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UTRF 2018 Innovation Awards Celebrate UT Researchers

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KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – The University of Tennessee Research Foundation (UTRF) celebrated the researchers whose achievements made 2018 a record-breaking year at the annual Innovation Awards ceremonies, held December 4 at the Health Science Center in Memphis and December 5 at The Foundry on the Fair Site in Knoxville.

The Innovation Awards recognize the researchers from all over UT who partner with UTRF to bring their innovations to market. “Innovations can truly come from anywhere,” said UTRF president Dr. Stacey Patterson. “UTRF proudly celebrates UT researchers whose technologies advance innovations from their labs to the marketplace and also benefit the public and regional economy.” As a part of the technology transfer process, UTRF vets invention disclosures, aids inventors through the patent application commercialization processes, executes license agreements, and supports investment efforts.

Patents are one of the ways UTRF protects some of UT’s groundbreaking innovations. Similarly, license agreements begin long-term partnerships between UTRF and the licensee who will use their innovation to develop products. Honorees from this year’s Innovation Awards included 42 inventors who patented 27 technologies, 37 researchers who secured 24 licenses, and founders of three startup companies.

Recipients of 2019 UTRF Maturation Grant funding were also recognized at the ceremony. The Maturation Grant program, open to UT researchers, faculty, staff and students at all campuses and institutes, helps further develop technologies that have the potential for commercial success. Submitted projects are related to UT invention disclosures and judged based on criteria that include a demonstration of path for commercial development and market potential. This year, UTRF awarded seven grants to promising innovations from departments in agriculture, engineering, medicine, and pharmacy.

Dr. Brett Compton, assistant professor in the Department of Mechanical, Aerospace and Biomedical Engineering, was named the recipient of the Innovation Driver Award from the Knoxville office. The Innovation Driver Award recognizes faculty inventors who have submitted their first invention disclosure within the last three years and who have

demonstrated exceptional enthusiasm and drive to move their inventions and ideas to the commercial market.

During the past five years, UTRF has received 759 invention disclosures, executed 122 licenses to large established companies and fledgling startups, and generated license revenue in excess of \$12.2 million. In fiscal year 2018, UTRF received 185 invention disclosures, an all-time high.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The University of Tennessee Research Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that promotes the commercialization of UT intellectual property, encourages an entrepreneurial culture, contributes to state and regional economic development, and promotes research and education to benefit the people of Tennessee and beyond. UTRF provides assistance and resources to the research activities of faculty, staff and students of the UT system and works to help move ideas to the marketplace. For more information visit www.utrf.tennessee.edu/

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