



President Nannerl O. Keohane's
State of the University Address to Duke Alumni
April 15, 2000

Thank you, Laney, for your kind words. I'm glad that you all came back to campus to renew your friendships and reboot your memories, by celebrating your relationships with this place and the people of this place. Thank you all for being here, and thanks to supportive spouses, who have become very much a part of the Duke community, too. Without our 100,000-plus alumni, Duke would be a very different, and much less exciting and robust, university.

I think of returning for reunion as a kind of pilgrimage, with a quasi-holy destination, some hardships along the way, and very interesting companions. Chaucer's preface to the *Canterbury Tales*, which many of you surely studied at Duke or in order to get into Duke, seems especially pertinent. If scholars in the audience will pardon my barbaric pronunciation of Middle English:

*Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote . . .
And smale foweles maken melodye,
That slepen al the nyght with open ye . . .
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages.*

Looking out at this marvelous group of alumni from many generations, I see a panorama of men and women across the life span, a living testimonial to the accomplishments, vigor, wisdom, and character of every decade represented here. I also think of the continuity of experience across the 75 years that Duke University has existed -- and the almost one hundred years that our institution existed before that as a smaller college. With all our roots leading back to this one splendid place, we also find common ground in the present -- most deeply, in rooting for Duke sports teams.

One of the most wonderful aspects of being Duke's president for almost seven years is the awareness, reaffirmed every year on my travels, that in every part of the world -- literally from Seattle to Miami, from Tokyo to Paris, Dukies gather with family or friends to watch our basketball teams. Your children know every player by face and number, and all of you can call out memorable moments from this and every season. There is a true and magic bond in this shared loyalty, in which current students, faculty and staff, join with full enthusiasm.

My travels for Duke recently took me to Hot Springs, Arkansas, where I went to high school. I revisited the First Presbyterian Church, where my father was pastor during those years, to see the beautiful sanctuary and share it with Sterly Wilder, my companion on that trip. As I showed her the pictures of past ministers in the parish hall, someone came out of the church office and introduced himself as the current interim minister. I said that I was Jim Overholser's daughter, visiting in town, from Duke University. Sterly loyally said: "She's not just *from* Duke, she's the most important person at Duke."

Whereupon the interim minister looked at me skeptically and said, "Oh, no, I know better than that; Coach K is the most important person at Duke! When he had his hip replaced, my wife sent him flowers and candy, and she didn't even *go* to Duke." Fair enough, I said; the man obviously knows what he's talking about.

The basketball coaches -- both Coach K and Coach G -- told us this was to be a rebuilding year, which in their

specialized technical vocabulary means walking away with two ACC championships. The dedication of all our scholar-athletes has helped hone everyone's sense of involvement and bonding both on and off campus. In that spirit, be sure to attend this afternoon's Blue and White Scrimmage for Coach Franks' wonderful football team.

Speaking of competition, one reason we have gathered is to compete in a friendly way by comparing attendance from each class at this event, and to accept the kind and substantial gifts you have made to the Annual Fund. Like those generations of Dukies linked across time in today's procession, the annual fund similarly ties us together in a common purpose. Duke University isn't *about* money and never was, but it takes the energy of money as well as time to help the fruit of education ripen.

Our alumni put their money where their heart is, and I'd like to take a moment to celebrate your dedication, and to hear your reports. Our 580 Annual Fund Volunteers, including the 154 reunion volunteers whose selfless service has brought us to this point, deserve a round of applause, and we have a nice way of doing that by class.

I'll ask the Reunion Planning Chair for each class to announce the total number of attendees, as we receive your gifts with gratitude on behalf of the entire university community.

[Call out each class year (from youngest to oldest) for them to announce attendance and Annual Fund pledges. The Senior Class Gift Chair and Reunion Class Leadership Gifts Chairs will present checks to you on stage.]

Class of 2000 (concluding a wonderful senior week, party last night)
 5th reunion (1995) (great to see so many familiar faces from my own era)
 10th reunion (1990)
 15th reunion (1985)
 20th reunion (1980)
 25th reunion (1975)
 30th reunion (1970)
 35th reunion (1965)
 40th reunion (1960)
 45th reunion (1955)
 50th reunion (1950)
 Half Century Club

Total gifts and pledges from the ten reunion classes to Duke University come to almost \$38 million. The Annual Fund alone has received commitments from reunion classes amounting to more than \$4.5 million, which is beginning to close in on last year's reunion class record of \$5.2 million, and we still have two months to go! I encourage you people to beat last year's total by the time commencement comes. And we thank you most warmly for your generosity.

I also want to pay tribute to those classes vying for the President's Awards, (which you see up here). These awards were created four years ago to recognize outstanding Annual Fund Gifts and Participation. Front runners to date are the Class of 1980 for Largest Annual Fund Gift, for example, with more than \$860,000 as of April 3rd. The class of 1970 currently leads all other classes in the participation award at 41%, as of that same date. Class years will be engraved on the awards after June 30th when the totals are tallied, and the final awards will be presented at Homecoming. Again, the year isn't over and other classes could easily upset the front runners, so no coasting!

I have invoked the image of reunion as a pilgrimage, and in that spirit, I want to use an old chestnut, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, as the theme for my report on your university today. It turns out that Bunyan was amazingly clairvoyant in predicting what the educational pilgrimage would be like for generations of Duke students.

Let me postulate an imaginary student from the class of 2003, this current freshman class. Filled with fear and trembling, he matriculated in Trinity College last fall, and has just spent his first year under the gargoyles. Using Bunyan's tale as a lens to examine his experience, I shall tell you how he fared; and I think you may well recognize yourselves in him.

To refresh your memory, the hero of Bunyan's 17th-century allegory, called Christian, sets out from his hometown, "the place of all evil," on what is at times a lonely journey, leaving behind his family and the playthings of his former life in order finally to reach the Celestial City where everybody is above average. Along the way he encounters "molestations, troubles, wars, captivities, cries, groans, frights, and fears" but in the end gets to live in company with the Shining Ones and walk in white, like Duke parent Tom Wolfe. And he makes quite a lot of friends along the way.

Huckleberry Finn once described *Pilgrim's Progress* as being "about a man that left his family it didn't say why. I read considerable in it now and then. The statements was interesting, but tough." Well, that's a fair summary of an education here. But while Huck had the golden heart of a Dukie, his prose lacked some of the polish he might have picked up in our University Writing Curriculum, which focuses on close and engaged reading along with scholarship, analysis and critical thought.

Actually, *I* know why our pilgrim left his family to come here. He wanted to be one of the movers and shakers of the next fifty years; to get a higher *higher* education combining the cutting-edge resources of a large research university with the personal attention of an elite liberal arts college; to find a community whose ambition and energy were commensurate with his own exuberant intelligence.

However, like most first-years, our hero promptly tumbles into the Slough of Despond, a quicksand of depression familiar to new students sure that they haven't got the right stuff. Full of "doubts and discouraging apprehensions," he cannot find his own way and has to be yanked out of the mire by his Resident Advisor. This is why we have such an elaborate and wonderful Student Affairs unit at Duke, with ties across the university that form a network of counseling, medical service, academic advising, and more.

But our freshman already understands the importance of a balanced body and mind, educating the whole person. He plays tennis, which Billie Jean King called a perfect combination of violent action in an atmosphere of total tranquillity. Thus the new facilities our hero enjoyed this year include the Wilson Rec Center, where you will presently lunch -- 99,000 square feet filled with weight machines and cardiovascular equipment, racquetball courts, basketball courts, an indoor track, aquatics center, dance room, wellness center, and juice bar; the Sheffield Tennis Center-six varsity courts, coaches' offices, locker rooms; and the Schwartz-Butters building-the six-story tower next to Cameron Stadium that will be dedicated today to house basketball offices and an academic center for all our student athletes, as well as a true Hall of Fame room for Duke athletes. Christian may already have thought he'd died and gone to heaven.

All of these buildings now form a handsome athletics quadrangle centered on the old Card Gym tower, with a harmony and proportion that continues and recalls the splendid Quads that are the heart of West Campus. In the middle is the grassy lawn that is now Krzyzewski-ville, with a sign that says "Krzyzewski-ville" to enlighten visitors who come when students are not camping out there. Traditional Duke lampposts line the lawn, and in the base of each is an ethernet connection so that students can plug in their computers and do homework, email, and other manner of distance learning. Christian had a great time camping out with his friends this year.

Bunyan's pilgrim pointed out to one of his companions that "The body without the soul is but a dead carcass," and we too try to cultivate spirit and foster *religio* to help our young pilgrim stay lively and in tune with the universe. With the October opening of the Freeman Center for Jewish Life on Campus Drive, our Jewish students and faculty finally have a permanent and worthy space for social gatherings, learning and, of course, worship. It has become one of the most popular spaces on campus for meetings and parties, and the Kosher dining is deservedly praised. Not only Jewish students and faculty enjoy it -- the FCJL is open to, and used, by everybody, and serves to make Jewish life and culture familiar to all. Christian's roommate, for instance, invited him to the Center to enjoy his first Passover seder next week.

Besides his frequent visits to the chapel, sometimes to sit and listen to music and sometimes to sit and listen to the silence, Christian was excited to learn the Divinity School's launch of the new Institute on Care at the End of Life, an intentional community of professionals, academics, clergy, doctors, and lay people who want to help understand what it means to heal into death, and of how practical compassion can smooth the journey. This interdisciplinary initiative will rely on ties among Divinity and the Medical Center, the School of Nursing, the Law School, the Kenan Institute for Ethics and the Sanford Institute of Public Policy, the Aging Center, the School of Arts and Sciences, as well as the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work, North Carolina Central University, and St. Christopher's Hospice in London. As it gets organized during his tenure here, Christian is hoping to attend a few talks and maybe do some volunteer work in the hospice affiliated with the Duke Health System.

Our hero has already applied himself spiritually, though, by helping out with Duke's Neighborhood Partnership Initiative, which cuts across all parts of the university and medical center with dozens of programs around the city and region. While our librarians trained public school teachers in bringing the Internet to the classroom, our pilgrim joined over a hundred other students in tutoring at-risk children during the year, and he attended the grand opening of a church-based community center and charter school in Walltown, north of East Campus, a former drug hangout renovated with substantial help from the university. And after the horrific damage wrought last fall by Hurricane Floyd, our pilgrim joined hundreds of Duke students and employees in sending water, food, and money to the eastern part of our state, and joined friends on a bus to the afflicted area one weekend and invested his muscle. The kid has a good heart.

Despite his superior service orientation, however, like many newcomers our hero at the end of his first semester came up against Mr. Worldly Wiseman who, I'm sorry to say, gave him bad advice about what to take at Duke. Starting next fall, our new Curriculum 2000, with its emphasis on critical thinking skills, foreign languages, quantitative reasoning, the scientific method, cultural studies and ethical inquiry, will do a better job of helping the pilgrims of this world choose their educational path wisely, and prepare them for the lives of leadership that we know they will lead after Duke.

Christian has also made his way to Vanity Fair, where all kinds of enjoyments are available. At first he has a great time -- Duke parties are still deservedly famous; but then he shows poor judgment and falls prey to some temptations that he does not choose to write home about, even though he is in regular email contact with his family. The entire university community had a sobering experience this year when a junior in the Pratt School of Engineering died after a drinking binge. As you may have heard we are working hard on the problem now from every angle--students, parents, and staff shoulder to shoulder, reexamining our efforts at health education and information, social policy, habits, national trends, alternative event funding, and more--to make sure this place is both safe and fun.

After his sojourns at Vanity Fair, our pilgrim has to pull several all-nighters to catch up with his work. Fortunately he comes to a way-station: weary and benighted, our text reports, "He lifted up his eyes, and behold, there was a very stately palace before him" where the lovely Discretion receives him and he gets a square meal and some shuteye -- the Palace Beautiful.

Now my guess is that while our hero's dorm may not have seemed a Palace Beautiful at the outset, once he gets tired enough, it passes muster-particularly since he is housed on the first-year East Campus, with its refurbished dining halls, playing fields, Lilly Library and especially supportive culture. He mentioned in an e-mail to me-Christian is no slouch-that the East Campus experience has the sense of a great and unified community-a sense some of you have told me you recall from your days in the Woman's College. The 1,650 students of the class of 2003 have used it as a safe space and a springboard get to know each other well, share their fears and triumphs, enjoy excellent facilities, throng to Ninth Street as their own college drag, and spend good face-time with residential faculty.

We still have work to do to bring an equally coherent and joyful residential experience to all upperclassmen. Some of them have a great experience, especially those who are in selective housing; others find residential life after their freshman year a considerable disappointment. However, progress is being made. If the Board of Trustees approves our plan next month, construction will get underway this summer on new residential facilities on West Campus, linking Wannamaker and Few Quads with Edens, (which we still call the "new dorms").

I should say a bit more about Christian's companions; his class, a third of them African-American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian or Asian-American, represents 47 states and 49 other countries. He was one of about 13,900 applicants last year. Those odds were tough enough, although they would have been even tougher if he applied just one year later with 14,450 hopefuls and a smaller class to counterbalance past high yields. However, Christian and his family were glad to know that we do give preference to the children of alums like his mom, Diligence. Now *there* was a good student; and she's back for her reunion this year.

Christian -- who has a work-study job and a hefty loan through Duke -- is very aware of how our need-blind admissions policy remains a critical component of what makes Duke Duke. Study after study has confirmed what we knew from our experience: that diversity is important to good education, shaping a more solid citizenry and stronger, more ethical leaders among all ethnic backgrounds and races.

In fact, however, Duke provides financial support to *all* students, even those who pay full tuition-an implied scholarship of more than \$10,000 that represents the difference between what it actually costs to educate each Duke undergraduate each year, and the price we charge even those who pay "full tuition." Wealthier schools with endowments larger than Duke's -- of which there are at least two dozen -- can make up all that difference from endowment income. Here on Tobacco Road, further down the road from Vanity Fair, we rely more heavily on the generosity of living alumni and friends like you. Christian and his classmates are well aware that Duke's ambitious capital campaign will bring in \$100 million dollars of new scholarship endowment to support undergraduates here, as well as generous Annual Fund money each year. As of this month, more than \$1.1 billion has already been received toward the total goal of \$1.5 billion dollars for the university as a whole

Our hero, like Bunyan's, eventually wanders into the Valley of Humiliation and fights with a rude monster named Apollyon, the foul fiend who presides over that country. Apollyon is clothed with scales like a fish, which, Bunyan tells us, "are his pride." But though he is fearsome, his roars and fire-breathing can only slow Christian down, not stop him. This reference to scales is an obvious and prescient indictment of the Florida Gators-and they won't get away next time. Bunyan's Christian eventually sends old Apollyon packing. Ours will beat him in several spring sports, and there is always next year ...

Emerging from his humiliation, Christian first espies from a great distance "a most pleasant . . . country, beautified with woods, vineyards, fruits of all sorts; flowers also, with springs and fountains, very delectable to behold." Duke provided our pilgrim with glimpses of such Delectable Mountains too, with a pleasant prospect on every side, teeming woods, gardens and fountains galore. He needs only to troop across the street to find the Sarah P. Duke Gardens; and nearby is Duke Forest, whose trails have appealed to so many of you over the years, and which we have tried to preserve as one of the most fortunate of our inheritances.

Of course, the beauty of flowers, trees, and water depends on Christian's ability to appreciate them, which seems to grow over time and given a little leisure. If he were standing here beside me - I almost feel he is - he would advise you to spend some time on this busy weekend (despite the weather) renewing your acquaintances among the architecture and the flora of this lovely campus, or introducing yourself to the blue herons who linger in the gardens.

During their journey, Christian and his classmates have spent a good deal of their time in cyberspace. New instructional technologies enrich their education, in all parts of the curriculum - classics as well as chemistry, art history, no less than physics: virtual labs, virtual journeys through the world's great museums and archeological sites, data bases in every area, including all of Greek classical literature assembled on a CD-Rom, simulations of all kinds of situations relevant to a budding social scientist. E-mail flies regularly from professors to students, and being a-synchronous, has the happy feature that the students can send email at 2 or 3 am, when they are awake and studying, and the professors can respond at 6 or 7 am when the students are sound asleep. The Library is the central axis for all of this virtual learning, giving new meaning to its historic role as the heart of the university.

Our hero is also aware of the importance of technologies in other parts of the university. Our Fuqua School of Business has been a world leader in management education that combines place and cyberspace. Through our Global Executive MBA program, students chosen from four continents can share, over 18 months, a very high quality Duke business education without leaving their homes and jobs. The material is presented over the internet and the World Wide Web during successive ten-week periods, punctuated by several two-week periods where they gather with the professors and classmates in different world cities to learn from business leaders in those countries -- Salzburg, Sao Paul, Shanghai. They complete their course work during two final weeks in Durham, where they attend a basketball game in Cameron to become true Dukies, and get their MBA.

The law school is also a leader in the technology of legal education. The School of Nursing sponsors a program that reaches out to nurses in rural eastern North Carolina, where they are the essential linch-pin of health care in their impoverished areas, linking them to the world class facilities of Duke University Health System. Our magnificent, expanding, complicated health system is doing a good job of weathering the immense financial and organizational challenges that all academic health centers face these days. They continue to focus on the fruitful symbiosis among research, teaching, and patient care, for patients from throughout this region and around the world. Their motto, which they live out every day, is "Brilliant medicine, thoughtful care." This is not the same old infirmary you may more or less affectionately recall.

Speaking of technologies, if you look up *Pilgrim's Progress* on the Worldwide Web, you will find that it's a travel agency in Kathmandu specializing in Nepal and Tibet. In this spirit, Christian and his friends have taken full advantage of Duke's increasingly global character and presence. There are large numbers of international students in every graduate and professional school, and increasingly, in the undergraduate colleges as well. There are innumerable cultural fests where students share their traditions with others; and at Duke, unlike some other universities, the students actually attend each others cultural events, not just "their own." At Duke, study abroad is also common and encouraged, and it's one of our significant competitive advantages for undergraduates. There are also large numbers of visiting professors and special lecturers on campus. Just recently, for instance, the North American Studies Institute at the Sanford Institute of Public Policy welcomed the ambassadors from our two neighboring countries -- Canada and Mexico -- for a series of lectures and class discussions. Both had also hosted me on a "state trip" to these countries last year, helping to raise Duke's profile around the world; the ambassador to Canada and his wife are Duke alums, which gave a special dimension to that journey.

In the end, after all *his* journeying, Christian will have made his way to the Celestial City, where the men and women who enter at the gate are transfigured by new robes and mortarboards, and, in Bunyan's words, "All the

bells in the city rang again for joy." That, of course, would be our carillon in the Chapel tower. They shake an administrator's hand and receive their degrees at last-but here is where we must depart from our text. When *our* student finishes, we will send him back out again from the Celestial City to regenerate the world; a world that is always in the process of being recreated, from which our students come and to which our students return.

The stone of the buildings on this campus makes them as sturdy and serviceable as the education one gets within them; yet that stone does not so much confine as liberate the minds and lives it touches. The buildings themselves may be beautiful, but they are nothing compared to the spirit that inhabits them-your spirit. And the institution you have helped and continue to help build, young though it is, will be a work for the ages. On this rock we are building the future of the world. I honor the depth of your commitment, the brilliance of your achievements, the energy and potential you bring to this region, this nation, and to humankind -- and my young friend Christian salutes you all.