

John W. and Anna H. Hanes Foundation

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About the Foundation

The John Wesley and Anna Hodgkin Hanes Foundation was established in 1947 by their children (Daisy Hanes Lassiter, Lucy Hanes Chatham, John Wesley Jr., James Gordon Sr., Ralph Philip, and Robert March), and their grandchildren (Hugh G. Chatham and Anne Hanes Willis). Additional contributions have been made over the years by other family members and Hanes Hosiery Mill. Initially, the foundation's mission was to improve the lives of the citizens of Forsyth County, North Carolina. In 1958, with a subsequent gift by Robert March, its scope was broadened to include all of North Carolina, while continuing to have a distinct focus on Forsyth County citizens.

The Hanes and Hodgkin families were instrumental in business and politics in North Carolina and also at national levels. John Wesley was a genius and a visionary for growth and development. He was frank, strong, honest, and true. He bought a failing tobacco plant in 1872, turned it around, and sold it to R. J. Reynolds in 1900 for \$1 million. He bought the Hodgkin tobacco plant and turned it into a men's hosiery plant, renaming it Shamrock Mills in 1901. His son, James Gordon Hanes, took the helm in 1903 at his father's death. It became Hanes Hosiery in 1914. In 1918, the company expanded its product line to include women's socks. In 1938, working with DuPont, they introduced nylon into their hosiery and became the first company to start producing pantyhose in the 1960s. Subsequent corporate actions included the spin-off of the L'eggs brand in 1972 and the sale of the company to Sara Lee in 1979.

Anna Hodgkin married John Wesley Hanes in 1879 in a brilliant and fashionable wedding in Winston-Salem with, among others, R. J. Reynolds as a groomsman. In 1903, R. J. Reynolds served as pall bearer at John Wesley's funeral. Anna survived her husband by 43 years, and reared eight children from their home at 4th and Cherry in Winston-Salem, it is said with an atmosphere of love, broad vision of service, calm purposefulness, moral values, and quiet philanthropy. Educated at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Anna's children earned seats on Wall Street and the SEC board, served as the Undersecretary of the Treasury, as an ambassador, as banking executives, and as servants of both houses of the North Carolina state government, and held numerous other positions of state and local leadership.

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