Dillard's history begins in 1869. On June 12, 1869, the American Missionary Association of the Congregational Church founded Straight University. On July 8, 1869, the Freedman's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church established Union Normal School. Straight University and Union Normal School were subsequently renamed Straight College and New Orleans University, expanded to include the secondary, collegiate, and professional levels.

Straight operated a law department from 1874 to 1886. Gilbert Academy, a secondary school, was a unit of New Orleans University. New Orleans University in 1889 opened a medical college, including a school of pharmacy and a school of nursing. The medical college was named Flint medical College and the affiliated hospital the Sarah Goodridge Hospital and Nurse training School. The medical college was discontinued in 1911, but the hospital and the nursing school were continued under the name of Flint- Goodridge Hospital.

On June 6, 1930, New Orleans University and Straight College merged to form Dillard University, which elected to follow the practices of the two parent institutions in making no distinction as to race, religion or sex in the admission of students or in the selection of faculty.

The trustees of Dillard elected to continue as a part of the university the work of the hospital but not that of Gilbert Academy. The latter continued operation as a separate institution under the sponsorship of the Board of Education of the Methodist Church until 1949. The university operated Flint-Goodridge Hospital of Dillard University from 1952 until 1983.

In September 1935, on a new site with a new physical plant, Dillard University began instruction. The University was named in honor of James Hardy Dillard, whose distinguished service in the education of African Americans in the South forms an important chapter in the history of American education.

Since 1869, Dillard University has been committed to providing students with a quality four-year liberal arts education. Dillard is a fully accredited private, historically black university. In 2010, U.S. News & World Report ranked Dillard among the nation’s Top 10 HBCUs, based on comprehensive undergraduate studies. Dillard also was awarded a Top 10 Ranking in 2010 for liberal arts schools in the social mobility category by Washington Monthly.

The cornerstone of New Orleans’s Gentilly Community, the University sits on a beautiful and serene 55-acre campus, replete with signature live oak trees and a mixture of historic buildings and modern facilities.

Dillard Highlights:
- In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Dillard completely restored and refurbished 32 campus buildings and three off-campus residential complexes, and built two new LEED® registered (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) buildings: the Professional Schools and Sciences Building, and the Student Union and Health & Wellness Center.
- In 2010, Dillard entered a partnership with the New Orleans Recovery School District for a new teacher education program that may revolutionize teacher education in New Orleans and, perhaps, serve as a model for programs across the country.
- Dillard’s physics program has acquired a $1.8 million pulse laser system that allows students to perform graduate level research.
- Dillard’s highly acclaimed nursing program was the first of its kind in Louisiana.
- Dillard offers 21 academic majors across seven departments and schools.
- Dillard’s student-faculty ratio is 14 to 1.
- Dillard University boasts one of the few Student Success system that allows students to perform graduate level research.
- Dillard’s history begins in 1869. On June 12, 1869, the American Missionary Association of the Congregational Church founded Straight University.
Dillard’s commencement exercises take place on the Rosa Freeman Keller Avenue of the Oaks, named in honor of Ms. Keller, who served on the board of trustees for 40 years. The ceremonial walk down the Avenue of the Oaks is a longstanding tradition at Dillard University.

Built in 1952 and named for Edgar Stern, a prominent New Orleans philanthropist and former chairman of Dillard’s board of trustees. Stern Hall houses the faculty of the Biology Department, along with several laboratories for biology and physics.

This $15 million facility, opened in 2010, covers 55,000 square feet and houses a student health clinic. It also features a bowling alley, movie theater, indoor track, and workout facility. The Office of Health and Wellness is also located in the Student Union, it provides an outpatient clinic, a radio station, classrooms, seminar rooms and a conference center.

Traditional being the hub for student life, Kearny Hall houses the dining hall, Grill 360, and the University Post Office.

Camphor Hall was named in honor of Alexander Priestly Camphor on May 18, 1947, College President and Missionary whose life of consecration helped youth in America and Africa. Many of our new student women reside here.

Dent Hall was named for the first American explorer to reach the North Pole, Matthew Henson. Henson Hall houses the university bookstore and provides a convenient location for students to access course materials.

Named for Julius Rosenwald, the oldest building on campus, Rosenwald was the main academic building and library when it was built in the 1934. It is now the main administrative building housing the Division of Academic Affairs; Recruitment, Admissions and Programming; Business and Finance; Financial Aid and Scholarships; Records and Registration; Institutional Advancement; and the Office of the President.

Named for the first American explorer to reach the North Pole, Matthew Henson, Henson Hall houses the university bookstore and provides a convenient location for students to access course materials.