



President Nannerl O. Keohane's  
**Pratt Memorial Service Remarks**

November 1, 2002

I wish I could have known Ed Pratt in his trumpet-toting undergraduate days; what an excellent friend he must have been! I *do* know that the man who charmed us and moved us and who transformed this university was the same person as that rambunctious, daring, smart, funny and fun-loving musician of the 1940's. **He had never heard of Duke when the Navy told him to report here, yet once he came, this place would never be the same.**

**He pulled off a *magna cum laude* degree despite the distraction of having a dance band that played four nights a week on campus and in town, and he found time for the Freshman Advisory Council, the orchestra, the band, student musicals, and honor societies for math, engineering, intellectual achievement, and leadership. Even then Ed saw the value of service—and he *liked* it. He *liked* being where the action was, working behind the scenes to fix, tweak, build, and transform, sometimes breathtakingly.**

**At Pfizer he became known as a radical champion of long-term thinking when everyone else was focused on quick profits. Some people thought he was too radical—until history proved otherwise. Ed's style, his eagerness to imagine a better future and then invest in it without apology, characterized his relationship with Duke, too.**

**He served his alma mater for more than 50 years, and for him, friendship and generosity were their own rewards. The first University Professorship was established in his honor; the Pratt Commons was born as a permanent memorial enjoyed by hundreds of students and faculty; and the school he loved came to bear his name, and generations of students will say proudly, as they do now, that they went to Pratt; he served as a trustee for 11 years and worked on an alphabet soup of university committees, projects, and campaigns. Friend and counselor to deans, chancellors, and presidents, he preferred to keep a low profile; yet his fingerprints are everywhere you turn. He gave of himself not in order to receive thanks or praise, but out of an old-fashioned sense of conviction—the kind of conviction that animates all good deeds. He was convinced that one person could make a difference, and should. And so, of course, he did.**

There is a wonderful legend about Amphion, king of ancient Thebes, whose musical talent was so great that when he played and sang, stones rose and built themselves into a wall surrounding and protecting his city. Even though his musical career yielded to his other extraordinary talents, Ed Pratt shared that skill for building and fortifying the things he cared about with ease and grace.

He will be remembered with great fondness and deep gratitude. Duke is a better and more renowned university because of his example, his stewardship, and his gifts. The world itself is a better place because Ed Pratt is part of it.