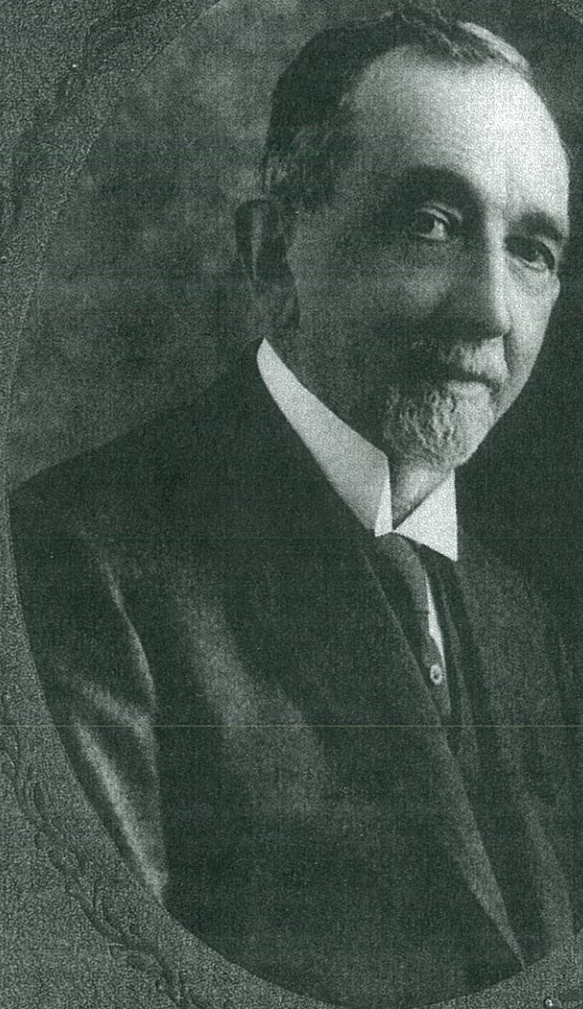
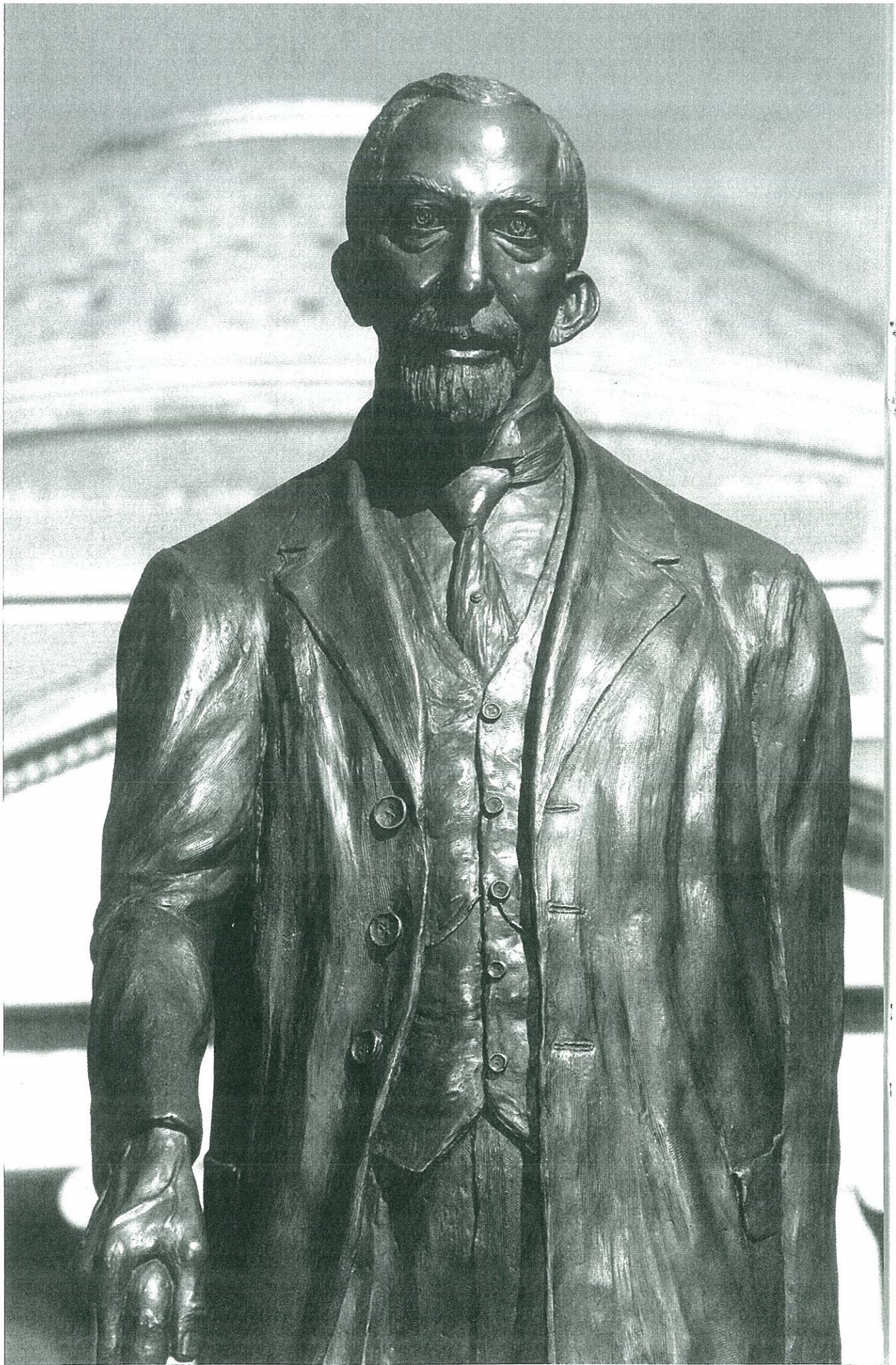


BENJAMIN NEWTON DUKE



1855 ~ 1929



"MR. BENJAMIN N. DUKE
*had a great affection for Trinity College, and
encouraged that same respect in his younger
brother [James B. Duke, founder of The Duke
Endowment]. ... But until today, there has
been no physical reminder that Ben Duke not
only exerted considerable personal effort to
advance this institution, but encouraged his
family members and others to do so as well.
... It is fitting that in this, the 75th year of
James B. Duke's philanthropy to the people of
the Carolinas, we at The Duke Endowment
formally acknowledge Ben Duke's role in
advancing this university, and applaud the
vision of academic excellence that he and his
brother shared."*

~ Louis C. Stephens, Jr.

*75th Anniversary Chairman, The Duke Endowment
Remarks at the Benjamin N. Duke Statue Unveiling
Duke University, October 2, 1999*



BENJAMIN NEWTON DUKE



MODEST BEGINNINGS

Benjamin Newton Duke was born in 1855 in a modest farmhouse a few miles north of Durham, North Carolina. His father, Washington Duke, had built the house for his second wife, Artelia Roney, in 1852. Ben's younger brother, James, and sister, Mary, also were born there before Artelia and one of Washington Duke's son's from his first marriage died of typhoid fever in 1858. Widowed for the second time, Washington relied upon the children's aunts and grandparents to help raise them. Later in life he also gratefully acknowledged the role of the circuit-riding preachers of the Methodist Church in this time of troubles. An upbringing rooted in family and church had a profound effect upon the children.

Photo Opposite Page: Washington Duke with his granddaughter, Mary Lillian

Photo Above: Ben Duke

BUILDING AN INDUSTRY

In 1865, after a brief period in Confederate service, Washington gathered his children at home again and together they began to turn from farming to the manufacture of tobacco products for sale. Each member had a role in beating, sifting, and packaging tobacco, or in peddling the finished product by wagon. School was intermittent in local academies, but Mary and Ben each completed a year at nearby New Garden Boarding School, now Guilford College. As the popular locally grown bright leaf tobacco launched an industry, many developing businesses relocated to be near the railroad. Consequently the city of Durham grew spectacularly. The Dukes moved to town in 1874, incorporating the business as W. Duke Sons and Company in 1878. The Dukes turned to cigarettes, first with laborers to hand-roll the product, to compete successfully with the leading Bull Durham brand. As partners and talented salesmen literally circled the globe advertising and selling Duke products, Ben handled the correspondence and ran the front office. James B. Duke, however, clearly became the driving force in the company, later moving to New York City in 1884 to open a factory devoted entirely to the machine manufacture of cigarettes.

In 1890, James B. Duke persuaded the five leading tobacco companies to consolidate into the American Tobacco Company with him as president. Expansion followed in Japan, China, Cuba, and Europe, and through the control of subsidiary companies producing tobacco flavoring, packaging and machinery. The new company came to control over 90 percent

of the cigarette business in the United States and over 80 percent of the entire tobacco industry except for cigars. Ben Duke was a director and, for a time, treasurer of the American Tobacco Company, and director of several of the subsidiary companies.

BRANCHING OUT

As the family wealth grew, the Dukes branched out into new endeavors. In 1892 Ben Duke enticed William A. Erwin, an experienced textile manager, to join him in launching a textile mill in Durham. Named Erwin Mills, with Ben Duke as president and Erwin as secretary and treasurer, the company first produced tobacco bag cloth. It quickly became one of the largest mills in the state. Soon the partners opened a second textile mill in Durham and others in Erwin and Cooleemee, making Ben Duke one of the state's most successful textile manufacturers. Ben Duke also became president of three banks, a real estate company, and the local Cape Fear & Northern Railroad, which he extended to Durham and renamed the Durham & Southern.

Ever alert for new ventures, the Duke brothers were in the vanguard of the development of a second major industry, electric power production. Prompted by the desire for more efficient textile production, Ben, as early as 1897, became aware of efforts at hydro-electric power production at scattered sites along rivers in North Carolina and South Carolina. James B. Duke became interested because of the challenge of bringing large-scale economic development to his native region. With the Dukes providing most of the capital, investors incorporated the Southern Power

Company in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1905. Later renamed the Duke Power Company, the venture played a major role in the industrialization of the Piedmont section of the Carolinas. It also became the primary interest of James B. Duke after the breakup of the tobacco trust by the Supreme Court in 1911.

A PHILOSOPHY OF GIVING

Appeals to the Dukes for contributions became commonplace as their wealth and generosity became known. Washington Duke was especially supportive of family, the Methodist Church, and the disadvantaged, particularly African Americans and their institutions. As the patriarch grew older, Ben increasingly became the family dispenser of philanthropy. He worked at the task and enjoyed it immensely. Initial giving primarily went to preachers and churches and an orphanage at nearby Oxford, but family giving increasingly centered on a Methodist institution of higher education, Trinity College. Ben Duke made the first family contribution to the college in 1887 and he was elected to the board of trustees in 1889.

Located in Randolph County, Trinity College was undergoing tremendous change under the leadership of a new president, John F. Crowell. Crowell was initiating curricular reform and attracting new faculty, but most significantly he sought to relocate the college from its quiet rural surroundings to an urban setting. Raleigh was selected as the new site for the college. Durham entered the picture when Raleigh was slow in meeting its monetary pledge, and local Methodist ministers

enticed Washington Duke to make an offer. Duke personally pledged \$85,000 for a building and endowment, and he suggested asking Julian S. Carr to donate the land. When the college trustees accepted his offer, it was clear that pride in church and pride in city had united the Dukes with Trinity College.

The relocation of the college to Durham in 1892 was not without difficulty. Construction problems delayed the move, and expansion at the time of a national economic depression threatened the school's existence. Soon Ben Duke lamented that the college had only caused "trouble and worry," but he was determined not to let it fail. In 1896 Ben calculated that he had paid one-third of the operating expense of the college since its relocation. In 1894 a new president, John C. Kilgo, invigorated the college and excited the Dukes. Washington Duke sent a strong signal of approval by donating \$300,000 for endowment before his death in 1905.

GREAT STRIDES AT TRINITY

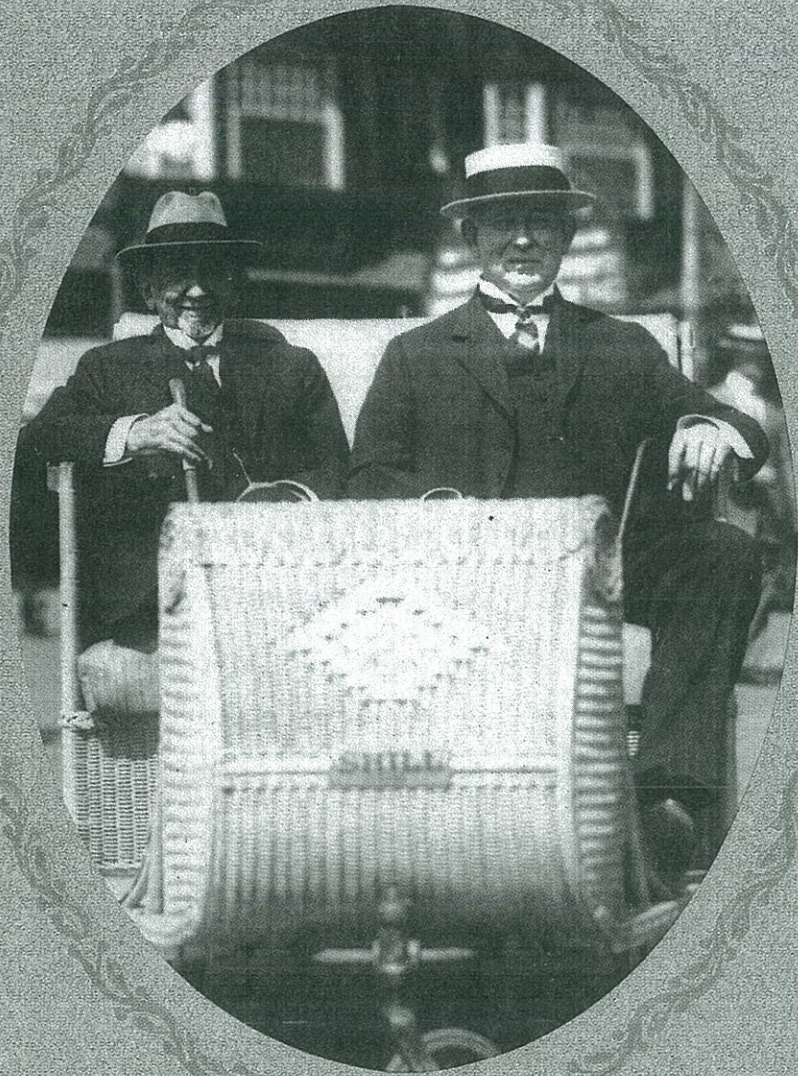
The first two decades of the twentieth century represented a dramatic change for the college. The physical plant and landscaping of the campus improved tremendously. Trinity's academic reputation was firmly established by its leading role in establishing high admission standards for undergraduates as well as for its new school of law. In 1903 the college received deserved national recognition for its strong stand for academic freedom when the board of trustees did not request the resignation of Professor John Spencer Bassett when he challenged the prevailing Southern views on race. Student

enrollment increased, but with the guiding principle being “quality over numbers,” and a strong faculty was assembled, with almost all having Ph.D. degrees earned at the best universities in the United States and abroad.

Throughout these pivotal decades, Ben Duke’s influence was ever present. He helped engineer the majority trustee vote in the Bassett Affair by persuading his business colleagues on the board to support the principle of academic freedom. He supported scholarships, endowed professorships, and gave money for salaries, current expenses, land, buildings, and equipment. He persuaded his brother to make his first gift to the college by donating money for a new library and \$10,000 for books. And as always, Ben had a keen eye for the appearance of the college. He donated money for a granite wall to surround the campus and at commencement one year he typically urged that extra attention be given to beautification, noting, if need be, he would “see that the bill is paid.”

Ben Duke’s monetary gifts to the college were so numerous that an accurate tally is impossible. By adding an incomplete list of gifts published in the annual *College Bulletin*, a total of \$1,235,000 can be calculated without including his help in the construction of many buildings. One simply must agree with President William Preston Few, Kilgo’s successor, when he named Benjamin N. Duke the “chief benefactor of Trinity College.” But Few relied on Ben Duke for more than money. Few frequently sought and relied upon his advice. As increasing illness kept Ben confined at home, Few turned, at Ben’s urging, to James B. Duke for family support.

*Photo Opposite Page: A lighter moment — The Duke brothers
on a family vacation in Atlantic City, August 1924.*



THE DUKE ENDOWMENT

On December 11, 1924, James B. Duke signed the indenture creating The Duke Endowment, which codified decades of family philanthropy and included ideas about the college Few had discussed with the Duke brothers since 1919. Trustees of the foundation were instructed to distribute the annual income from securities worth \$40,000,000 to hospitals, orphanages, and four educational institutions in North and South Carolina, and to the Methodist Church and its pastors in North Carolina. The largest portion of the annual distribution for higher education was designated for a university to be built around Trinity College, and eventually at least \$17 million was earmarked for the construction of two campuses for the university. President Few proposed that the new institution be named Duke University, and James B. Duke agreed if it were understood that it was to be named after his father and family.

Few had acknowledged in the past that perhaps Ben, and by extension the family, might have considered bearing financial responsibility for Trinity College to be burdensome. But he put their opportunity in perspective, saying, "You have the unique distinction of being in this region a pioneer builder of education on a vast scale." Clearly James B. Duke's creation of The Duke Endowment with the corollary transition of Trinity College into Duke University met, if not exceeded, Few's vision. Immediately after the signing of the indenture, Few wrote Ben, "... my dream and your dream is to be realized in full. Isn't it glorious."

A CHANGING FAMILY

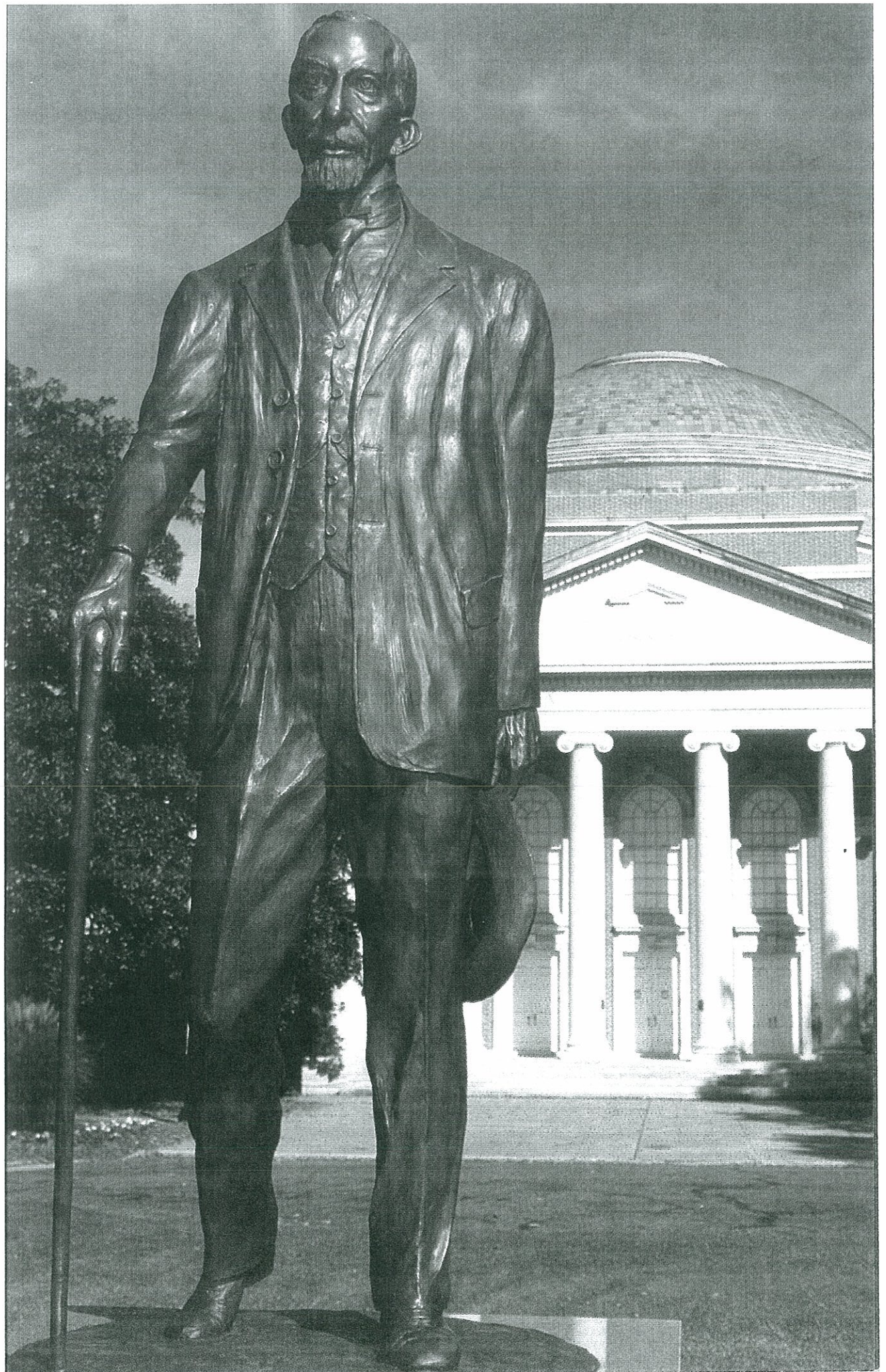
Building the campuses and launching the university were indeed busy and glorious times, but sadly, James B. Duke became seriously ill and died on October 10, 1925. His death was hard on Ben, for they were the closest of brothers, but he was buoyed and supported by family. Benjamin Duke had married Sarah Pearson Angier of Durham in 1877. They had three children: George Washington, who died as a small child; Angier Buchanan, born in 1884; and Mary, born in 1887. Ben and Sarah raised the children in Durham and New York City, and they were delighted when they enrolled in and graduated from Trinity College, Angier in 1905 and Mary in 1907.

In 1915, New York and Philadelphia society celebrated the marriages of a Duke brother and sister to a Biddle sister and brother. Angier married Cordelia Biddle in April and Mary married Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Jr. in June. The elder Dukes greatly enjoyed their grandchildren: Angier and Cordelia's boys, Angier and Anthony; and Mary and Anthony's boy and girl, Nicholas and Mary. (Ben Duke's granddaughter, Mary Duke Biddle Trent Semans, is now chairman of The Duke Endowment.) Although Ben Duke was bedridden late in life, the grandchildren enjoyed and looked forward to their visits to his New York mansion. They had stairs to play on, an elevator to ride, and treats and stories to enjoy from their grandfather. To this day they harbor two strong images of Ben Duke. He always had a vase of American Beauty roses by his bedside, and he had a constant stream of people visiting him.

THE GIVING CONTINUES

Ben Duke's visitors could be his personal stockbroker or people who interested him from the city, but more often they were family and individuals reporting on schools or orphanages or hospitals or churches that were of interest to him. Many were African American. The Dukes had long identified with the disadvantaged, and they frequently supported African American individuals and institutions. In Durham, when Watts Hospital opened for whites, the Dukes financed Lincoln Hospital for blacks. One of Ben Duke's frequent visitors in New York was C. C. Amey of the North Carolina College for Negroes (now North Carolina Central University). In Durham, Ben gave frequently to the college, continued vital support for Lincoln Hospital, and helped St. Joseph's African Methodist Church. He also gave liberally to nearby African American institutions, an orphanage in Oxford, and Kittrell College north of Raleigh. In Durham, Ben also had a strong personal attachment, which he backed with financial support, to Main Street Methodist Church and the Conservatory for Music. The Dukes had started the Methodist Church for employees in their tobacco factory. It was renamed Duke Memorial Methodist Church after the death of James B. Duke.

After the creation of The Duke Endowment and premature death of James B. Duke, Ben Duke was besieged with requests for money. During the last four years of his life he donated approximately \$3,000,000 to twenty-seven institutions of higher education in the South. Buildings named for Benjamin N. Duke can be found at Elon College and at



REMEMBERING BENJAMIN N. DUKE

Washington Duke (1820-1905), and his two sons, Benjamin Newton Duke (1855-1929) and James Buchanan Duke (1856-1925) are buried in recumbent sarcophagi in the Memorial Chapel at Duke University. For many years, however, Washington and James B. were better known on the campus because of their outdoor statues. The elder gentleman is seated serenely in the East Campus traffic circle, and the younger brother stands larger than life with cane and cigar surveying West Campus.

On October 2, 1999, an outdoor statue of Benjamin N. Duke was dedicated as part of the seventy-fifth anniversary celebration of Duke University and The Duke Endowment. It stands in front of Baldwin Auditorium on the university's East Campus. The statue, by North Carolina sculptor Stephen H. Smith, was a gift to the university from The Duke Endowment and The Mary Duke Biddle Foundation.

Benjamin Duke is also remembered elsewhere on the Duke campus. His interest in beautification is acknowledged by the plaque inside the Main Street entrance noting his gift in 1915 of the granite wall circling East Campus. The Chapel's Benjamin N. Duke Memorial Organ, Flentrop, 1976, commemorates his interest in the arts and religion, and the prestigious Benjamin N. Duke Scholars Program continues his special interest in enabling young men and women to earn a college education.

