



NEWPORT RESTORATION FOUNDATION

Founded by Doris Duke

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON DORIS DUKE

Doris Duke, the only daughter of James Buchanan Duke, was born on November 22, 1912. Her father was a founder of the American Tobacco Company, the Duke Power Company and a benefactor of Duke University. When Mr. Duke died in 1925, he left his daughter an estate estimated at \$80 million; Miss Duke was 12 years old.

The media was quick to dub Doris Duke the “Million Dollar Baby” and later “The Richest Woman in the World.” Miss Duke trusted her instincts and invested her money wisely. Her estate was valued at well over a billion dollars at the time of her death in 1993.

Doris Duke married twice, first in 1935 to semi-millionaire James H.R. Cromwell. The couple had a daughter named Arden in 1940 who lived only for one day. Three years later the marriage ended in divorce. Duke married again briefly in 1947 to Porfirio Rubirosa, a diplomat from the Dominican Republic. They remained good friends after divorcing.

Miss Duke spent much of her life traveling the world, amassing countless treasures and notable collections of Islamic and Southeast Asian art. She also traveled throughout Europe building her collection of fine art and furniture. Miss Duke was a lifelong preservationist and environmentalist and much of her fortune and her time were spent restoring Colonial buildings in Newport, Rhode Island where she spent her summers. She founded the Newport Restoration Foundation in 1968 with the purpose of preserving more than 80 Colonial buildings in Newport. Duke also had a keen interest in horticulture and environmental conservation and designed elaborate greenhouse gardens at her Duke Farms home in New Jersey, which she then opened to the public.

Miss Duke was an active supporter of medical research and child welfare. She established a foundation called Independent Aid when she was just 21 years old. That organization eventually became *The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation* – an organization that still operates today and which received more than 90 percent of Miss Duke’s estate when she died. Besides medical research, *The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation* also supports the environment, the performing arts and the prevention of child abuse. Her foundation estimates that Doris Duke gave away more than \$400 million to various causes during her lifetime, often as anonymous contributions.

For more information:

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