History
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I have selected Duke University as one of the principal objects of this trust because I recognize that education, when conducted along sane and practical, as opposed to dogmatic and theoretical, lines is, next to religion, the greatest civilizing influence. I have selected hospitals as another of the principal objects of this trust because I recognize that they have become indispensable institutions, not only by way of ministering to the comfort of the sick, but in increasing the efficiency of mankind and prolonging human life.

James Buchanan Duke, Indenture of the Duke Endowment, 1924

In 1924, James Buchanan Duke, an industrialist and philanthropist, established the Duke Endowment and directed that part of his gift be used to transform Trinity College in Durham, N.C. into Duke University. The following year, upon his death, Mr. Duke made an additional bequest to the Endowment and the university, including funds to establish a medical school, hospital, and nursing home.

One of Mr. Duke’s primary motivations in establishing the Endowment and the School of Medicine was the improvement of health care in the Carolinas. At a time when medicine in the region was still a cottage industry, Duke dared to dream of creating what he hoped would become one of the leading medical institutions in the nation.

By the time the new school and hospital opened in 1930, this dream was already well on its way to becoming reality. Recognizing its responsibility for providing quality care to the people of the Carolinas, Duke soon opened the first major outpatient clinics in the region. The Private Diagnostic Clinic, opened in 1931, not only provided coordinated medical and surgical care to private patients with moderate incomes but also allowed members of the medical faculty to contribute a portion of their earnings toward the continued excellence of medicine at Duke. Less than five years after the School of Medicine opened, the Association of American Medical Colleges ranked it among the top 25 percent of medical schools in the country.

Building on this heritage, Duke University Medical Center has grown and expanded over the years and now ranks as one of the world’s outstanding health care centers. In education, its innovative medical curriculum features a generous measure of elective courses in the belief that all health professionals must be prepared for a lifetime of self-education. The scientific grounding for that education is provided through participation in a wide variety of ongoing research programs. Duke University Hospital, now located in facilities opened in 1980 and since expanded several times, draws patients from across the Carolinas, the United States, and the world for diagnosis and treatment. In both basic and clinical research, Duke University Medical Center has grown into a premier biomedical research institution and is consistently one of the largest recipients of funding from the National Institutes of Health.

In recent years, Duke University Medical Center has evolved into an even broader health care institution, one poised to meet the challenges of health care delivery in the twenty-first century. No
longer solely a traditional academic medical center where patients are referred almost exclusively for specialty care, Duke has expanded to include an integrated system of health care providers and facilities across the region. The Duke University Health System is composed of Duke University Hospital; Durham Regional Hospital; Duke Health Raleigh Hospital; Duke Health Community Care; and Duke University Affiliated Physicians; and encompasses many other strategic relationships and programs.

Representing the continuing fulfillment of the dream of James Buchanan Duke, Duke University Medical Center still seeks to carry out its teaching, research, and patient care programs in a manner that meets the needs of society. In keeping with its heritage, it seeks to provide socially relevant medical education, research, and patient care and is expressly committed to the search for solutions to regional, national, and global health care problems.
The University

Duke University, located in Durham, North Carolina, has an enrollment of almost 12,000 students from all 50 states and from many foreign countries. The university’s schools and colleges include Trinity College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School, and the Schools of Business, Divinity, Engineering, Environment and Earth Sciences, Law, Medicine, and Nursing. Durham, with a population of 223,000, is in the Piedmont region of North Carolina and has easy access to the sea coast and mountains. It is one of the three cities bounding the Research Triangle Park where numerous private research laboratories and governmental agencies are located. Duke University is 25 miles from North Carolina State University in Raleigh, eight miles from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and is in the same city as North Carolina Central University.