

Ronald DePinho, MD, tells a story about his vision as the 4th President

Dr. DePinho came to MD Anderson in 2011 to become the institution's 4th president. He brought a bold vision to develop partnerships between academic research and industry to make an impact on cancer, resulting in the Moon Shots Program. His administration was turbulent, and Dr. DePinho resigned in March of 2017, however the Moon Shots endure. In an interview conducted in 2015 he explains his research vision.



A Vision for MD Anderson's Research

I thought about where the field was in terms of its conceptual maturity, knowledge of how the immune system works, and other major advances in the technology of genome sequencing, cognitive computing, the ability to manipulate genes at will, genetically engineered models that have matured — all of those things were converging at a time when the institution was poised to seize the moment and apply that knowledge more vigorously.

I recognized that MD Anderson was a unique institution, in that it already had this culture of collaboration and collegiality. It had a critical mass of both basic translational, as well as clinical science. It had a global reach, so that if things were discovered, it would be easier to facilitate the exporting of that knowledge to other institutions around the world, other parts of the world.

That's one of the things that inspired me about this place. I recognized the tremendous potential that it held to be the leader in taking all of this amazing knowledge and converting it into new drugs, new diagnostics, new standards of care for patients, as well as prevention and early detection strategies.

About This Content

This interview clip was taken from an in-depth interview conducted for the Making Cancer History Voices Oral History Project. This ongoing project currently contains almost 500 interview hours with MD Anderson institution builders.

The transcript has been edited from the original.

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Interview link: <http://mdanderson.libguides.com/DePinhoR>

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