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**FIELDS INSTITUTE** Research in Mathematical Science

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## CELEBRATING WOMEN IN MATHEMATICS

### MARJORIE LEE BROWNE

1914-1979, USA - In 1935, Browne received her BS degree from Howard, where she graduated *cum laude*. Following graduation she taught mathematics and physics at Gilbert Academy in New Orleans, Louisiana, a private secondary school for Black students. However, Browne remained in this post for only one year as she then enrolled as a graduate student at the University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor, where she received her Masters degree in mathematics in 1939.



Marjorie Lee Browne earned her Ph.D. as well from the University of Michigan, and was the second Black woman to earn a doctorate in mathematics. She completed her Ph.D. there in 1949 after becoming a teaching fellow in 1947.

In 1949, Browne joined the faculty of mathematics at North Carolina Central University, then called North Carolina College, where she stayed until her retirement in 1979. For 25 years she was the only person in the department to have a Ph.D. She became Chair of the Mathematics Department in 1951, a post she retained until 1970.

Browne spent her summers instructing secondary school teachers. Due to her leadership in this effort, NCCU became the first institution in the United States, primarily for Black people, to be granted funds for a National Science Foundation Institute for secondary teachers of mathematics. For 13 years Browne served as director of the mathematics section of these Institutes. Due to this work for the continuation of education for secondary teachers, Browne became the first recipient, in 1975, of the W. W. Rankin Memorial Award for Excellence in Mathematics Education, given by the North Carolina Council of Teachers.

*Biography courtesy of The MacTutor History of Mathematics archive*