Research Park lies a serene bank of the Tennessee River. As researchers, we're always focused on developing new and exciting projects, but every now and again, it's worth taking a moment to pause and reflect.

As we look over the waterway, Sequoia Hill stands in the distance. And with the familiar sounds of running a creek and birds chirping, it's easy to forget that behind us is a collection of modern buildings that make up UT's Research Park. What was this campus like before these buildings were built, before it was a dairy farm, and before the city had ownership of the property, back hundreds and even thousands of years ago, at a time when the land was inhabited by Native Americans? For that answer, I asked Tom Rogers, the current President and CEO of the University of Tennessee Research Park, who knows quite a bit about the site's ancient history.

**Tom:** The site itself is 200 acres, but as they did the environmental scans required to get the development underway, only 75 acres of that 200 acres is really developable. The rest of it is down near the river and has been preserved in perpetuity because of its archeological significance. As they did that original archeological investigation, they actually found artifacts that date back to 6000 BC.

**Rickey:** The university works with Dr. Kandace Hollenbeck, a professor of archeology at UT, to help preserve that history and culture, and so we decided to visit her in her element on site at the Research Park to learn a little bit more. And to help us put this area into its historical context, Dr. Hollenbeck starts at the beginning.

**Kandace:** Here in East Tennessee, pretty much anything flat next to a river is going to have several thousand years—five to ten thousand years—of occupation on it. That’s the case here, too.

**Rickey:** Dr. Hollenbeck says that this land has changed a lot over the past 10,000 years, with river movement and flooding, creating ‘build up’ as she calls it.

**Kandace:** So, if we were to take a big backhoe and dig straight down right here, we could probably go down about four meters or so and maybe hit the bottom, maybe hit 10,000 years ago, or maybe not. Even going down four meters—12 feet or so—we may hit around 6000 years ago and could probably keep going. And then, river stabilized, probably around 5000 years ago or such, and that’s when we start seeing people, even to 3000 years ago, and people could become more sedentary.

**Rickey:** There have even been some interesting archeological finds from these digs, says Dr. Hollenbeck.

**Kandace:** There are these Mississippian time period villages down here houses, house structures, that are dotted along that area. And so those are really neat. They date to around 800 years ago or so. And so, those are probably some of the most exciting parts of it. You know, there’s a little hamlet and then some individual farmsteads, homesteads in between. So, kind of imagining those communities I think is fun.

**Rickey:** Once people started to settle at the site, we can see their history in the archeological record. Dr. Hollenbeck breaks that down for us as the riverbanks transition over into farmland over the years.

**Kandace:** Tennessee in the mid-south is one of eight to ten independent centers of domestication around the world. So, native peoples here, around 4000 years ago, domesticated a set of crops, including sunflower seeds, which we know today, squashes—a little bit earlier than 4000 years ago, even—another one called sumpweed, which is very similar to sunflower, and then quina pod, which is similar to quinoa. Quinoa is the South American cousin, but people up here domesticated a similar relative of it, too. And so they settled down and became farmers around that time.

**Rickey:** These early cultures were just one part of the history of the site. Later tribes would come to the region as well.

**Kandace:** We see some similarities and some continuities from those Mississippian cultures to the Cherokee, historical Cherokee cultures, and such, but there are also changes and things, too. It gets really complicated. But yes, a lot of shifting and a lot of movement of people, a lot of trade, even back 5000, 10,000 years ago. A lot of people moving. And we're so used to our cars and such, we forget how—we have no concept, we have no concept of how they could have relatively quickly gotten across the landscape. These rivers and creeks and such are a huge avenue as well.

**Rickey:** Artifacts are still being discovered on site and Dr. Hollenback and her team are taking measures to help further protect them.

**Kandace:** Whether we entice students to become archeologists or not, I think just to give them that appreciation of the history and kind of have pride in it so that we can protect archeological sites like this one here. We're really lucky because we do have this overlay and UT Research Park that is committed to preserving that area.

**Rickey:** The university is working on ways to formally recognize indigenous people and their native connection to the land upon which UT now stands, such as through a committee tasked with drafting a land acknowledgement statement. Though this is still being created, several members of the committee have begun to use this statement that, reads, "The land upon which the University of Tennessee-Knoxville is built is part of the traditional territory of the Tsalagi [Sal a ghee] peoples, now Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, and the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma. The Tsoyahá [Soy Ah Hey] peoples of Yuchi, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and Shawnee peoples (Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma and the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, and the Shawnee Tribe)."

As Dr. Hollenback has illustrated, farming is nothing new to the landscape of the park. Farming came to dominate the site for thousands of years. So, here's Tom again to tell us a little bit more about that.

**Tom:** Back in the 1890s, this property was actually sold by the city of Knoxville to a private developer who laid out a plan for a residential development that he called Cherokee. And we think that's where the name originally came from. He actually built a bridge from what is now Sequoia Hills over into the park, and had a layout that looked very much like Sequoia Hills. This city eventually took the property back for non-payment of taxes, but the bridge stayed for nearly 40 years until it became so dilapidated that it was torn down. You can still see the abutments of the bridge on both sides of the park. So, that was an interesting beginning. The city then sold the land to the university and it became a dairy farm. That's what I remember it as when I came to this town many years ago.

**Rickey:** The 200 acre stretch of flatland remained a dairy farm for many years. Rogers says many of the University of Tennessee alumnus first and foremost remember the land as a dairy farm.

**Tom:** They talked about having milk delivered to their dormitories every morning from the dairy farm.

**Rickey:** Though this old dairy farm is currently home to a burgeoning Research Park, about 75 acres of the property is being preserved and recognized due to its Native American history. The Park may also soon serve the university's mission and the public's interest by utilizing the Cherokee Landing site for educational and recreational purposes.

**Tom:** Over a several year period of time to develop the park-like portion of the Research Park into something we hope to call Cherokee Landing to have a synergy with Volunteer Landing, and Suttree Landing, and the other areas here and in town. That would be open for recreation, as there's a greenway now, and lots of people come here and walk and ride bikes and bring their dogs on the weekends. But we'd love to have access to the water so that people can use kayaks and canoes and paddle boards. And build some structures and some ways of celebrating the Native American heritage that's here. So, on the longer-range horizon, that's definitely in our plans.

**Rickey:** This project is a collaboration between the university's Research Park and the Legacy Parks Foundation, which is helping to coordinate the development of the concept and the plan of the design for the sprawling Cherokee Landing site. At this point in our story, it might seem as though the plan for the Research Park at the University of Tennessee sprang into life overnight, but that couldn't be further from the truth. It took a lot to bring this idea to where it is today, and none of it would have been possible without the efforts of one man: Dr. David Millhorn. So, who was Dr. Millhorn?

**Stacey:** Dr. Millhorn was my mentor. He became my friend and even kind of a father figure for me in many ways.

**Rickey:** That's Dr. Stacey Patterson, current president of the UT Research Foundation. Dr. Millhorn passed away in 2017 and had previously served as president of the UT Research Foundation.

**Stacey:** Many people described him as stoic and to himself, but that was only if you didn't really get to know him. Dr. Millhorn had a small circle, but once you were in that circle, you were family to him. He was the type of person that took care of the people that he worked with. He really believed that this University had the potential of any place in the world. And he had been at many different places, but Tennessee was his home, and he really believed that this was his opportunity to realize a big vision. And that's what he spent his whole time, his whole 11 years here doing.

**Rickey:** While Tennessee may have been home. Dr. Millhorn didn't start his career at the University of Tennessee.

**Stacey:** Dr. Millhorn had spent a number of years at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he had been a department head of physiology, and then he had moved to the University of Cincinnati, where he developed the inaugural Genome Research Center with a pharmaceutical company. So, he had a vision already coming in as to what it meant for a university to work with the private sector and what that could mean for the faculty, staff, and students of the university, but more importantly, even the region in which that opportunity was taking place.

**Rickey:** Dr. Millhorn joined the University in 2005, where he oversaw the management of science and technology programs at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and for much of his time, he served as Vice President of Research and Economic Development. Along the way, his responsibilities grew, becoming the Executive Vice President at the University in 2007, and later becoming the president of the UT Research Foundation in 2014. His work during this time was significant to the development of the university's research enterprise, which included, amongst other accomplishments, a contract with the US Department of Energy to manage Oak Ridge National Laboratory, a \$65 million NSF grant, which is the largest of its kind during the time, to build the world's fastest supercomputer, and of course, the establishment of UT's Research Park. Throughout his career at the University, Dr. Millhorn had a vision in mind for what would ultimately become the Research Park as we know it today. Dr. Patterson describes his vision in this way.

**Stacey:** He had a vision that we would bring in large companies that faculty could collaborate with, we could build big research programs, and we could provide opportunities for students. One of the challenges we have in this region is we educate some really top notch students, and in the graduate programs, oftentimes those students have to go to other parts of the country to get gainful employment. And so Dr. Millhorn's vision was, if we could bring those companies here, then we could offer high pay, high technology jobs right here and we could keep those best and brightest students in this region, and it would lift the whole community up.

**Rickey:** As I'd mentioned in episode one of this podcast, university research parks are the physical locations developed and designed to foster an environment of collaboration between universities, the public and private sector, and federal research labs. In addition to the way research parks benefit local economies, research parks can also benefit their respective university systems. Let me explain.

The University of Tennessee is a Tier One research university, which means it is a university that's known for world-class research, academic excellence, and exceptional student body—as Dr. Patterson noted—as well as high levels of innovation, creativity, and scholarship. Like all universities, UT looks for ways to draw in that top tier talent to the university, and in turn this benefits not only our students and faculty, but our current Park tenants, and the local community. Dr. Millhorn knew that we would need a dedicated research park with the likes of MIT, Cal Berkeley, and other universities in close proximity to major national labs to increase the recognition and prestige.

But for many at the University of Tennessee, this combination of academic, community, and economic drivers was a challenge to understand at first. It took a lot of trust building to convince them that this effort was worth pursuing. Naturally, Dr. Millhorn got to work. He leveraged his many contacts and developed a very clear vision for what a collaborative space could look like.

Over the early years of his time at UT, Dr. Millhorn developed a plan that would convey the case for a research park to the university and how having a dedicated research park would help the faculty at the University further develop the University, and also have a positive economic impact on the region as a result of this park. So, in addition to the development of the Research Park, a small business incubator was constructed on the Ag campus. Here, students and faculty could go to further develop their entrepreneurial endeavors, giving the university, and the public a glimpse into the future of what a collaboration could look like with a full-fledged research park. In 2009, when Dr. Patterson joined the UT system as a director of research partnerships, the case for the Research Park had already been submitted in the mind of the university and plans were already underway for the development of the Research Park property.

**Stacey:** The concept of the UT Research Park at Cherokee Farm was actually developed by Dr. Millhorn prior to me joining his office. But I joined in 2009 right when the infrastructure project was underway and we were finishing up the master plan and development guidelines so that we could move things forward.

**Rickey:** Development quickly became the next challenge. With the university on board for this project, they had secured a grant for more than \$30 million to purchase Cherokee Farm from the state for use as the University of Tennessee Research Park. Now, the main obstacle was to get the residents of Sequoia Hills on board with the concept of trading in a cow farm for a massive research complex.

**Stacey:** The residents were really concerned about what the differences were going to be, going from a few cows on that property to what Dr. Millhorn was envisioning as an active, thriving public-private partnership type research park. So, there was a lot of outreach, a lot of community meetings, we went to neighborhood meetings, I even did a couple of Sunday school classes at the churches that were across the neighborhood and talked about the vision of the Research Park and what it would mean to the region. And one of the things if you knew Dr. Millhorn and what he was interested in doing, he always looked out for the institution first, so it was always clear to the constituents that that this wasn't about him; this was about making the university and Knoxville, the Knoxville region, a better place for its citizens.

**Rickey:** Dr. Millhorn stressed the value of the Research Park and its intersection with Oak Ridge National Laboratory to the residents of Sequoia Hills. To Dr. Millhorn, those who called Sequoia Hills home needed to know that the park would bring skilled workers to the town and keep Tennessee's best and brightest in their home state.

**Stacey:** When companies come in, they think about this region. They're impressed that we have the University of Tennessee, the state's flagship research public institution here in Knoxville; we have what I consider a national treasure, the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. And it's really the combination of those two institutions and the brain power that they represent that really make this region special. It makes it a special opportunity for companies to come and engage with those kinds of people and the technologies that are developed here, the opportunities.

I think that Dr. Millhorn was—I'll say he was an early adopter. He saw that. He was able to see what that potential could be, and he was bought in completely and wholly. And I think the Research Park is part of that, of his vision of how those two institutions could work together to just make this region a really spectacular and special place.

**Rickey:** Eventually the land was secured and approved by surrounding stakeholders. The university began constructing its first research park facility in 2014. Tom Rogers recalls his first time looking at the plot of land where they were planning to build.

**Tom:** First time I drove over to see what Dr. Millhorn's vision really looked at, I was pretty much overwhelmed, wondering where people were going to park. There were beautifully laid out one-acre parcels, about 16 of them, but it wasn't logical to me where people were going to park. As we've discovered since then, the original master plan called for parking garages, about 4000 parking spaces in two parking garages.

**Rickey:** Dr. Patterson says parking may not have been the top concern for Dr. Millhorn. For all he brought to the Research Park and the university, this was a guy that wanted to discuss big ideas rather than minutiae.

**Stacey:** So, Dr. Millhorn is one of the biggest thinkers I've ever had the privilege of working with. He would often say, "Oh, I can't be bothered by these small things." He wanted to be part of a big transformational things like the relationship with Oak Ridge National Laboratory, like the UT Research Park. He would thrive on it, and there aren't as many people in the world that can have that big vision like he does.

**Rickey:** Oh, and the parking situation did get worked out, of course.

**Tom:** For better or worse, we now have a PhD in parking lot and parking garage construction and finance, and they're just not feasible at this time. And so actually later on this afternoon, we're going to begin a process to update our master plan that focuses more on reality. I think there aren't 16 developable lots out here; there are probably eight or nine as you include the surface parking that goes around them. And as you also know, we're hopeful that we'll soon have three projects under construction at the same time. And so that the park is going to look a little bit different than I think it was originally envisioned.

**Rickey:** Dr. Millhorn didn't shy away from taking a leap of faith. Dr. Patterson says that her mentor taught her the value of taking risks.



**Stacey:** I was very privileged to be able to work side-by-side with him, hand-in-hand, really getting to understand that sometimes you have to lean forward, you have to take a little bit of risk for a big reward. And he would do that time and time again. And by taking a little risk, pushing the envelope, frankly, making people a little bit uncomfortable, doing things differently than what they've ever been done at the University before, he was able to transform this institution.

**Rickey:** As far as risk goes, building the first building of the Research Park was one of the first challenges Dr. Millhorn and his team ran into.

Between 2014 to 2015, the first building was developed at the UT Research Park. It was built as a collaboration between Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the UT Research Park. It was very aptly named the Joint Institute for Advanced Materials, or JIAM for short. The first building on site was a direct result of the collaboration between the University and ORNL, an outside organization. As Dr. Patterson points out, it was a challenge to determine where to break ground on the new building at first.

**Stacey:** That project actually has a very interesting history. There were a lot of different people that had a lot of different ideas of where that building should be located. Some people thought it should be located at Oak Ridge, some people thought it should be located on the Knoxville campus; there's not a whole lot of room for a building that size on the Knoxville campus. But Dr. Millhorn was a real advocate for putting that Joint Institute for Advanced Material Science at the UT Research Park, to act as a catalyst to get things going, get researchers and students out at the park, get some buzz going, make sure that it was in a space that made sense.

So, it was in advanced materials, which is an area that is a special area for the University of Tennessee as well as at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. We have lots of joint faculty who are world-renowned experts in this space. So, he really saw that as making sense as being a catalyst and hopefully launching the Research Park in a direction where we could potentially attract private sector partners. I think that's worked, right? So, JIAM opened several years ago, and since that time, many of the companies that we've been able to attract to the park and who are interested in being at the park have some affiliation with JIAM or want to do some collaboration with the researchers that are represented by the JIAM faculty. And so I think that's really exciting.

**Rickey:** Clearly no challenge was too big back in 2014. Dr. Millhorn left his role with the university in 2016. After Dr. Millhorn's departure in 2016, Dr. Patterson was confirmed by the UT board of trustees to assume Dr. Millhorn's former roles as Vice President for Research, and Outreach, and Economic Development, as well as President and CEO of the UT Research Foundation. The university also looked to Tom Rogers, a veteran of ORNL, to become President and CEO of the Research Park. As a result of overcoming these challenges, Tom shares with us that—

**Tom:** The University of Tennessee is one of a half-dozen universities in the country that manage national laboratories, along with the University of California, the University of Chicago, State University of New York, and a few others. And so it's a real feather in our cap. We've seen it as we visited with prospects interested in the park to explain to them that we're a gateway for collaboration with the University, but to also be able to say, "We're able to help you leverage the resources and talents of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory as well," will really raise some eyebrows. So, I think the relationship that UT has with the laboratory is a real asset. We're sitting today in the Joint Institute for Advanced Materials.

The 'Joint Institute' means Oak Ridge and UT. With your background at UT and mine at the laboratory, we know a lot of people and are able to help prospects that we have—companies, students, entrepreneurs—find the right people to work with at both institutions, and that's a great value proposition for this research park.

**Rickey:** And even though Dr. Millhorn is no longer part of the institution, his legacy remains. Tom's vision for what the Research Park should be today and in the coming years is not wavering from the original vision.

**Tom:** Another key tenet of successful university research parks around the country is embracing entrepreneurship and innovation. It's fine to work with professors and work with companies that want to collaborate with professors on research, to work with students, but it's really important to embrace young people and their ideas about the future. So, everywhere I've been, dating back to my early career days at TVA, I've been involved with small business startups, mostly on the technology side. I was involved with a great program at Oak Ridge called Innovation Crossroads.

**Rickey:** As a result of his experience and the original vision for the Research Park, Tom has helped the Research Park launch the Spark Innovation Center, which assists early-stage tech companies with the right kind of support to become successful companies, right here in East Tennessee. Here's Tom with more about the Spark Innovation Center.

**Tom:** We early on decided that entrepreneurship needed to be a focus out here. We've started something called the Spark Innovation Center and have six really talented young entrepreneurs growing companies here. The University is excited about that initiative. As we look to build our next building, they're going to incorporate more space for Spark in that building. I think you'll see that entrepreneurship really becomes an important part of the fabric that we're weaving here at the park.

**Rickey:** As the park grows in size, and new buildings and partnerships get added to the park, there is a lot to be optimistic about. It's not just about the new buildings and businesses. The park is truly becoming a gateway to collaboration.

**Tom:** My four decades plus of work has brought great relationships with the state and with TVA and others, and being involved with all of that gets the park in the middle, in the mix, for some really interesting prospects. We're in the homestretch of working with one now that would never have even thought about looking at the park, but on my first week of the job, got random call and said, "We hadn't thought about this, would you be interested in a prospect like this?" And they are a great fit for the Research Park.

**Rickey:** Dr. Millhorn had a vision for what the park should become, but he also didn't stress too much about the details. Under Tom's leadership, the details are coming into focus and we're beginning to see where this path will take us in the next five to ten years. Tom and I reminisced about this during our conversation.

**Tom:** Now, I think we're beginning to see some themes naturally emerge. One, of course, is advanced materials and manufacturing, with the work here at JIAM and the industry collaborations. Second is medical research because the University of Tennessee Medical Center and OrthoTennessee are building an ambulatory surgery center here and have committed to include research on the top floor of that facility. And there's a lot of interest at UT, both at UT Knoxville and at the UT Health Science Center in Memphis, about capitalizing on that opportunity.

And the third, I probably can't coin as quickly as the other two. But it has to do with information technology, business analytics, supply chains, cybersecurity, that whole realm. There's just a lot of interest in the private sector, and it's some of the stronger programs at the university. So, we're seeing more and more companies saying that it really makes sense to be at the park, to be right across the river from the campus and those incredible students that they're producing. I'd say those three themes are going to emerge.

There could be others as time goes on, but materials, medical research, and whatever we're going to call the analytics portion of it seemed to be the three themes that are most likely to lead us forward.

I think the development of this new vision of being the gateway to collaboration with the University and ORNL has really driven the interest in what we're doing over here, far beyond what I remember it being when I was over on campus. So, I think the involvement, and the communication, and the buy-in from leadership on campus has really driven home that we have a unique opportunity to be able to develop something very special here that is going to help get our students get jobs, it's going to help build the economic development for the community of Knoxville and be able to help build this bigger ecosystem as we, kind of, move forward in the future development.

**Tom:** I think the relationships that we are building on campus are really going to be mutually beneficial. It's pretty remarkable to see what we've been able to do in the last year with COVID. Originally, when we [headed for house 00:28:54], I was concerned that we might be dead in the water for a while. Now, I'm really looking forward to three to six months from now when we can start being face-to-face with people because we got an infrastructure built that can really, I think, accelerate the development of this park.

**Rickey:** With Tom at the helm, the future of the UT Research Park is in good hands.

When it comes to evaluating the Research Park's rich past, there is no doubt that Dr. Millhorn left a lasting impact. As Dr. Patterson puts it.

**Stacey:** Dr. Millhorn's legacy is his vision. He was a big thinker. There was no project that was too big. There was no hurdle that you couldn't overcome.

**Rickey:** Dr. Patterson says she knew he was the right person for the job since the beginning, as he strengthened UT's relationship with Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Now, Dr. Patterson has taken over much of the role that Dr. Millhorn had, and she is carrying on his legacy, visions, and readiness to take risks with her.

**Stacey:** Dr. Millhorn had made the decision with his family that it was time for him to take a little bit of a step back and to transition to more of an advisor role between the University and Oak Ridge National Laboratory as the National Laboratory advisor. He actually set up an office at Oak Ridge. He was having a lot of fun thinking about the [science 00:30:13] and having some time. He used to say a lot that, "I'm going to go home for the afternoon so I can think."

Because that was really a big deal for him, to be able to have some quiet time where he could just think and make sure that all those puzzle pieces were coming together. And I think this gave him an opportunity to do that and to think about how the relationship was working, and what wasn't working, and for him to really contribute further. I have truly appreciated the opportunity to serve as the Vice President for Research, Outreach, and Economic Development for the University of Tennessee, and I certainly could not have done it without the experience that I had with my mentor and friend, David Millhorn.

**Rickey:** Dr. Patterson says she'll remember Dr. Millhorn as the caring man that he was: A father, an army veteran, an academic, an entrepreneur, and mentor.

**Stacey:** He was a tough nut to crack. People didn't really know that. I can't tell you how many times in the last three years that I have asked myself, "I wonder what Dr. Millhorn would do in this situation?" It may sound weird, but I kind of feel like he gives me some guidance in those moments.

**Rickey:** For me personally, while I did not have much time with him, I do recall the first time I ever met him. The reason I can remember this so vividly is that I can remember looking at him and thinking, "He is a spitting image of my grandfather," a man that I hadn't seen since I was ten years old. And from that moment, he and I shared a very special connection, and one that I cherish today. In remembrance of Dr. Millhorn, Dr. Patterson's goal is to make him proud of the work that we're continuing to do.

**Stacey:** One of the things that I want to make sure that we do is I want to make sure that we make him proud, that we do push on his vision, that we are always focused on what's in the best interest of the university, and what's in the best interest of this region, and the people of this region because that was really where his heart was, was around doing what's best for others. And I want to take just a little bit of that and make sure that we're following through with that, and in some way making him proud and making sure that his family is proud of the legacy that he's left here.

**Rickey:** He would definitely be proud. Since breaking ground on the JIAM building, the Research Park has experienced several accomplishments over the past five years, like the development of our first public-private partnership, the announcement that Volkswagen is moving their North American Innovation Hub to the Research Park, the ribbon cutting ceremony of the Spark Innovation Center, and most notably, the collaborative partnership between UT Medical Center and OrthoTennessee to develop their 93,000 square-foot ambulatory surgical center that's scheduled to open in the spring of 2022. And we're well on our way to a bright future as a research park, an economic driver, and a park for the community.

On the next episode of *The Research Park Chronicles* we're going to be speaking with the University of Tennessee Medical Center and OrthoTennessee about the orthopedic surgical center that's coming to the Research Park, and the medical research that will be happening in this facility.

**Rickey:** Thank you for listening to *The Research Park Chronicles* with Rickey McCallum. Keep up with the latest episodes by subscribing on Apple or Google podcasts, Spotify, or wherever find podcasts are found.