



A publication for alumni and friends of MJC, MCC and SCF

## Faculty Hall of Fame

### Dr. Charles Johnson



Music is a strong part of the tradition and culture of State College of Florida. Much of the success of the College's music program traces its roots back to Dr. Charles Johnson and the passion and dedication he embodied. He came to Manatee Junior College (MJC) in August 1960 as professor of music and director of instrumental music. He served as head of the department of art and music from 1961 to 1970.

"My first memory of the music department was that it was in the maintenance building. We didn't have our own building," reflects Dr. Johnson. It took a little while to develop a band. At first it was a community wind band; then more college students joined. "The College band grew to the point that we could take a tour each year."

Dr. Johnson also created and directed a Wind Arts Ensemble from 1970-85. "It was very elite. We did four or five concerts each year," he recalls. "The community seemed to take a big interest in that. We played some really challenging music, and that helped us develop some excellent members."

The greater Tampa Bay area enjoys many musical opportunities—orchestras, bands, opera and other performing arts. Dr. Johnson played in the St. Pete Philharmonic, Florida West Coast Symphony (now Sarasota Orchestra) and Tampa Philharmonic (now Florida Orchestra). Additionally, in 1971-73 he served as the president of the Florida State Music Teachers Association.

Asked what stands out in his College experience, he points to his activity in the campus chaplaincy program, which was supported by 12 local churches. Dr. Johnson was a leader in bringing the first chaplain to campus in 1970. "I really thought that was a great program."

Although he retired in 1989, he's very supportive of the College and its future. He admires the faculty for their attention to the students. "Professors make their living teaching and staying up on their field. I think often the students get more intense instruction at a community college than they do at some universities," he said. "I elected to send my son to MCC. He found it really an asset. And when he went on to FSU, he competed very well and earned his Ph. D. in music."

Some of Dr. Johnson's former students have gone on to distinguished careers as well. One stand-out is Dr. Charles Turon '74 who played tuba in the band. Turon, also an accomplished pianist, is now on the music faculty at SCF. "It's rewarding to hear from my former students."

