

BOWDOIN COLLEGE
COMMENCEMENT 1997

DR. JAMES M. MCPHERSON, George Henry Davis Professor of History at Princeton University, Pulitzer Prize winning author, expert on the history of the United States in the nineteenth century:

You have contributed to our understanding of the American Civil War more than any other living scholar. You have written nearly five dozen essays, and more than a dozen books, including *Battle Cry of Freedom*, which won the Pulitzer and other prizes in 1988. Your scholarship has explored the history of abolitionism, the African-American experience, and the Civil War and those who risked their lives in it. You have enhanced immeasurably our struggle to come to grips with our most turbulent and defining years. In the best tradition of the public historian, you have subjected questions of central national interest to sophisticated analysis, exposing the crucial social forces underlying what you have called the Civil War's "veneer of romance and myth."

Many in this audience recall your participation at Bowdoin's bicentennial celebration in 1993. Then, you helped us interpret our rich history of political and social activism. You have thus become a part of the Bowdoin tradition. Your name complements well an impressive list of Bowdoin community members who have championed the rights of African Americans: John Brown Russwurm, Benjamin S. Bosemon, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Oliver Otis Howard, James G. Blaine, William Pitt Fessenden, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Professor McPherson, you beckon us continually to confront the great conflicts of our past so that we might meet the many challenges of our present. You do so in a manner consistent with the principles upon which institutions such as Bowdoin were founded: those of courageous, forthright, honest and disciplined investigation.

President Edwards, it is thus my great honor and privilege to present to you **DR. JAMES M. MCPHERSON** for the degree of **DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS**, *honoris causa*.

Presented by Professor Patrick Rael