

# **Johnson C. Smith University History**

## **1867**

In 1867, the Rev. S.C. Alexander and the Rev. W. L. Miller saw the need to establish an institution in this section of the South. On April 7, 1867, at a meeting of the Catawba Presbytery in the old Charlotte Presbyterian Church, the movement for the school was formally inaugurated, which by charter was named The Freedmen's College of North Carolina, and these two ministers were elected as teachers.

## **1867-1876**

Mary D. Biddle of Philadelphia, Pa. who, through appeals in one of the church papers, pledged \$1,400 to the school. In appreciation of this first and generous contribution, friends requested Mrs. Biddle name the newly established school after her late husband, Major Henry Biddle. From 1867 to 1876, the school was named Biddle Memorial Institute and chartered by the state legislature.

## **1876**

Charlotte citizen Colonel W. R. Myers donated the first eight acres of land for the school. The school charter was changed by the North Carolina Legislature, and the name became Biddle University.

## **1883**

A new building was erected to serve as the main administrative building for the university. It featured recitation rooms and a 600-seat audience chamber. It is currently known as Biddle Memorial Hall.

## **1892**

The first black football game was played by Biddle University against Livingstone College in December in Salisbury, N.C. The Golden Bulls earned their first historic victory in what today is called the Commemorative Classic, an annual tradition at JCSU.

## **1919**

Biddle University became the first black college in the South to offer professional courses in education.

## **1921-1922**

The late Jane Berry Smith, of Pittsburgh, Pa., gave funds to build a theological dormitory, science hall, teachers' cottage and memorial gate. She provided a handsome endowment for the institution in memory of her late husband, Johnson C. Smith. In recognition of these gifts, the board of trustees changed the name of the institution to Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU).

## **1924**

JCSU was recognized as a four-year college by the North Carolina State Board of Education, and the university was further strengthened by a substantial provision from James B. Duke. That same year, James B. Duke authorized the establishment of the Duke Endowment, which included JCSU as one of four beneficiaries in higher education.

## **1938**

The institution attained the status of an independent college, affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, reporting to the General Assembly through the Board of Christian Education.

## **1941**

Women were admitted to the freshman class.

## **1944**

JCSU joined the United Negro College Fund as a founding member.

## **1965**

The Mary Joyce Taylor Crisp Memorial Student Union was built.

## **1967**

JCSU celebrated its 100th anniversary. During this historic centennial occasion, the institution examined its past and made innovative plans for the future.

## **1990**

The Robert L. Albright Honors College Center was built to recruit outstanding students who have the academic, social and service commitments to function as leaders and role models on campus, as well as in their communities.

## **1994**

Dr. Dorothy Cowser Yancy became the first female president of JCSU. That same year, the Service Learning Center was established as a model program in the Southern region to instill strong values of service to the community and create a well-balanced education for JCSU graduates.

## **1996**

JCSU received a \$1 million gift from Irwin Belk, a prominent Charlotte businessman. At the time, it was the largest gift from a living individual in the school's history.

## **1997**

The Technology Center was established, featuring a state-of-the-art video teleconferencing auditorium center and nine state-of-the-art labs. This placed JCSU on the leading edge of technological advancement.

## **2000**

JCSU gained national recognition when it launched the IBM Laptop Initiative, known as ThinkPad U. JCSU became one of the few colleges in the country, and the first HBCU, to provide an IBM laptop computer to every student.

## **2002**

The Duke Endowment awarded JCSU \$3.9 million. That same year, JCSU was acknowledged by *Yahoo Magazine* in its list of the “Top 50 Most Wired Small Colleges.”

## **2003**

The Irwin Belk Complex, a state-of-the-art academic and sports facility, was built.

## **2005**

The Corporate Alliance Program (CAP) was established as a relationship builder to align corporate interests with university goals and objectives.

## **2006**

The 1867 Giving Societies was established to honor the university’s most generous benefactors.

## **2008**

Dr. Ronald L. Carter becomes the 13<sup>th</sup> president of JCSU.

## **2009**

The Duke Endowment awarded JCSU \$5.7 million, the largest single gift in the school’s history, to fund two new programs: the Center for Applied Leadership and Community Development and the Metropolitan College.

That same year, the Mary Joyce Taylor Crisp Memorial Student Union was renovated and ground was broken on the JCSU Arts Factory, an innovative teaching and performance facility for students majoring in visual and performing arts.

The university began a campus improvement program with renovations to the student union and upgrades to other key areas around campus.

## **2011**

The JCSU Arts Factory opened its doors for students and the Charlotte community.

## **May 15, 2011**

Johnson C. Smith University breaks ground on Mosaic Village, a mixed-use development featuring living and retail space.

### **Oct. 12, 2011**

The Duke Endowment awards a \$35 million grant to Johnson C. Smith University to support science programs, scholarships and capital improvements on campus. It is one of the largest gifts ever given to a Historically Black College and University.

### **Oct. 13, 2011**

Johnson C. Smith University breaks ground on the renovation of the George E. Davis House, a historic landmark that will become headquarters of the Foster Village Network Center.

### **March 15, 2012**

“Passing Through Light,” a new work of public art using LED technology and located at the I-77 and West Trade Street underpass, makes its debut. The public art serves as a visual and dynamic gateway for vehicles and pedestrians as they enter and exit the city of Charlotte’s Historic West End. The artwork was created by Austrian artist Erwin Redl.

### **Sept. 4, 2012**

JCSU, in collaboration with the Congressional Black Caucus Institute, hosted "UFUTURE: A Summit for Innovative Young Thinkers." The summit attracted high-profile politicians and celebrities to JCSU as the event amplified the voice of more than 300 students from 20 regional colleges and universities. Students from across the nation submitted questions via Twitter and text messages. During the event, President Barack Obama surprised the students with a tweet, and First Lady Michelle Obama surprised them with a letter about the importance of civic engagement.

### **Sept. 23, 2012**

President Barack Obama proclaims the week of September 23, 2012, as National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week.

As JCSU moves into the future, JCSU's Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer expounds on the vision of what a 21st Century HBCU looks like.

### **Oct. 4, 2012**

JCSU's Mosaic Village opens in the historic West End as the latest sign of revitalization in the Northwest Corridor. The 25-million-dollar project features 80 apartment-style suites serving 300 student-tenants, street-front retail space and a parking garage.

### **Oct. 25, 2012**

JCSU breaks ground on the 62,000-square-foot Science Center that will house innovative programs in the College of Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Funded by a \$25 million grant from The Duke Endowment, the new center will house programs that will prepare students for emerging fields in renewable energy, medical informatics, bioinformatics, homeland security-STEM, analytics and bioinformatics, in addition to electronics, cyber security and robotics programs offered at the STEM complex on campus.