

HIGHLIGHTING POETRY/SPOKEN WORD, VISUAL ARTS,  
ESSAY WRITING AND THE PERFORMING ARTS

12th Annual  
**Creative**  
**Arts**  
FESTIVAL

**APRIL 13 & 14, 2018**

 @MargaretWalkerCenter

 @MwalkerCenter



This project is supported in part by funding from the Mississippi Arts Commission, a state agency,  
and in part, from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

# 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Creative Arts Festival

## *The Margaret Walker Center at 50*

### History

A 2005 trip to the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis generated discussion about a possible conference. Dr. Janice Neal-Vincent (founder) and students in her Analysis of Communication class examined artifacts that depicted the historical perspective of the civil rights movement. Upon returning to campus, students were given ten questions to research based upon theories of communication. These questions sparked attention from faculty and students across campus, thereby giving rise to the *First Annual Spoken Word Creative Fest/Conference*. Two high schools, Natchez and Piney Woods Country Life School, competed with original orations, poetry, and storytelling. Dr. Charles C. Chiplin was the first artist-in-residence who shared his book *Roads from the Bottom* and original poetry.

Since then, the conference has grown with national scholars, artists, and activists, including Haki Madhubuti, Jerry Ward, Amiri Baraka, C. Liegh McInnis, Charlie Braxton, Sonia Sanchez, Tonea Stewart, Jesmyn Ward, Leonard Pitts, Chuck D, Nikky Finney, Joan Trumpauer Mulholland, and, this year, Frank X Walker. The current festival continues a legacy of thoughtful, creative, and inspiring keynotes, specifically providing space and opportunity for the scholarship of budding scholars and artists, especially with regard to the black experience across the African Diaspora.

In their original writings, research papers, performances, and visual art forms, our students, students in surrounding areas, and like-minded scholars and activists have examined their personal convictions about civil rights, human rights, and the human condition. Their issue-oriented materials represent Maya Angelou's famous words: "For Africa to me...is more than a glamorous fact. It is a historical truth. No man can know where he is going unless he knows exactly where he has been and exactly how he arrived at his present place."



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MARGARET WALKER CENTER

April 13, 2018

Dear friends:

On behalf of the Margaret Walker Center, its staff, and Advisory Board, I am pleased to welcome you to Jackson State University for the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Creative Arts Festival, *The Margaret Walker Center at 50*.

Dr. Margaret Walker Alexander touched innumerable lives through her work as an outstanding author, prolific researcher, and dedicated teacher at JSU, and she stood at the forefront of a nascent Black Studies movement, leading her to found the Institute for the Study of the History, Life, and Culture of Black People in 1968. This year's Creative Arts Festival recognizes the vision of our founder 50 years ago and lifts up young scholars and artists in the same manner as Dr. Alexander did throughout her career.

Now named in her honor, the Margaret Walker Center serves as both a special collections archive and museum committed to the preservation, interpretation, and dissemination of African American history and culture. Located in historic Ayer Hall at JSU, the Center is open to the public and offers dozens of programs to the community during the year free of charge, including this festival.

Dr. Alexander hosted regular conferences like this one on the JSU campus. The participants who came simply because she asked included the likes of Ruby Dee, James Baldwin, Langston Hughes, Sonia Sanchez, Nikki Giovanni, Alex Haley, St. Clair Drake, and Ossie Davis. That is the cultural inheritance of the Margaret Walker Center, and this event and your presence reflect our mutual commitment to that artistic and academic legacy.

Thanks for all that you do to make Margaret Walker's vision a reality.

With best wishes for a great conference,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads 'Robert Luckett'.

Robert Luckett, PhD  
Director

## **Dr. Margaret Walker Alexander**



**1915-1998**

As a professor of English at Jackson State University in 1968, Margaret Walker Alexander founded the Institute for the Study of the History, Life, and Culture of Black People. Already an accomplished author, she stood at the forefront of a nascent Black Studies movement, but the Institute also reflected her immersion in 20<sup>th</sup> Century African-American history and culture. During her lifetime, Dr. Alexander had the unique opportunity both to be mentored by the likes of W.E.B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, and Richard Wright and to be a mentor to writers such as James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, and Maya Angelou.

Born in Birmingham, Alabama, on July 7, 1915, Margaret Walker was reading and writing by the time she was five. When her family settled in New Orleans in 1925, her writing flourished after meeting Langston Hughes, who encouraged her to leave the South to complete her education. Graduating from Northwestern University, her father's alma mater, in 1935, Walker stayed in Chicago to work with the Federal Writers' Project. There, she developed a close friendship with Richard Wright and joined his Southside Writers Group.

In 1937, Walker wrote her seminal poem, "For My People," for which she became the first black woman to receive the Yale University Younger Poets Award. By 1949, Walker and her husband, Firnist Alexander, had moved their three children to Mississippi, so she could join the English Department at Jackson State. While at JSU, she completed her doctoral dissertation, a neo-slave narrative inspired by the memories of her maternal grandmother, Elvira Ware Dozier. Published in 1966, *Jubilee* represented thirty years of research and reflection and has never since been out of print.

Margaret Walker Alexander's lasting achievement at JSU was the Institute for the Study of the History, Life, and Culture of Black People. As director of the Institute, she organized several conferences that were the first of their kind, including the 1971 National Evaluative Conference on Black Studies and the 1973 Phyllis Wheatley Poetry Festival.

After thirty years of teaching, Dr. Alexander retired as Professor Emerita and donated her literary and administrative papers to the Institute that she had founded and that was subsequently named in her honor. The Margaret Walker Papers at JSU constitute one of the single largest collections of a modern black, female writer anywhere in the world. The Walker Center houses approximately 40 significant manuscript collections such as the papers of former U.S. Secretary of Education, Roderick Paige, and a large oral history repository that includes more than 2,000 interviews.



# Frank X Walker

## Keynote Address

12:00 p.m., Saturday, April 13  
JSU Student Center Ballroom



**APRIL 13 & 14, 2018**

Jackson State  
**UNIVERSITY**  
STUDENT CENTER

Keynote Speaker  
**FRANK X  
WALKER**

     
[www.jsu.edu/margaretwalkercenter](http://www.jsu.edu/margaretwalkercenter)

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Former Kentucky Poet Laureate, **Frank X Walker** is a Professor in the department of English and the African American and Africana Studies Program at the University of Kentucky and the founding editor of *Pluck! The Journal of Affrilachian Arts & Culture*. A Cave Canem Fellow and co-founder of the Affrilachian Poets, he is the author of eight collections of poetry, including *Turn Me Loose: The Unghosting of Medgar Evers*, winner of the 2014 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Poetry, and *Buffalo Dance: The Journey of York*, winner of the Lillian Smith Book Award, as well as two collections: *The Affrilachian Sonnets* and *About Flight*.

He has lectured, conducted workshops, and read poetry at over 400 national conferences, arts centers, and universities across the globe, including places like Derry, Northern Ireland; Santiago, Cuba; Shanghai and Beijing, China; Mainz, Germany; Toronto, Canada; and New York's Lincoln Center, the University of California at Berkeley, Notre Dame, and Appalachian State University.

Voted one of the most creative professors in the South, he is the originator of the word "Affrilachia" and is dedicated to deconstructing and forcing a new definition of what it means to be Appalachian. The Lannan Poetry Fellowship Award recipient has degrees, including honorary doctorates, from the University of Kentucky, Spalding University, and Transylvania University.

# 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Creative Arts Festival

## *The Margaret Walker Center at 50*

### Schedule of Events

#### Friday, April 13

2:00 p.m. to    The Margaret Walker Center at 50  
3:50 p.m.       Opening Plenary  
                    Frank X Walker, Jerry Ward, Charlie Braxton, and RaShell Smith-Spears  
                    Shanna Smith, moderator  
                    JSU Student Center Theater

4:00 p.m. to    *A Place for All People*  
6:00 p.m.       Exhibition and Reception  
                    Sponsored by Phi Alpha Theta and the Mississippi Humanities Council  
                    Ayer Hall

#### Saturday, April 14

8:30 a.m. to    Continental breakfast: Check-in/Registration  
9:00 a.m.       JSU Student Center, First Floor

9:00 a.m. to    Concurrent Sessions I  
10:15 a.m.       JSU Student Center Theater and Rooms 3210, 3241, 3250

10:30 a.m. to    Concurrent Sessions II  
11:45 a.m.       JSU Student Center Theater and Rooms 3210, 3241, 3250 and Ayer Hall

12:00 p.m. to    Frank X Walker, Co-Founder, Affrilachian Poets  
1:15 p.m.       Luncheon and Keynote Address  
                    JSU Student Center Ballroom B

1:30 p.m. to    Concurrent Sessions III  
2:45 p.m.       JSU Student Center Theater and Rooms 3210, 3241, 3250

3:00 p.m. to    MADDRA Performance Troupe  
4:00 p.m.       Closing Address: Charlie Braxton, Poet and Author, *Embers among the Ashes*  
                    Ian Foster, moderator  
                    Awards Program  
                    Phi Alpha Theta Award  
                    \$1,000 Margaret Walker Award  
                    JSU Student Center Theater



## Concurrent Sessions Saturday, April 13, 2018

**9:00-10:15 a.m.**

**JSU Student Center Room 3210**

**Panel 1: Poetry**

*Trauma, Trials, and Travails: The Work & Impact of Poetry*  
Jerrica Fleming, Northwest Rankin High School

*The Truth*  
Princess Hilton, Jackson State University

*Looking for Him*

*The F Word*

**Moderator:** helen j. crump, Jackson State University

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**9:00-10:15 a.m.**

**JSU Student Center Room 3241**

**Panel 2: Written**

Phi Alpha Theta

*Witchy Women: Women and their Relationship with the Occult in Colonial New England*  
Laura Davis, Mississippi College

*The Silent Killer*  
Chastity Quick, Jackson State University

**Moderator:** Mark Bernhardt, Jackson State University

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**9:00-10:15 a.m.**

**JSU Student Center Room 3250**

**Panel 3: Written**

*False God and Religion: A Comparison between the God of the Enslaved and Those Who Enslaved Them*  
Asha McDowell, Jackson State University

*Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired: The Legacy of Stokely Carmichael*  
Quvorris Harris, Jackson State University

*Media vs. Truth: A Deeper Look into the Emmett Till Story*  
Sasha Goodlett, Jackson State University

**Moderator:** Laura Miller, Jackson State University



**9:00-10:15 a.m.**  
**Panel 4: Written**

**JSU Student Center Theater**

*(Mmanwu) Masquerades Noire/Black Masks*  
Kaelyn Conley, Jackson State University

*Adultery*                      *That Summer*  
Marietta Kosma, Jackson State University

*The Talk and Its Mountains*  
Bethani England, Jackson State University

*The Fine Art of Appreciation in Southern Black America*  
Pinkie Lee Davis, Jackson State University

**Moderator:** Kathy Pitts, Jackson State University

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**10:30-11:45 a.m.**  
**Panel 5: Poetry**

**JSU Student Center Theater**

Inspired Writing: Telling Our Stories through Individual Poetry

*Selected Poems*  
Lauren Veal, Jackson State University

*An Ancient Gem*                      *From a Diamond in the Rough*  
Tiffanie Herron, Jackson State University

*Less/no. 53 Love*                      *Letter to Leto*  
*Eve's Apology*                      *Spider's Bite*  
Samuel Owens, Jackson State University

*Song of Myself*                      *Legacy*  
Kidrica Wilson, Jackson State University

**Moderator:** Nettie Ravick, Jackson State University

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**10:30-11:45 a.m.**  
**Panel 6: Poetry**

**JSU Student Center Room 3210**

“The Struggle Staggers Us”: Compassion in the Face of Polarization

*With Pain beneath Our Fingernails*    *My Ancestors Were Strong, I Know*    *Home*    *Family Cookout*  
Jasmine DeBerry, Allen University

*For My People, 2018*                      *In My Childhood*                      *Southern Blues*                      *School*  
Maurisha James, Allen University

**Moderator:** Fayaz Kabani, Allen University

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**10:30-11:45 a.m.**  
**Panel 7: Visual Art**

**Ayer Hall**

*Baptism*  
Ahmarey Stimley, Jackson State University

*Kill Them with Kindness*                      *Love and Effort*                      *Superman*                      *Muhammed Ali*  
Ricardo Jamison, Jackson State University    Sharidyn Barnes, Jackson State University

**Moderator:** Jimmy Mumford, Jackson State University



**10:30-11:45 a.m.**

**JSU Student Center Room 3241**

**Panel 8:** Written

Phi Alpha Theta

*The 1875 US Supreme Court Case Chy Lung v. Freeman, and*

*How That Proceeding Affects Homeland Security's Immigration Laws Today*

Samantha Ervin, Mississippi College

*A Dangerous Game: Why the 1963 Mississippi State Basketball Team Broke the Unwritten Law*

Will Brown, Millsaps College

*Legislating Sexuality: How Mississippi Slaveholders Expressed Total Control over Slaves from 1817-1865*

Sarah Grantham, Mississippi College

**Moderator:** Christian Pinnen, Mississippi College

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**10:30-11:45 a.m.**

**JSU Student Center Room 3250**

**Panel 9:** Written

Sexuality and Small-Town Columbus, Mississippi

*History of Parietals at the Mississippi University for Women*

Alexandria Davis, Mississippi University for Women

*Charles Henri Ford and the First Gay Novel*

Toby Hartleroad, Mississippi University for Women

*Wedding of the Classes*

Elane Westfaul, Mississippi University for Women

**Moderator:** Erin Kempker, Mississippi University for Women

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**1:30-2:45 p.m.**

**JSU Student Center Room 3210**

**Panel 10:** Spoken Word/Poetry

*Sun-Rise*

Jess Iman James, Jackson State University

*Don't Pull the Trigger: The Face of Police Brutality*

Cynthia Jones, Tougaloo College

*Black Bodies of War and Fairytales*

Byrony A. Murphy, Alcorn State University

*Free Spirit*

S.E. Yakubu, Jackson State University

**Moderator:** Naykishia Head, Jackson State University

**1:30-2:45 p.m.**  
**Panel 11: Prose/Poetry**

**JSU Student Center Room 3241**

*The Black Experience in America Is Unique—It Has No Real Parallel*

*Constraints of the African American Woman*  
Destiney Sharkey, Mississippi Valley State University

*Black Divergence*  
Devein Treadway, Mississippi Valley State University

*Admiration, Disdain, and Shades of Grey*  
Jai Cosey, Mississippi Valley State University

**Moderator:** Shanell Bailey, Mississippi Valley State University

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**1:30-2:45 p.m.**  
**Panel 12: Written**

**JSU Student Center Room 3250**

Re-evaluating the Vietnam War's Impact on the American Experience

*Faked It until They Made It: How the Media Silenced Vietnam Veterans*  
Cody Westbrook, Mississippi University for Women

*Women's Strike for Peace: The Evolution of Feminine Identity via the Vietnam Antiwar Movement*  
Ezra McKee, Mississippi University for Women

*The Influential Nature of Eisenhower: The Kennedy Administration in Southeast Asia*  
Lauren Harmon, Mississippi University for Women

**Moderator:** Thomas G. Velek, Mississippi University for Women

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**1:30-2:45 p.m.**  
**Panel 13: Written**

**JSU Student Center Theater**

*Black Americana: The Southern Black American Experience through the Looking Glass*  
Raquel Peters, Jackson State University

*Am I My Brother's Keeper?*  
Clay Bingham Morris, St. Andrew's Episcopal School

*What God Has for You Is for You*  
Ashley Grant, Jackson State University

**Moderator:** Kathi Griffin, Jackson State University

**[www.jsums.edu/margaretwalkercenter](http://www.jsums.edu/margaretwalkercenter)**

**Hours:** Monday – Friday, 8:00 am. – 5:00 p.m.



Become a fan of the Margaret Walker Center on Facebook!

Follow us on Twitter @MWalkerCenter!



## **Margaret Walker Center**

### **Mission, Vision, and Goals**

Both an archive and museum at Jackson State University, the Margaret Walker Center is dedicated to the preservation, interpretation, and dissemination of the African-American experience. Founded by Margaret Walker as the Institute for the Study of the History, Life, and Culture of Black People in 1968, the Center seeks to honor her artistic and academic legacy by expanding and promoting its manuscript holdings and oral history collections, interpreting African-American history and culture through its museum and exhibits, coordinating public programs on campus and throughout the community, preserving historic structures central to the African-American experience, and advocating Black Studies at Jackson State.

### **Margaret Walker Center National Council**

The MWC National Council is constituted for the substantial development and promotion of the Center and is comprised of persons with influence on the national and international levels who were impacted personally, artistically, and professionally by Margaret Walker and her works.

Mr. Chaucer Barnes	Dr. William Ferris	Dr. Maryemma Graham
Dr. Alferdteen Harrison	Mr. Randall Pinkston	Dr. Walter Reed
Justice Leah Ward Sears	Dr. Tonea Stewart	Gov. William Winter

### **Margaret Walker Center Advisory Board**

A voluntary group, the MWC Advisory Board provides guidance and advice to the Center Director and the University administration on ways to enhance and develop the Center.

Dr. Robert Smith, <b>Chair</b>	Mr. Thomas Hudson
Mrs. Marcia Weaver, <b>Vice-Chair</b>	Mrs. Willie Jones
Dr. Jennifer Young-Wallace, <b>Secretary</b>	Mrs. Mildred Kelley
Mr. Milton Chambliss, <b>Treasurer</b>	Mr. Gustavus McCoy
Senator Hillman Frazier, <b>Parliamentarian</b>	Mr. C. Liegh McInnis
Rev. Barron Banks	Dr. Richard Middleton
Dr. Daphne Chamberlain	Dr. Patricia Murrain
Ms. Natalie Collier	Dr. Theresia Ratliff
Dr. Ella Jean Davis	Ms. Evelyn Reed
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Rev. D.L. Govan	Ms. Nettie Stowers
Mrs. Helen Govan	Mr. Eric Stringfellow
Dr. Maryemma Graham	Mr. Reginald Thompson
Dr. Lucille Green	Dr. Glenda Windfield
Judge Malcolm Harrison	

### **Margaret Walker Center Staff**

Dr. Robert Luckett, Director

Ms. Natalie Collier, Director, Lighthouse Project	Mr. Brandon Thompson, PR Manager
Ms. Angela D. Stewart, MA, Archivist	Mrs. Trina Toles, Administrative Assistant
Mrs. Linda Brady, Receptionist	Mrs. Edith McKenzie, Receptionist

Dr. helen crump, Project Director and Co-Coordinator, Creative Arts Festival

MARK YOUR CALENDARS  
*Spring* 2019

13th Annual  
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FESTIVAL

**April 12 & 13, 2019**