Faculty Profile: Margaret Johnson
Professor Margaret Johnson is a woman of many talents and interests. A faculty member since 1976, Professor Johnson's expertise is in child development. Over the years she has taught experimental child psychology, personality, abnormal psychology and is currently exploring the emerging field of evolutionary psychology, which involves the study of how such things as courtship behavior, gender differences and personal characteristics are influenced by the evolutionary process rather than just through environmental stimuli.

But Professor Johnson's academic interests do not stop with her professional interest in child development. She is one of the College's instructors in the Freshman Seminar. Designed as a way of helping incoming students adjust to college life, the Freshman Seminar has grown in popularity as students look for ways of better understanding themselves and the world they live in. Professor Johnson is excited about her participation in the Freshman Seminar. She has seen students become more focused on college life, form better decision-making skills and have a better handle on career opportunities.

But while she is deeply committed to her teaching and her involvement with the Freshman Seminar, her love of music continues to place new demands on her time and energy. As Professor Johnson says with a ready smile, "music is my first love."

Eventually touring Europe with the chorus and performing on two highly-acclaimed CDs. She also participated in recital series of Romantic and Baroque composers such as Debussy and Schuman. Also because of her high soprano voice, she was able to experiment with the chamber works of composers such as Arvo Paert and Anton Webern. Professor Johnson is especially fond of Webern's music which is noted for its complex atonal style. She has faced up to the challenges of Webern's music and finds singing his works "amazing experiences."

Besides the commitment to Emmanuel Church, Professor Johnson is also associated with a Brookline-based choral group, Jubal's Lyre. Its director, Norman Janis, takes biblical verses (primarily Psalms) and creates programs consisting of works of composers from medieval to modern times. Offering three concerts a year, Jubal's Lyre has appeared live on WGBH's "Performance" series.

Because of the joy that music brings to her, Professor Johnson is currently planning solo recitals both at Emmanuel Church and at Bridgewater. Before joining Emmanuel Church and coming to Bridgewater, Professor Johnson performed as a soloist throughout the Boston area, including recitals at Harvard. Professor Johnson hopes to be able to make a solo recording of Webern's work, which to date has had limited availability.

Since Professor Johnson is pulled in so many different directions she is looking forward to her sabbatical in Spring of 1997. During that sabbatical she will be working with noted Cambridge film maker Lisa McElaney. Professor Johnson will advise McElaney on the production of a series of films on maternal and child health care issues. Professor Johnson will provide the project with her professional insights on how parents can better help their children through difficult emotional and physical problems.

Like many of her colleagues at Bridgewater, Professor Johnson believes firmly that she has an obligation to join her professional expertise and talents with the world outside of Bridgewater. In Professor Johnson's case her music and her work in film production are just one more example of how Bridgewater faculty are reaching an ever widening audience.