

MARGARET WALKER

Born July 7, 1915, in Birmingham, Alabama, Margaret Abigail Walker grew up in a sophisticated Black family in New Orleans. After attending Northwestern University, she joined the WPA in Depression-era Chicago, where she met some of the day's great writers. She received an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Iowa. Her seminal volume of poetry, *For My People*, won the 1942 Yale Prize. In 1949 Walker began a thirty-year teaching career at Jackson State College. After decades of research, she published her 1966 novel *Jubilee* that ushered in a genre of modern slave narratives. At the forefront of the Black Studies and Black Arts Movements, in 1968 she founded an institute at JSU to preserve and interpret Black history and culture, which was later named in her honor. Describing her life, Walker celebrated "being female, black, and free." She died in 1998.

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