



Duke

Duke University Centennial Celebration

The Anniversary Forum

October 28, 2025

Essential for Success

- Establish goals and objectives early
- Create an organizational structure that works
- Limit ideation phase
- Develop and stick to your budget
- Build a thread
- Make it memorable: Signature Events
- Share ownership: Events, Activities and Programs
- Inform and Engage: Historical Projects

PROJECT TIMELINE

Duke's Centennial Celebration

2020 - 2021



Centennial Celebration Report

Board of Trustees Strategic Task Force

President Price and the Board of Trustees create a Task Force led by Trustee Lisa Borders; A framework is created with guidance for Duke's Centennial Celebration

Aug - Oct
2022



Listening Tour

Centennial Celebration Executive Director meets with University leaders, Board of Trustees, Alumni, Faculty, Staff, Students, Community Members, & Peer Institutions

Sept - Dec
2022



Planning and Implementation Structure

Steering Committee and Project Implementation Teams formed; Creative Agency hired

Executive Summary

"Duke is not what it used to be, but it is not yet what it ought to be."

- The Rev. Dr. Luke A. Powery,
dean of Duke Chapel

BACKGROUND

Duke University was established in 1924 when James B. Duke, through the Indenture of Trust, designated a gift that transformed Trinity College into a comprehensive research university. In 2024, Duke University will celebrate its centennial—a historic extraordinary past, Duke's extraordinary past, communicate the impact of the present, and especially look toward the potential of Duke's future.

CHARGE

Duke's Centennial Celebration Strategic Task Force was charged with advising and providing strategic insight to the administration for the initial planning phases of the commemoration of Duke's 100th anniversary in 2024.

PROCESS

The Task Force began by reviewing Duke's previous commemorations and its recent engagement with institutional history, as well as other universities' milestone celebrations. To solicit viewpoints from a diverse group of stakeholders, members of the Task Force conducted 47 interviews with representatives of key constituencies. The Task Force also developed a list of strategic questions and formed three working groups or subcommittees focused on these questions in the categories of Past, Present, and Future.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Centennial is an enormous opportunity for Duke to articulate its **remarkable trajectory**—unparalleled in the history of higher education in America. A joyful celebration will deepen understanding of Duke's history, inspire pride in Duke's astonishing first century, and lift up Duke's **unique** identity and characteristics.
- At the same time, the celebration should be balanced with a forthright acknowledgment of **challenges** in Duke's history and periods of discrimination and exclusion. This is an opportunity for candid reflection and meaningful **reckoning**.
- The focus should be on the **people** who have built the Duke community—including the famous as well as previously overlooked or under-examined legacies.
- There should be an effort to communicate Duke's **impact, discoveries, and leadership** across the university—in research, innovation, clinical care, the arts, athletics, and more. Events should project and reflect Duke's academic service, global connections, and aspirations to excellence and institutional aspirations to serve society and address local and global challenges.
- The approach to the Centennial must be **creative** and incorporate multimedia technology.
- The Centennial should acknowledge Duke University's **deep historic connection to The Duke Endowment** and its enduring and transformational support of the university's strategic priorities.
- **Duke and Durham:** Duke's history is intertwined with Durham's. We should emphasize that the people of Durham built Duke, highlight Duke's investments in downtown Durham and imagine how Duke will engage in the Durham of the future.
- The Centennial should extend a compelling avenue for **alumni, parents, and friends** to engage more deeply with Duke.
- To create momentum for Duke's next pivotal moment to celebrate the **campaign**, Duke will use its centennial as a bold and inspiring vision for Duke's impact on the world in its second century.

Goals for the Centennial

Deepen our understanding of Duke's history

Explore Duke's remarkable trajectory with candid reflection on Duke's history and the pivotal moments that led the university to today.

Inspire pride

Focus on the people – both well-known and under-recognized – who have contributed to Duke's growth and success.

Launch Duke into its second century

Advance [Duke's Strategic Vision](#) and seek to use our momentum to propel Duke to a second century of excellence and leadership—in Durham, in the nation, and around the world.



"We will look back at Duke's history with clear eyes and celebrate the work that has brought us to this moment. At the same time, this celebration should sharpen our focus on the work still to come and renew our commitment to meet the needs of a changing world."

President Vincent E. Price

Duke Centennial Celebration Steering Committee

Charge: The Centennial Steering Committee was charged by University President **to provide strategic insight for the planning and implementation phases of all aspects of the Centennial Commemoration.**

Members Representing Key Areas of University

- Executive Director, Centennial Celebration; Chair
- Alumni and Development; Co-Chair
- Communications, Marketing and Public Affairs
- Government Relations
- Provost's Office
- Arts
- Archivist
- Institutional Equity
- Human Resources

- Student Affairs
- Athletics
- Duke University Health System
- Alumni Association
- Duke Chapel
- PhD Student
- Undergraduate Student
- Faculty Representative
- Community Affairs

Project Implementation Teams

Campus Units

- Development/Alumni
- Communications
- Signature Events
- Athletics
- Provost's Office
- Research
- Learning Innovation
- Bass Connections
- Duke Arts
- Nasher Museum
- Duke Gardens
- Duke Press
- Duke Health
- Student Affairs
- Durham & Community Affairs
- Archives and History
- Duke Chapel/Religious Life
- Duke Employees
- Duke Government Relations

Schools

- School of Medicine
- School of Nursing
- The Graduate School
- Fuqua School of Business
- Duke Law
- Nicholas School of the Environment
- Pratt School of Engineering
- Sanford School of Public Policy
- Trinity College of Arts & Sciences
- Duke Divinity School

External Partners

Duke

Confidential Request for Proposal

Identity, Web, Creative and Special Event Services for Duke University's Centennial Celebration

September 28, 2022

Duke University is pleased to invite your agency to participate in this competitive RFP. We are looking for an integrated creative agency or multiple agencies with expertise in identity development and messaging, website development, video production, and special events planning and execution. Agencies do not need to have experience and capabilities in all of the listed scopes of work in order to submit a proposal.

Company Description and Background

Duke University was established in 1924 when James B. Duke, through the Indenture of Trust, designated a gift that transformed Trinity College into a comprehensive research university. In 2024, Duke University will celebrate its centennial—a historic opportunity to celebrate Duke's extraordinary past, communicate the impact of the present, and especially look toward the potential of Duke's future.

Duke's Centennial Celebration will consist of more than a year of activities, programming and events, beginning in January 2024 and culminating in May 2025 with commencement. This celebration should engage Duke's vast spectrum of constituents including faculty, students, staff, alumni, Board of Trustees, friends of the University, and community members.

The goals of the Celebration are:

- Deepen the understanding of Duke's history
- Inspire pride in Duke University
- Engage and reengage targeted audiences/constituents
- Launch Duke University into its second century of excellence

Dec - March
2022-23



Centennial identity, themes and signature events

Work begins with Creative Agency to develop a Centennial identity, theming and key Centennial deliverables including a website and signature events

Dec - March
2022-23



Teams plan Centennial-branded activities

Duke Schools & Offices begin developing plans for variety of Centennial activities, events and programming with input from faculty, students, staff, alumni and community members

March 31
2023



Centennial identify, Master events calendar created

Work on website, materials, and merchandise using identity begins; Project Implementation Teams submit initial plans for activities, programming and events; Master calendar is created

March - Dec
2023



Centrally and in units throughout campus, planning continues

Plans solidified, Implementation begins

By Fall 2023, the Centennial website is launched, materials and merchandise are in production, planning for a January 2024 Kick-off event is well underway, and campus-wide planning for events and activities continues at a rapid pace with widespread coordination

Duke *100*
— 1924·2024 —

Duke *100*
— CENTENNIAL —

Duke
100

Duke
— 1924·2024 —
100

Duke
CENTENNIAL
100

100

Clear Line of Sight™

MARCH 2023

Duke

GOAL

Leverage Duke's 100th Anniversary as a platform to advance our next 100 years while celebrating in a distinctly Duke way our remarkable growth trajectory as a global educational and research institution

OBJECTIVES

EDUCATION

Deepen the understanding of Duke's history with all audiences

ENGAGEMENT

Engage or re-engage key stakeholders and strengthen their feelings of connections and commitment to Duke

EMOTION

Inspire pride in Duke among key stakeholders

EVOLUTION

Launch Duke into its second century. Provide the fuel to fulfill Duke's vision for the future ([Strategic Vision](#))

AUDIENCES

Students
(undergraduate and graduate/professional)

Faculty

Staff and DUHS employees

Alumni

Volunteers and Friends of Duke

Duke family

Local Durham Community Members /Patients

Faculty, staff and students in International locations
(Singapore, Kunshan)

Emeriti faculty and retired staff

Media

Parents

KEY MESSAGES

- Duke has had a remarkable trajectory, from a small college to a global institution.
- Duke has had incredible impact locally, nationally and globally spanning education, healthcare, research, athletics, arts, innovation, and service.
- Duke's story should be told by focusing on pivotal moments and people – both known and underrecognized – who have contributed to Duke's growth and success.
- This historic milestone provides the opportunity to candidly reflect on Duke's history, take stock of our progress, and celebrate Duke's promise for the future.
- Duke is well-positioned for a second century of excellence and impactful leadership.

DEFINING SUCCESS

- Positive stakeholder sentiment
- Access to celebration events, activities and programming
- Engagement and participation in Centennial activities, events, and programming across all audiences
- Increased awareness of [Duke's Strategic Vision](#)
- Increased awareness of Duke's authentic history and people who have contributed to Duke's excellence and impact

CONSIDERATIONS

- Remember the past as a means to learn and grow in our future
- Messaging should build upon the [Strategic Vision](#) and align with Centennial goals
- Use and leverage vast amount of content that already exists at Duke to help tell stories and share information to achieve stated objectives
- Acknowledge that each stakeholder will have his/her own unique relationship with Duke

Any tactics/programs must:

- Serve as a vehicle to share Duke's mission, vision and stories;
- Reflect Duke's unique brand;
- Retain focus on stated objectives from ideation through implementation;
- Provide easy access to engagement for stakeholders (e.g. live streaming, free parking, convenient times and locations).



Ideation Phase (January – March 2023)

January 11, 2023

Good morning and Happy New Year!

[Duke University's Centennial Celebration](#) is our shared opportunity to recognize the people and milestones that have had great impact on Duke University during the last 100 years.

Planning for the celebration has begun, and together we will develop a timeline of events, activities and programs that span across Calendar Year 2024!

First quarter of 2023 (January – March 31, 2023) is the **Ideation Phase** for Duke University's Centennial Celebration Planning.

This is a critical time in our Centennial planning.

During this time, Centennial project implementation teams, as well as Duke schools, offices and units can submit proposed activities, events and programs for consideration to be included in the University's Centennial master timeline.

Once the activity is approved by the Centennial Steering Committee, teams and units will have the opportunity to use the Centennial icon/logo that is being created to show alignment/inclusion in the Centennial Celebration.

[The activity proposal form](#) is now live. **We encourage groups and units to submit ideas through one of the Project Implementation teams, if possible, to ensure the ideas are not duplicative, are well-coordinated, and align with the goals of the Centennial: to deepen the understanding of Duke's history, inspire spire, and launch Duke into its second century of excellence.**

When possible, teams and units are encouraged to use existing forums, events and activities that can be branded as "Centennial" and infused with Centennial messaging. If additional funding for a proposed activity is requested, please indicate the funding request on the activity submission form. The Steering Committee and University senior leaders will review all funding requests.

Thank you for your partnership! Onward!

Please contact me (jill.boy@duke.edu) with any questions. I would be happy to meet with any Steering Committee member, team chair, full team, or group.


Sincerely,

Jill Boy, Executive Director
Duke University's Centennial Celebration

Budget

August 2022 – May 2023: Develop Centennial Celebration plan

Confirm “must haves” for a win from leadership

Create estimated costs of all line items 

Leverage existing resources (staff and funds)

“Centennialize” existing events and programs

Create estimated budget

Central Projects

Signature Events

Proposals

Administrative

May 2023: Submit proposed budget for review and approval

President’s Chief of Staff

VP for Finance

Executive Leadership

June 2023 – May 2025: Regular reports to leadership regarding finances

Visit 100.duke.edu/event-calendar
to see an ever-growing calendar of Centennial events!



Join the Celebration

In 1924, Trinity College became Duke University.
This year, we celebrate the 100 years since that
historic moment and look forward to Duke's
second century.


[VIEW CALENDAR](#)



7.28

**Forever Learning
Summer Academy**

Combining the intellectual energy of college with the camaraderie of summer camp, the Forever Learning Summer Academy (FLSA) will provide a dynamic and immersive



9.06

**Duke Dermatology
Pinnell Symposium**

The Pinnell Center Annual Symposium brings together basic scientists, translational and clinical researchers, and clinicians



9.12

**A Duke Centennial
Celebration at the
National Aquarium**

Regional Signature Centennial Event



9.27

**Centennial Founders'
Day and Homecoming
Weekend**

More details to come!

Duke Centennial Celebration Timeline

2024 - 2025

Jan - July 2024

January Kick-off Event, MLK Commemoration, Scholarly Lectures and Events, Research Symposium, Arts Performances, Athletic Events, Centennial Book Launch, Reunions, Commencement, Employee Appreciation Activities



Campus History Tour App Launched, Founders' Day Program and Concert, Homecoming, Wall Center Dedication, Presidential Panel, Community Partnership Events, Arts Performances, Faith and Spiritual Event

Aug – Nov 2024



Dec 2024 – May 2025

Innovation Events, Premiere of Centennial Documentary, Campus-wide Anniversary Celebration, May 2025 Commencement





Centennial Editorial Plan

September 2023

Duke

Execution: Led by University MarComms with partners across campus

Target Audiences: Students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends, patients, parents, community members, general public

Channels: Duke Today, Duke Daily & weekly, social media, websites, newsletters

Content types:

1. Centennial Spotlights
2. Trailblazers Series
3. Trajectories of Growth Feature Series
4. Then and Now Photos
5. On This Day in History



CENTENNIAL SPOTLIGHT

Julian Abele

Close your eyes, just for a moment, and picture Duke.

You probably imagined Duke Chapel.

It's fair to say no one person had a greater impact on the look and feel of Duke than its chief designer, Julian Francis Abele. Abele was behind not only the 210-foot tower that anchors West Campus, but iconic buildings all over Duke, including many lining the quad that now bears his name.

And yet the contributions of Abele, a Black architect during segregation, were barely known at the time and went largely unmentioned until the 1980s, when Duke students and others brought attention to his work.

Born in 1881 in Philadelphia, Abele was recruited to the architectural firm of Horace Trumbauer, where he became chief designer in 1909. He designed a home in New York City for James Buchanan Duke, who was impressed enough to hire the firm to begin planning for what would become Duke's campus.

Though it's unclear if Abele ever visited Duke, his architectural skill and imagination is manifest all over campus. He redesigned East Campus, including the creation of Baldwin Auditorium.

Cameron Indoor Stadium was his. His final design was the Allen Building, completed after his death in 1950.

A portrait of Abele was placed in the lobby of the Allen Building in 1988. And in 2016, the West Campus quad was renamed in his honor, with a marker on the quad's busiest pathway providing a constant reminder of Abele's crucial role in Duke's signature visual style.

• Centennial Spotlights

- 100 spotlights published bi-weekly beginning in January 2024
- Short articles (approximately 500 words) with complimentary image(s) and/or multi-media

Centennial Spotlights

- 100 spotlights
- 250-300 words with mixed media
- Duke figures who improved the University, society, or both
- Produced by University MarComms
- Editing by University MarComms for standardization and tone
- **Frequency: Twice per week**

Centennial Spotlights



Chantell Evans

Humans are born with all the nerve cells they will ever have, and in each of those nerve cells live about two million mitochondria – tiny power generators that keep the cell functioning properly. As mitochondria age or become dysfunctional, the cell systematically removes them and replaces them with newer models.

Neurobiologist Chantell Evans, PhD, wants to know more about this complex process. “How does the cell know how to maintain all of those mitochondria? How does it keep track of who is healthy, who’s damaged, who needs to be replaced, and how many new mitochondria need to be made?” she says.

Disruptions in the elaborate system can lead to nerve cell dysfunction and death, which contributes to neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson’s disease and Alzheimer’s disease.

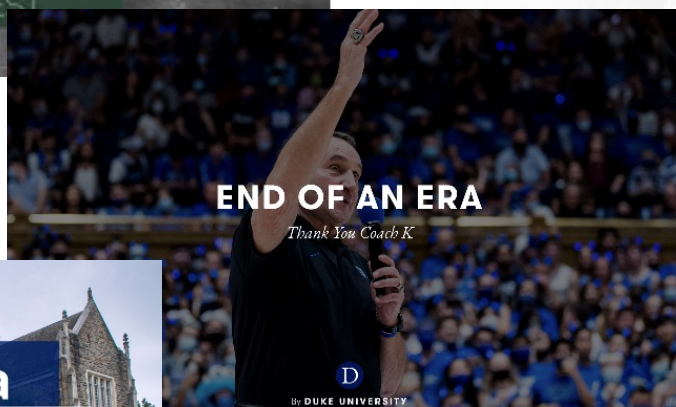
Evans joined Duke’s Department of Cell Biology in September 2021 to continue her work investigating the pathways that contribute to mitochondrial maintenance in nerve cells, in hopes that understanding the pathways could help identify the missteps associated with neurodegeneration and lead to the development of preventative therapeutics for neurodegenerative diseases.

Evans said she came to Duke because of the emphasis the university places on diversity and the opportunity she has to make a difference. “At some other institutions, there weren’t a lot of women of color in senior leadership roles,” she said. “To see a school that is valuing that and putting those people in senior roles said a lot about the institution. I also wanted to go somewhere where I felt that I was going to receive a lot of support and mentoring as a junior faculty member. I’m excited to start my lab here at Duke to future collaborations and discoveries.”
(from School of Medicine archives)

Trailblazers

Trailblazers Series

- 50 or so spotlights
- 250-300 words with mixed media
- Impactful figures at Duke who will help lead the university into its second century
- Surveying school and unit communicators to develop list
- Produced by University MarComms in partnership with unit communicators Editing by University MarComms for standardization and tone
- **Frequency: Once per week**

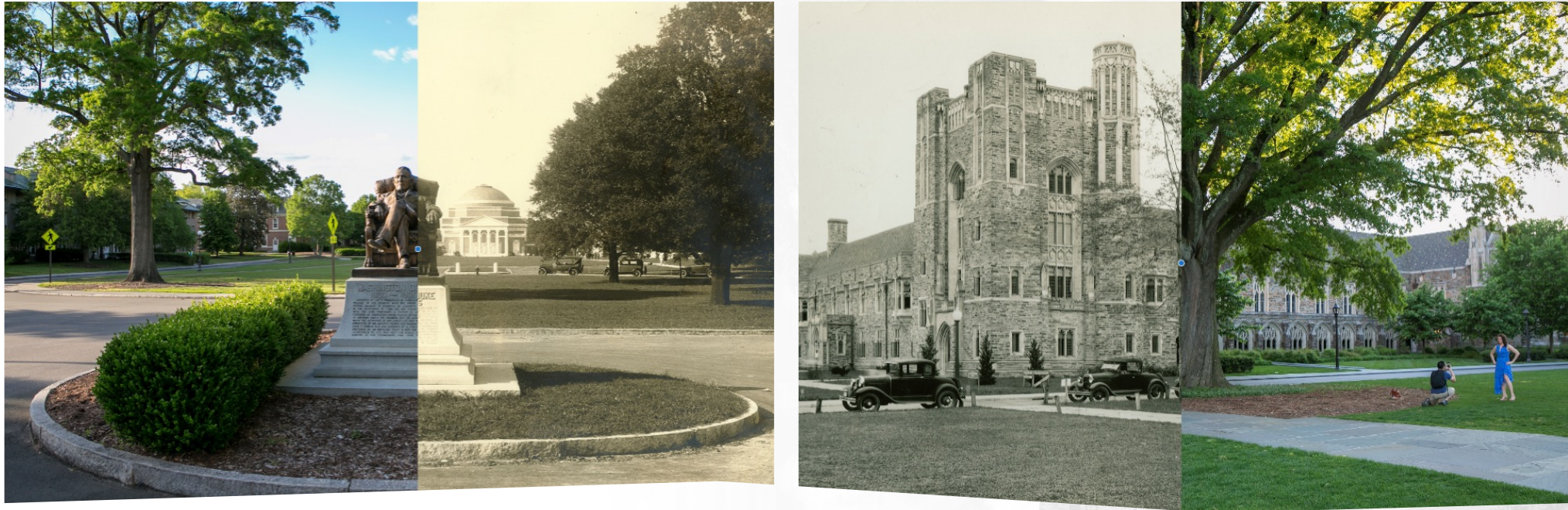


Feature Stories

- Centennial Spotlights
 - 100 spotlights published bi-weekly beginning in January 2024
 - Short articles (approximately 500 words)

Feature Stories - Trajectories of Growth

- Features a figure(s) from Duke's past and present with significant impact on Duke's history and vision for the future, bringing together new and existing content into a narrative in written or visual form when possible;
- Produced by University MarComms, unit communicators, Working@Duke and Duke Magazine writers
- Editing by University MarComms for standardization and tone
- Examples:
 - The Beginning: The Duke Family and The Duke Endowment
 - Duke's rise as a scientific and healthcare leader
 - Duke's commitment: striving toward equity
 - Duke's Vision for the Future
 - **Frequency: Once per month**



Then and Now Series

- 52 "then and now" images published weekly beginning in January 2024
- Images found, taken and curated by University MarComms
- Photo sliders juxtaposing old and new images of the same Duke scenes (buildings, spaces, etc.)
- Examples:
 - Wallace Wade Stadium
 - Hudson Hall
 - Marine Lab
- **Frequency: Once per week**

Then and Now



December 11, 1924. The signing of the Duke Indenture. (With these two pens!!)

June 5, 1928: the Duke cornerstone is set.



On This Day in History

- Photos from Duke's history, with short captions, published on the date in history they occurred
- 52 photos, published weekly beginning in January 2024
- Produced by University MarComms
- Examples:
 - June 5, 1928: West Campus cornerstone set
 - Dec 11, 1924: Signing of the Indenture
- **Frequency: Once per week or as available**

On This Day

The background of the slide is a detailed architectural drawing in blue ink on a light beige background. It features various architectural elements such as columns, arches, and structural details, with some text labels like 'DETAIL OF VIEW', 'SECTION', and 'PLAN' visible. The drawing is oriented horizontally and serves as a decorative backdrop for the text.

Key Points to Celebrate

High Engagement from Key Channels: The success of direct and email traffic demonstrates effective outreach and a committed audience.

Strong Interest in Events: Event pages like Founders' Day and the kickoff celebration resonated strongly with users, showing the campaign's success in drawing attention to these milestones.

Historical and Personal Stories: Pages like "Brenda Armstrong" and "Five Women at Duke" reflect the audience's appetite for personal narratives and historical highlights, reinforcing the importance of storytelling.

Global Reach: While U.S. users dominated, there is evidence of international interest, particularly in Germany, India, China, and Canada, hinting at the centennial's ability to attract a global audience.

Creating an Identity

Duke
CENTENNIAL
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Signature Events

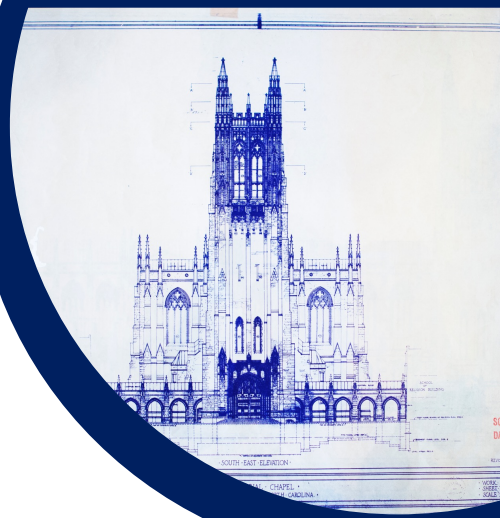


Duke
CENTENNIAL
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Historical projects

Archives Exhibit • Centennial Book •
Documentary • Campus History Tour App • Oral
History Interviews



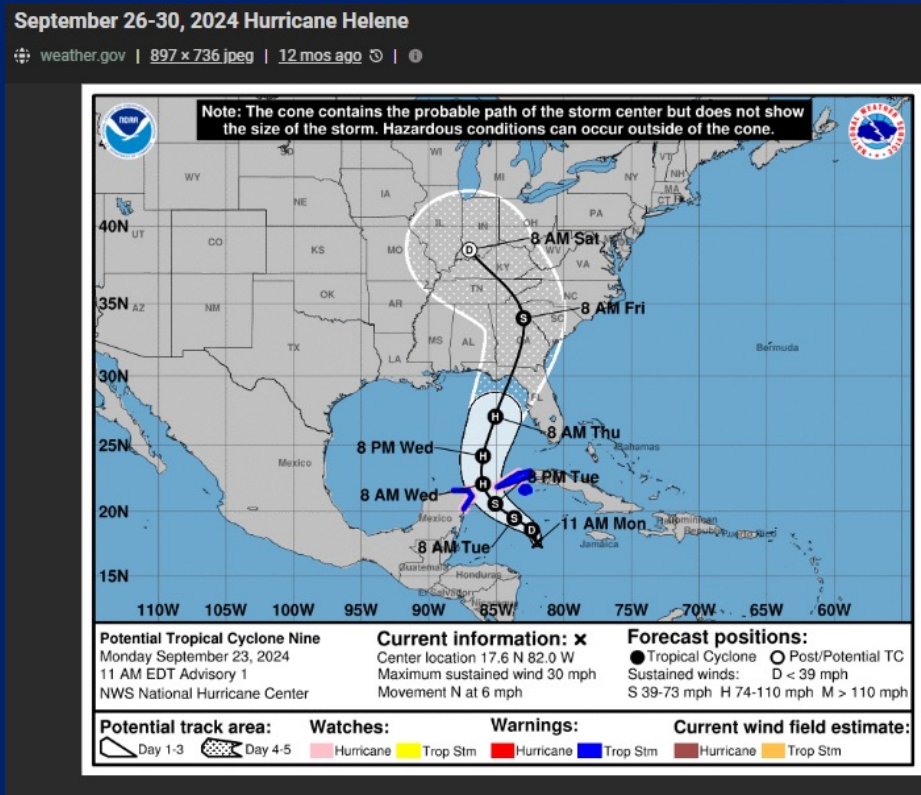
Video



One last tip . . .

Be flexible with plans; pivot when necessary

Duke



A blue-tinted photograph of a large Gothic-style building, likely a university chapel or library, with a tall central tower and multiple spires. The building is surrounded by trees and a paved area with some parked cars in the foreground.

Duke

Thank you

Jill Boy, Executive Director, Centennial Celebration
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