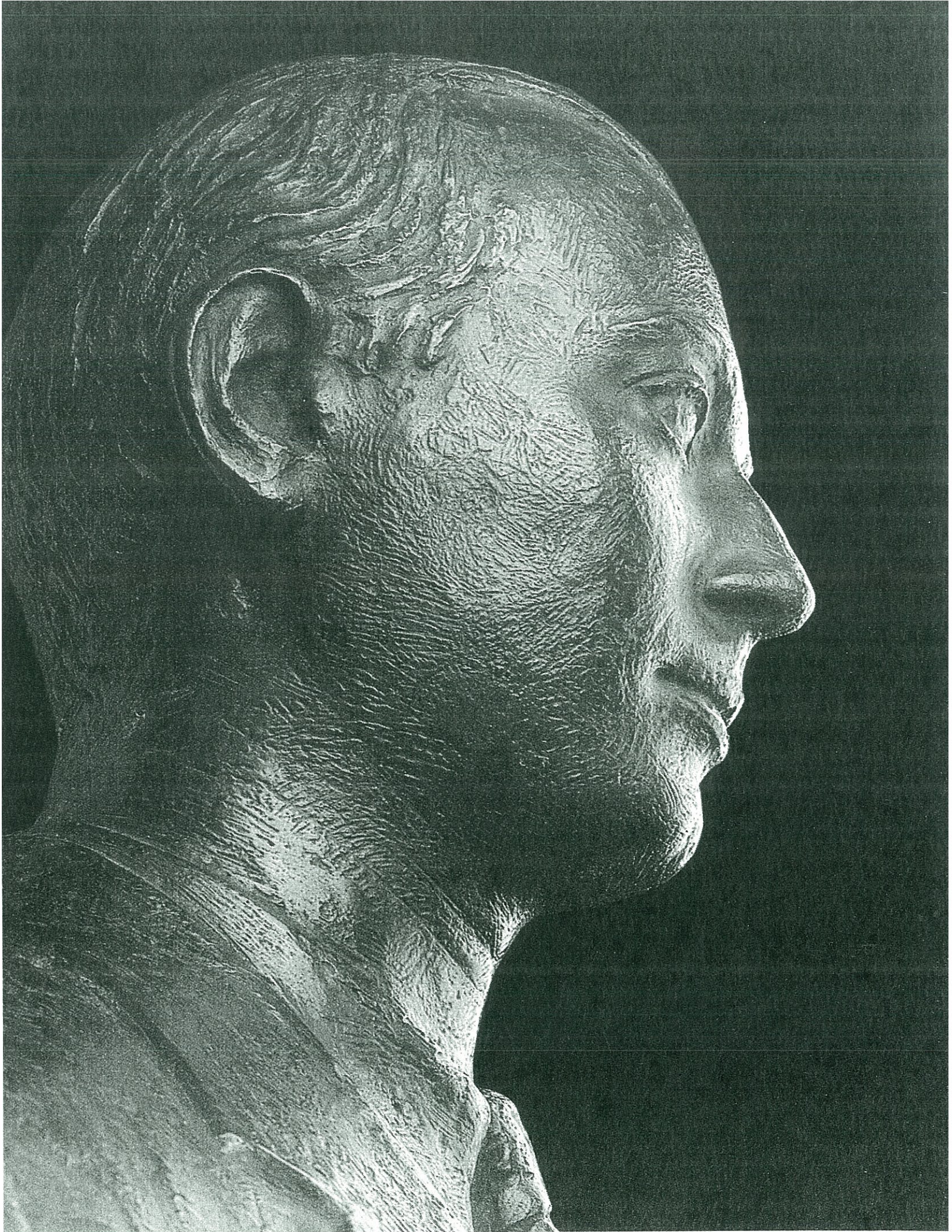


ANGIER BUCHANAN DUKE

1884 ~ 1923









*Photo, opposite page:  
A bust of Angier B. Duke*

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ANGIER BUCHANAN DUKE,  
A MEMBER OF ONE OF  
NORTH CAROLINA'S MOST  
CELEBRATED FAMILIES,  
WAS A BUSINESSMAN AND  
PHILANTHROPIST WHOSE  
TRAGIC EARLY DEATH  
SHORTENED A CAREER  
THAT HELD GREAT PROMISE  
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF  
PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION.







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## EARLY INFLUENCES

Angier was born on December 8, 1884, the son of Benjamin N. Duke and Sarah P. Duke of Durham. Angier's father and his uncle, James B. Duke, working in the tobacco company established by their father, Washington Duke, helped make it the largest in the industry, and made the Dukes one of the wealthiest families in North Carolina. But the Duke family business interests, which included not only tobacco but also textiles, railroads, and hydroelectric power, represented only part of the early influences on young Angier.

Washington Duke, who spent much of his life working a small farm near Durham, nurtured in his family an appreciation for the importance of education and a love for the Methodist Church. And as his family tobacco company prospered in the late nineteenth century, he also set an example of philanthropy, giving and lending money to a variety of causes, and encouraging others in his family to do likewise. As Washington Duke grew older, Angier's father, Ben Duke, took over responsibility for much of the Duke family philanthropy, which probably strengthened the example set for young Angier.

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## THE TRINITY COLLEGE YEARS

Angier was six years old when his grandfather donated the money that allowed Trinity College, a small Methodist institution







in Randolph County, to relocate to Durham. Ben Duke became a member of the college's Board of Trustees and its Building Committee, and Angier saw his father play a significant role in the planning, construction, and growth of the college. Ben Duke donated funds for the construction of the college's first gymnasium, which was officially named the Angier B. Duke Gymnasium in honor of the then fourteen-year-old boy.

Young Angier attended public schools in Durham before entering Trinity College, where he was both popular and dedicated to his studies. While at Trinity, he joined the Columbia Literary Society and pledged Alpha Tau Omega fraternity. His strong interest in sports also led him to become manager of the tennis and baseball teams, positions that then included many scheduling and financial duties.

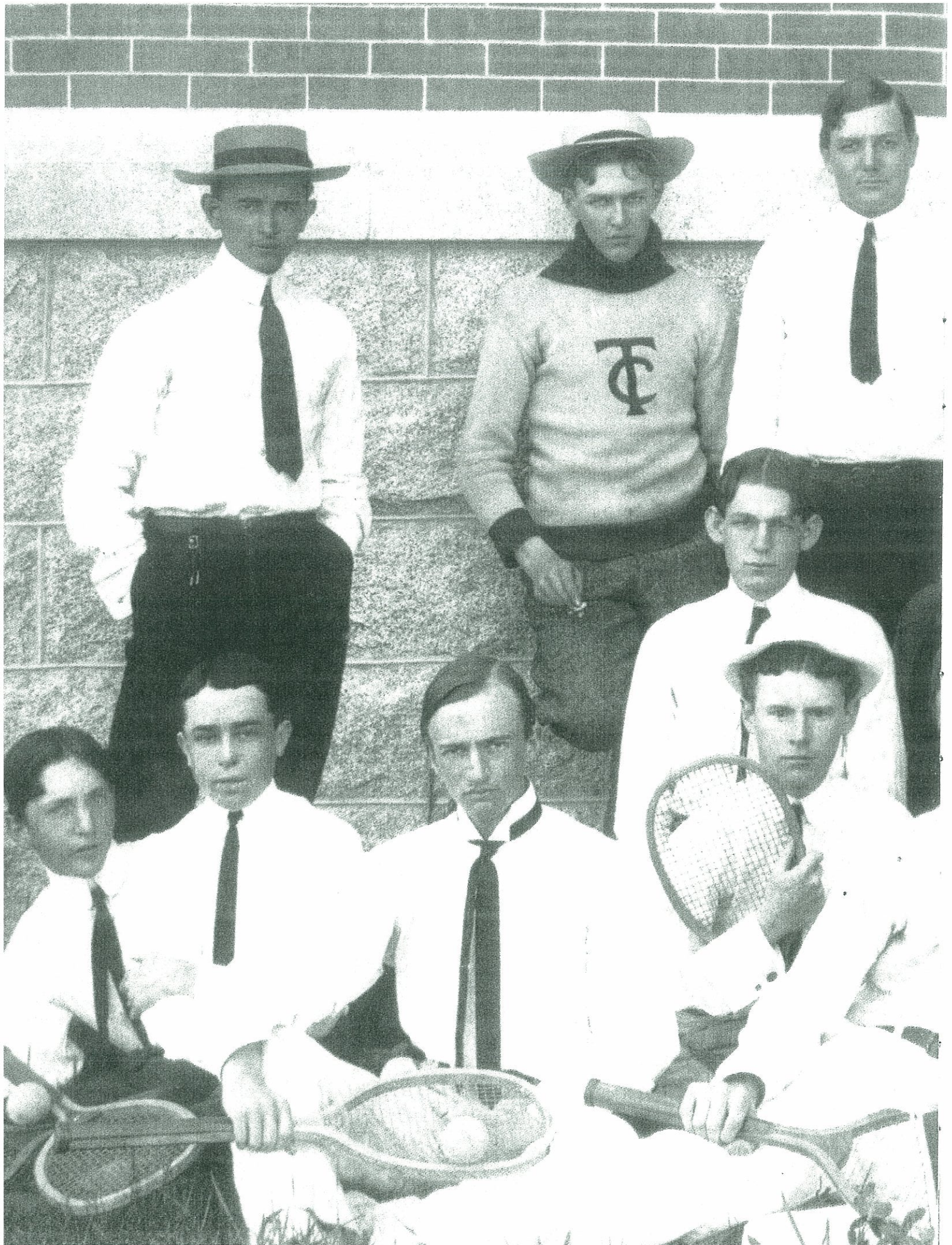
Angier graduated *cum laude* from Trinity in 1905 with a degree in economics. His senior research topic was "Progress of Industrial Family Organization During the Past Twenty-Five Years." Although he was by then among the third generation of the Duke family to be involved with Trinity, he was the first Duke to earn a degree from the college.

Tragedy struck in late 1905 when Angier, on a hunting trip in eastern North Carolina, was injured in a gun accident that caused him to lose his right hand and part of his arm. Undeterred, he rebounded from the accident to continue an active lifestyle that included swimming and sailing. And his injury did not prevent him from becoming an early enthusiast of automobiles — he drove a Rolls Royce Torpedo-Phaeton with specially built controls.











After 1916, Ben Duke began to divide up much of his fortune among his wife and two children, Angier and Mary, a 1907 Trinity graduate. Both Angier and Mary then began to make their own gifts to some of the traditional beneficiaries of Duke family philanthropy, including Trinity College. Angier made two unrestricted gifts of \$10,000 each at times of special need for the college. In 1922, he and Mary together made a gift of \$25,000 to start the campaign for a new gymnasium, named the Alumni Memorial Gymnasium in honor of Trinity students who lost their lives in World War I. Angier was elected vice president of the college Alumni Association in 1921 and president in 1922.

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### A TRAGIC END

But another sporting-related tragedy struck in 1923. Early in the morning of September 3, after a day of sailing at Greenwich, Conn., Angier and a group of friends were involved in an accident in a rowboat as they prepared to go to his yacht. Angier drowned at the age of thirty-nine.

In his will, Angier left Trinity College a gift of \$250,000. It was gratefully acknowledged in a resolution of appreciation from the college's Board of Trustees that also cited Angier's pattern of behind-the-scenes donations to recipients as varied as the Salvation Army and inmates at Sing Sing Prison. Tribute after tribute noted Angier's enjoyment of life, love of Trinity







College, and commitment to philanthropy. Trinity College President William Preston Few, in a letter to Ben Duke, poignantly recalled knowing Angier in “boyhood, young manhood and through constant associations about the family circle, and as a graduate, trustee and generous benefactor.”

“Such a life has not been lived in vain,” he wrote Angier’s father.

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### THE LEGACY CONTINUES

The Duke family’s long involvement with Trinity College reached its peak in 1924 when Angier’s uncle, James B. Duke, created The Duke Endowment. A gift from the Endowment then transformed the college into Duke University. Ideas for establishing the Endowment and remaking Trinity had been in the works for several years, so it seems likely that Angier, as a trustee of the college, knew something of the great vision that his uncle had for the institution the Dukes had supported so faithfully.

In 1925, Ben and Sarah Duke created the Angier B. Duke Memorial Inc. in their son’s memory. The memorial is a charitable fund established to provide scholarships for students at Duke University and at Rutherford College, another Methodist institution the Dukes had supported. Rutherford College merged with two other institutions to become Brevard College in 1933. The Angier B. Duke Program continues today



at Duke, where it is the university's most prestigious scholarship, and at Brevard, where an endowment to fund the scholarship program permanently was created by the Memorial's trustees in 2004.

Angier B. Duke's influence can still be seen on the campus of Duke University. The original Trinity College gymnasium that once bore his name still stands on the university's East Campus, and is now known as The Ark. The Alumni Memorial Gymnasium that he and his sister Mary helped build is now a part of the Brodie Center, also on East Campus. Angier's portrait hangs in Perkins Library on the university's West Campus.

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**CREDITS**

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