

BOWDOIN COLLEGE
COMMENCEMENT 1995

Graduates, guests, members of the college community. You can all read in the newspaper or press releases at least the high points of **JEAN BYERS SAMPSON'S** accomplishments: among other things, she is the author of a study of the Negro (as was the style of the times) soldier in World War 11, done for the NAACP in 1947, and she was a founder of the Maine branch of the NAACP. There is long time service in various aspects of education, including on the Board and Chairman of the Board of the University of Maine and Overseer and Trustee of Bowdoin College. She has been executive secretary of the Maine Civil Liberties Union and now is a mediator in the Maine Courts. I want to give a more personal glimpse of Jean Sampson, because we have known each other for years, in various venues. Many years ago, she and her husband Dick were cruising with us on Penobscot Bay. We were making our way slowly -- very slowly -- toward Rockport Harbor. A weak southwesterly was pushing us northward toward Rockport against a south flowing ebb tide. Jean sat on the stern deck, fishing, patiently fishing as we glided along. Every once in a while she would get a strike, and at long intervals, a tinker mackerel. By the time we reached Rockport, we had enough for a fish dinner on board.

Since then, I have been at many meetings where Jean has been present. She sits quietly, saying little. Then, after a while, if there seems to be no resolution, or there are unbridgeable gaps between factions, she will quietly make a remark, or maybe just ask a question. All at once, we see the problem in a new way. Why of course, that's the way to go, or that's the resolution. I usually sit at these meetings thinking "what does Jean think?" -- sure that that will help me with my own thinking. Sometimes I've become a bit impatient with her patience. Why doesn't she speak up more? Once in a while I've even suggested that to her. But now I realize, Jean, that this silence, this patience, this listening is a further measure of your wisdom.

President Edwards, I am honored to present to you **JEAN BYERS SAMPSON** for the degree, **DOCTOR OF LAWS**, *honoris causa*.

Presented by Professor Daniel Levine