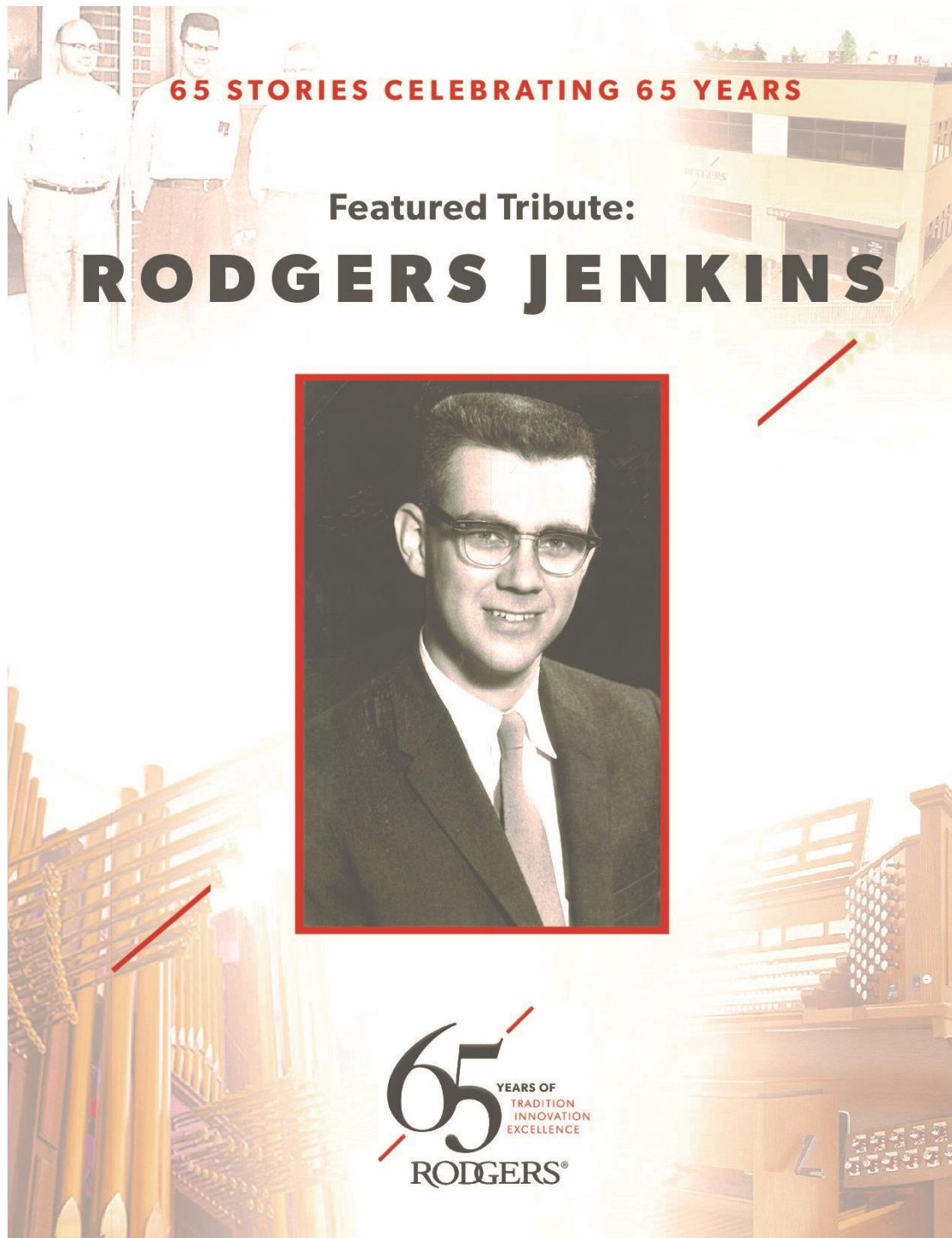


MAY 05, 2023

# FEATURED TRIBUTE: RODGERS JENKINS

[www.rodgersinstruments.com/news/featured-tribute-rodgers-jenkins](http://www.rodgersinstruments.com/news/featured-tribute-rodgers-jenkins)



*In this issue of “65 Stories Celebrating 65 Years” we regret to inform you that one of our company founders (and company namesake), Rodgers W. Jenkins, recently passed away on April 12<sup>th</sup> at the age of 99. At his personal request, there was no public obituary and no memorial service. We celebrate his life and honor his many contributions to the Rodgers Organ Company with this tribute.*



Before the development and founding of the Rodgers Organ Company, Rodgers Jenkins served in the military at Pearl Harbor, repairing war-damaged radio and radar systems aboard Navy ships. Upon his return as a veteran, he resumed his job at KGW Broadcasting, working at their radio transmitter station. When KGW Broadcasting began considering television broadcasting, Rodgers changed jobs and was hired by Tektronix. There he first worked in the testing department but then worked in the engineering department that designed oscilloscopes.

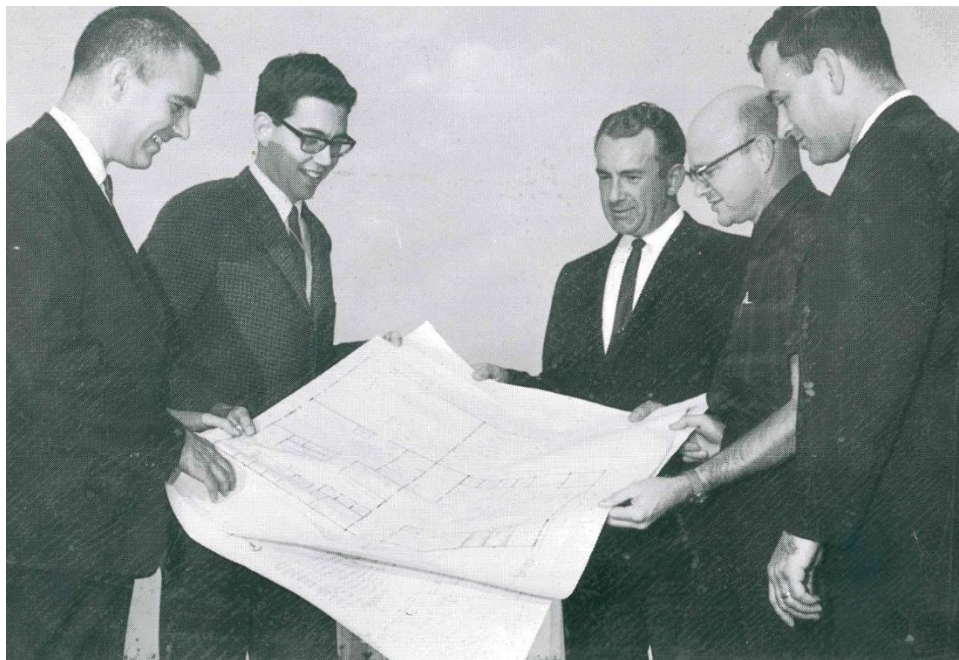


While working at Tektronix around 1955, in his spare time he experimented with the idea of a completely transistorized electronic organ. Until then there were either pipe organs or electronic organs powered by vacuum tubes. The management at Tektronix authorized a study of the development of an electronic organ, resulting that the venture should become a separate company.

Receiving startup capital from several sources, three Tektronix employees (Rodgers Jenkins, Fred Tinker, and Bill Johnson) founded the Rodgers Organ Company in 1958.



Some of his ideas that came to fruition included a type of ferrite core oscillator that created a musical tone, and a pedal board that operated with magnetic reed switches instead of mechanical contact switches. The company's roots were in Beaverton, but a need for more manufacturing space dictated a move to a new plant in Hillsboro.



*Looking at plans for a 14,000-square-foot expansion at Rodgers Organ Company in Hillsboro are (left) Rodgers Jenkins, company President; and (second from right) Fred Tinker, Vice-President.*



---

1959

---

## Rodgers Organ Sounds Much Like Pipe Organ



Rodgers Jenkins, right, one of the co-owners of Rodgers Organ Co., looks pleased after hearing the performance of the company's inaugural instrument at the governor's inauguration in Salem recently by Charles Gray at the console.

The inaugural model of the Rodgers Organ Company of SW Canyon Road, was unveiled recently at the Oregon Governor's Inauguration held in Salem.



*Fred Tinker and Rodgers Jenkins in exploration and development mode.*

Read more about the first ten years of Rodgers' history here:  
[www.rodgersinstruments.com/news/rodgers-spotlight-the-first-ten-years](http://www.rodgersinstruments.com/news/rodgers-spotlight-the-first-ten-years)



*Famous virtuoso concert organist Virgil Fox and company President Rodgers Jenkins are celebrating an outstanding performance on a three-manual Rodgers organ.*



Rodgers Organ Company's first custom Touring Theater Organ was built for organist Don Baker in 1961. Upon completion of its touring schedule which entertained thousands, Rodgers Jenkins moved it to his house, where he increased the analog equipment to 15 ranks and real percussions. He expanded the audio with speakers placed in the basement.

Recently, the organ's new owner, a brilliant college student with a technical expertise for analog technology and having a strong passion for Rodgers organs, moved the organ from the Jenkins estate. He will get it in the best shape possible before installing it into a music room on his college campus.

After Rodgers Jenkins left Rodgers Organ Company, he designed and built home theater speakers. At the encouragement of a long-time friend and boating enthusiast, Rodgers Jenkins created a new marine electronics company, Rodgers Marine, which is still in business today. You may be interested in their website which also has a very interesting biography of Rodgers Jenkins: [www.rodgersmarine.com](http://www.rodgersmarine.com)

Here are some other links about Rodgers Jenkins that may interest you:

[www.namm.org/library/oral-history/rodgers-jenkins](http://www.namm.org/library/oral-history/rodgers-jenkins)

[vintagetek.org/rodgers-organ-company/](http://vintagetek.org/rodgers-organ-company/)