

**JEAN A. DOWDALL**  
**FIFTH PRESIDENT OF SIMMONS COLLEGE**  
**1993-1995**

Jean A. Dowdall, a distinguished educator, social scientist, and administrator, was the first woman President of Simmons College. A native of New York City, Dowdall is a 1963 Phi Beta Kappa, *magna cum laude* graduate of Brown University. She received her M.A. in Anthropology from the University of Rochester, where she studied as a Woodrow Wilson Fellow; she received her Ph.D. in sociology from Brown in 1972.

Dowdall began her academic career in 1972 as Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology at Indiana University in Bloomington. The following year, she began a nine-year tenure as Assistant and then Associate Professor of Sociology at Buffalo State College, focusing her teaching and research on family, sex roles, and ethnicity.

After completing an American Council on Education fellowship in academic administration at the University of California at Los Angeles in 1979, Dowdall embarked on an administrative career that took her back to Buffalo State as Executive Assistant to College President Bruce Johnstone. In 1982, she became Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and Professor of Sociology at West Chester University.

Prior to her arrival at Simmons, Dowdall served for seven years as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College at Beaver College in Glendale, Pennsylvania. In this role, she provided leadership for all academic departments, academic support programs, and student affairs.

As an administrator, Dowdall participated in developing major grants for market research on enrollment, transfer programs for community college students, and programs incorporating community service and experiential learning into the curriculum. She also assisted with alumnae/i development for West Chester University and Beaver College across the United States and in Southeast Asia.

Dowdall was a past president and former singer in the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia. Her husband, Dr. George Dowdall, is Professor of Sociology at St. John's University in Philadelphia.

Compiled by Peter Carini, The Simmons College Archives, 1995.