

ARKANSAS BLACK HISTORY



Image courtesy of University Museum and Cultural Center, UAPB

John Howard Miller was born in Mississippi in 1908. Miller had a lifelong passion for art, however, he graduated from Alcorn College in 1934, a time when the school had no art program. To continued developing his talents, Miller painted murals, signs and drew for the newspaper. After college, he took his first professional job as the principal of the Black school in Toomsuba, Mississippi. In addition to serving as principal, Miller also acted as a de facto public health officer. He advocated for clean drinking water, built outhouses and advised the community on the prevention of disease. In 1936, Miller received a scholarship and attended Atlanta University (Georgia) where he studied with the well-known artist Hale Woodruff. In 1939, he joined the faculty at Arkansas Agricultural Mechanical and Normal College (AM&N), now the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB). Miller built the art department into a powerhouse in the nation, cultivating artists such as Jeffrey Donaldson and Kevin Cole. He was responsible for securing the funding to build the fine arts building on campus and became friends with Arkansas luminaries such as the poet John Gould Fletcher and the painter Louis Freund. Many of Miller's works are still on display at UAPB.



ARKANSAS
HERITAGE



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