

Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly Joins Signature Required

To Talk Leadership, Economic Mobility, and "Gig City" Innovation

CHATTANOOGA, TN, UNITED STATES, October 21, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Signature Required, hosted by Spencer and Carli Patton, released an in-depth interview today with Chattanooga's mayor, Tim Kelly. A fourth-generation Chattanooga, entrepreneur, and self-described "accidental politician," Kelly was first elected in 2021 and is currently serving his second term.

In the wide-ranging conversation, which spans civics 101 to quantum research, Kelly explains what his leadership looks like in practice, why he views City Hall as a 2,600-person service organization, and how Chattanooga's focus on quality of life, early childhood, and workforce skills is powering the city's next chapter.

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Mayor Tim Kelly

“I never ran for student council before I ran for Mayor—just a deep, abiding love for this city,” Kelly says in the episode. “The city of Chattanooga is a 2,600-person service delivery organization. My job is to make sure the trains run on time.” He adds, “I still search my desk for the magic wand, and it's not there. This work gets done by building teams and managing well.”

On Chattanooga's economic strategy, Kelly emphasizes mobility and skills: “If I have a theory of change, it's economic. We're de-stigmatizing the trades, aligning K-12 with real internships, and investing early, because by age five, the bread's largely baked. When families have access to childcare and kids get a strong start, everything changes.”

Kelly also highlights the city's distinctive infrastructure and growth model: “Municipal fiber helped make us the Gig City, and it's now enabling cutting-edge quantum research. Our task is smart, ‘Goldilocks’ growth—more density downtown, preserve green space, and keep the feel

The logo features the word "Signature" in a large, blue, cursive script font, with a blue pen nib graphic at the end of the word. Below it, the word "REQUIRED" is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif, all-caps font. A thick blue horizontal line is positioned underneath the word "REQUIRED".

people love. A city succeeds when its people feel loved.”

Host Spencer Patton reflected on the interview:

“Chattanooga’s transformation over the past 50 years shows what leadership can do. The city refused to accept the label of ‘dirtiest city in America’ and chose a different future. I appreciated hearing Mayor Kelly’s clear priorities: what’s working, what isn’t, and what he aims to accomplish with the time he has left in office.”



Mayor Tim Kelly stands with Carli and Spencer Patton

About Mayor Tim Kelly

Before public service, Kelly expanded his family’s auto business from one to 11 dealerships, launched ventures including Chattanooga Football Club, and helped lead local philanthropy as chairman of the Community Foundation. He ran for mayor to align public, private, and nonprofit efforts around opportunity and quality of life in Chattanooga.

About Spencer and Carli Patton

Spencer Patton is a Tennessee-based entrepreneur who grew his businesses from \$0 to over \$100 million in less than ten years. He and his wife, Carli, co-founded the Patton Foundation and co-host the Signature Required podcast.

About Signature Required

Signature Required spotlights Tennessee trailblazers—entrepreneurs, policymakers, educators, and community leaders—who embody the state’s entrepreneurial spirit. The show invites listeners to think deeply about leadership, community, and impact. Learn more at www.spencerpatton.com/podcast.

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