The Great Depression may have seen many fortunes lost, but Rody Davenport made his in the midst of it. In 1932, he and his business partner Joseph Glenn Sherill founded the very first Krystal on the corner of 7th and Cherry Streets in Chattanooga.

Davenport’s venture into the food industry certainly came during one of the most turbulent times in U.S. history. But ever the optimist, he believed that if they could create a restaurant that was spotlessly clean, efficient, and a great bargain, people would come – even in the midst of economic upheaval.

He was right – Krystal was an instant hit. He dedicated himself to the Krystal business for the rest of his life, and when he passed away, Sherill, and later, his sons Rody and Gordon, maintained and grew the Krystal empire.

Over the years, Rody’s sons Rody, Bobby, and Gordon made many significant contributions to the Chattanooga community, founding and funding several important area organizations and institutions. Among the three brothers’ many efforts, Rody was a major benefactor behind the Tennessee Aquarium and the Tennessee Riverwalk (sponsoring the Krystal Pier); Bobby founded the Central Park hamburger chain and Buck’s Pit BBQ, developed the Stonedge Condominiums on Lookout Mountain, and set up the Lula Lake Land Trust; and Gordon spearheaded the development of Finley Stadium.

“The first Krystal building, circa 1932

Rody Davenport & Sons KRYS TAL

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Krystal currently has 6,500+ employees at 353 locations and $282.7 million in annual revenue. It is now headquartered in Atlanta.

Lula Lake Land Trust protects more than 8,000 acres of public and private land and provides dozens of miles of hiking, biking, and horseback trails through the Cloudland Canyon Connector Trail system.

Finley Stadium is the largest venue in Chattanooga history, boasting 20,668 seats and 32 skyboxes.