

Citation for Joan Benoit Samuelson, May 2022
Presented by Sarah F. McMahon, Associate Professor of History

Today we honor your achievements as Bowdoin's most renowned athlete and among the most decorated runners in the world. You began running in 1972, the year Title IX was passed, and the first year of Nike shoes. In 1979, you won the Boston Marathon and in 1983 you set an eleven-year course record. In 1984, you won the gold medal in the first women's Olympic marathon, held in Los Angeles. You have continued to run, winning your age groups in the 2013 and 2019 Boston marathons. And you have been awarded memberships in eight Maine, national, and international Halls of Fame.

You have channeled the same skills, dedication, and drive that power your running to volunteer service in Maine. For more than four decades, you have encouraged and inspired young women runners to set their sights high. In 1997, you founded, and you continue to chair, the TD Beach to Beacon 10K Road Race in Cape Elizabeth, which brings elite runners from around the world to compete in Maine, while also celebrating Maine runners. The Race also has received awards for its environmentally sustainable operation, and each year it supports a different Maine charity through a donation from the TD Charitable Foundation. And you have volunteered your service to councils, associations, and foundations that focus on natural resources, Casco Bay and the Gulf of Maine, illness, physical fitness and health, accessibility, education, and women.

Your family connections to Bowdoin cross three generations, and your commitment to the College is exemplary. You were elected to Bowdoin's Board of Overseers in 1995, becoming a trustee in 1996, and you have continued to serve to this day. In 1985, you were awarded the Bowdoin Prize, the College's highest honor. In 2002, you were a member of the inaugural class of the Bowdoin Athletic Hall of Honor. In 2005, Bowdoin's Magee Track was upgraded through a gift from Nike and rededicated in your honor. This year, as we celebrate fifty years of women at Bowdoin, we are pleased to honor you once again.

President Rose, on behalf of the College, I am honored to present Joan Benoit Samuelson for the degree of doctor of humane letters, *honoris causa*.

Sarah F. McMahon, Associate Professor of History
Bowdoin College Commencement, 2022