

**BIOGRAPHIES OF FAMOUS PEOPLE**

*5 PART SERIES*

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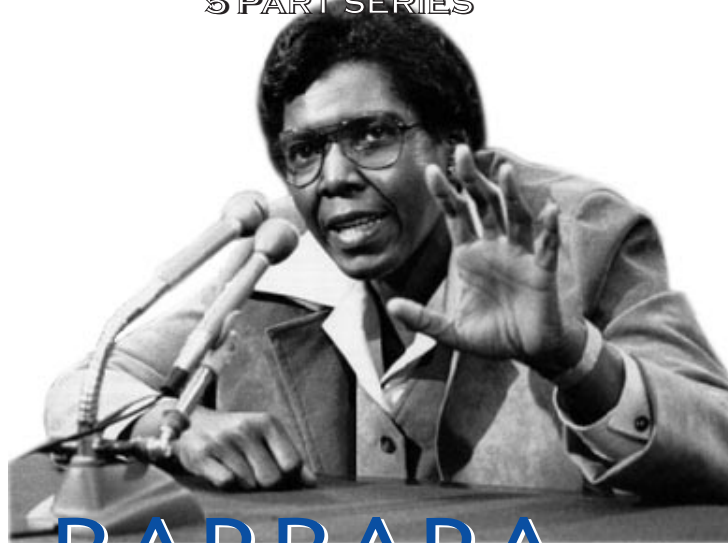
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*BIOGRAPHIES*  
*of*  
**FAMOUS  
PEOPLE**

**5 PART SERIES**



**BARBARA  
JORDAN**

*(1936-1996)*

**INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE**

## INTRODUCTION TO SERIES

Designed to enhance the social studies / humanities curriculum for the intermediate aged student on up. The Biographies of Famous People Series features men and women who are from divergent walks of life, and geographic regions of North America, who have made a recognized and significant contribution to the history of the United States.

As a complementary device with each video, an instructional guide suggests exercises to help teachers, parents and students. These interactive exercises will reinforce and further develop a student's level of comprehension.

The instructional guide provides:

**Vocabulary**  
**Biography**  
**Chronology / Q & A**  
**Discussion Points / Activities**

**Permission granted to copy the  
exercises provided in this guide.  
For educational use ONLY.**

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***The following is a list of awards, recognitions and  
“firsts” Barbara Jordan achieved throughout her life:***

### AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS:

- Medal of Freedom-For her contributions as a public servant.
- 1984 voted best orator and voted into the Texas women's Hall of Fame.
- 25 Honary Doctorate Degrees
- Spingarn Medal-For her life long service to the African American community.
- Keynote Speaker at the 1976 & 1992 Democratic Nat'l Convention.
- Graduates magna cum laude from Texas Southern University, and receives a law degree from Boston University.

### FIRSTS:

- The “first” African American woman to be elected to the Texas State Senate.
- The “first” African American from Texas to serve in the United States House of Representatives.
- As President Pro Temp Jordan was called upon to be the acting governor of Texas for a day. By becoming governor for a day Jordan becomes the “first” African American woman governor in the history of the United States.
- “First” African American buried at the Texas State Cemetery, an honor reserved for Texas heroes and heroines.

# BARBARA JORDAN

**Study the vocabulary list on pgs. 2 & 3. Then fill in the blank by selecting the words from the answers list.**

## ANSWERS LIST :

Multiple Sclerosis • Hope for Families • Medal of Honor •  
Civil Rights • Bar Exam • Medal of Freedom • Living Rights •  
Lipmus Pnummania • Family Coalition • CPA Exam

**8. A)** The nation's highest civilian honor the \_\_\_\_\_ recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions in the arts, science, literature, education, religion, or community service.

**B)** \_\_\_\_\_ are guaranteed by the constitution to all its citizens.

**C)** \_\_\_\_\_ is a disease which effects the brain and spinal cord.

**D)** An organization known as the \_\_\_\_\_ was headed by Barbara Jordan to help low income families rebuild their communities.

**E)** A state exam which when passed by an individual gives them a legal license to practice law is called the \_\_\_\_\_ .

As a skilled Texas politician, lawyer, and educator Jordan became the first African American woman from a southern state to serve in the U.S. Congress. Jordan's rise to prominence had taken her from Houston's impoverished inner city neighborhoods to the enshrined halls of Washington's U.S. Capitol Building. An inspiration to us all, Jordan's courage and fortitude enabled her to successfully manage a notable career and multiple sclerosis, a disease from which she had suffered for years.

After graduating from high school Jordan attended Texas Southern University. While enrolled in college she became a national champion debater, defeating opponents from the universities of Yale, Brown and Harvard. In 1956, she graduated magna cum laude from Texas Southern with a double major in political science and history. Jordan expressed an interest in attending Harvard University School of Law, but opted instead to enroll at Boston University where she received a law degree in 1959.

In 1962 and 1964 Jordan entered politics and ran for a seat in the Texas House of Representatives. Jordan lost both elections but in 1966 she claimed victory and became the first Black woman to serve in the Texas state legislature. In 1972, after serving six years in local government, Jordan was elected to the U.S. Congress representing the Eighteenth Congressional District in Houston. Throughout her political career Jordan sponsored bills that championed the cause for those who were disadvantaged.

In 1973, Jordan was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis which confined her to a wheelchair. Later that year she was appointed to serve on the house judiciary committee during the impeachment hearings of President Richard Nixon. Because of Jordan's proven oratory skills she was chosen to be the keynote speaker at both the 1976 and 1992 Democratic National Conventions. After thirteen years Jordan decided to leave politics in 1979 to become a Professor at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas. In August 1994, Jordan was awarded the Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor. Two years later at age 59, Barbara Jordan died on January 17, 1996 due to complications from pneumonia.

## VOCABULARY of *Barbara Jordan*

**BARBARA JORDAN:** As a skilled Texas politician, lawyer, and educator Jordan became the first African American woman ever elected to the Texas state senate and the first black person from Texas to serve in the United States House of Representatives. Throughout her political career she became a champion for the underprivileged while addressing issues concerning discrimination in business contracts, the establishment of minimum wage standards, and the environment.

**BAR EXAM:** A state exam which when passed by an individual gives them a legal license to practice law. Barbara Jordan passed the bar exam in two states --- Massachusetts and Texas.

**CIVIL RIGHTS:** Rights guaranteed by the constitution to its citizens. From 1954-68 a movement known as the Civil Rights Movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. fought for the legal enforcement associated with the racial equality contained in the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments of the U.S. Constitution. Throughout her political career Jordan introduced many important legislative bills which supported the civil and constitutional rights of minorities.

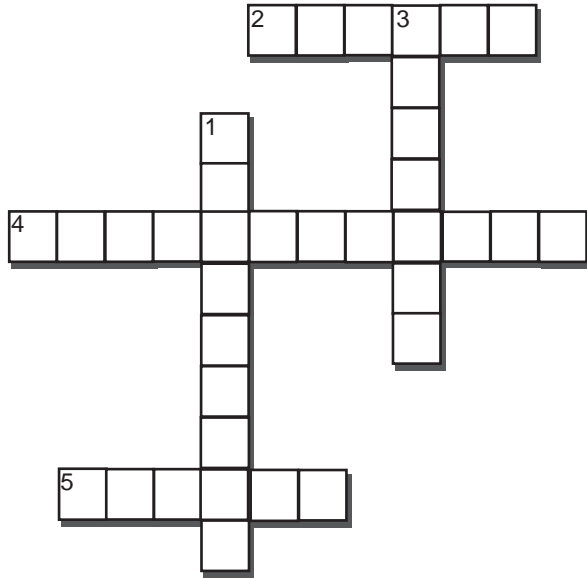
**CONSTITUTION:** A written document which outlines the way a nation may be governed. The Constitution of the United States is founded upon the principles of the Declaration of Independence. Power is divided among three independent branches of government; executive (president and presidential appointees), legislative (Congress), judicial (courts). It has been noted that Barbara Jordan, a great advocate of the U.S. Constitution, carried a copy of it in her purse. She especially upheld its guiding principles during the watergate proceedings as a member of the House Judicial Committee.

**DEBATER:** One who discusses a question or issue with an argument that supports a particular position. At Texas Southern University Jordan became a National Debate Champion.

## Discussion Points / Activities

1. During Jordan's academic and political career she became an incredible debater and orator. Assign students to different groups and have them debate political issues. Perhaps have the students debate a controversial issue concerning your local school or community? Then assign the students to give a speech to the class arguing the same issue but supporting the opposite position as they argued for during the debate. This exercise will offer students an intellectual balance and understanding needed when formulating one's position on challenging and complex issues.
2. If possible visit a museum or educational center which features the life of Barbara Jordan. Use the internet to research the life of Jordan.
3. If possible invite a lawyer, politician or judge to your school. During the visit discuss the framework of the constitution and the life of Barbara Jordan.
4. Jordan's distinguished career consisted of a number of awards and accomplishments. She was a voice and hero for society's less fortunate while fighting for their causes. Discuss some of Jordan's achievements which greatly helped the poor, Black, elderly, and disadvantaged people.
5. Jordan's upbringing began in Houston's impoverished inner city neighborhoods. She had to overcome much adversity before enjoying a successful career. Discuss other famous people who have successfully overcome the difficulties of a harsh environment to achieve notable fame. How were they similar to Barbara Jordan? How were they different? Write a brief description about a time during your own life when you overcame great odds to achieve a desired goal.

Use the words described in this guide on pgs. 2, 3 & 5 to complete the crossword.



**DOWN:**

- 1) greatest political scandal in U.S. history.
- 3) one who argues a particular position while addressing a question or issue.

**ACROSS:**

- 2) first African American from Texas to serve in the U.S. Congress
- 4) outlines the way a nation may be governed.
- 5) A person who has exceptional public speaking skills.

**ANSWERS:**  
 Down - 1) Watergate, 3) Debater  
 Across - 2) Jordan, 4) Constitution, 5) Orator

**HOPE FOR FAMILIES:** An organization headed by Barbara Jordan which was dedicated to help low income families rebuild their communities.

**LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON:** A fellow Texan and 36th president of the United States who mentored Barbara Jordan at the start of her political career.

**MAGNA CUM LAUDE:** Honor given to students who have achieved outstanding academic success. Barbara Jordan received this honor after graduating from Texas Southern University in 1956.

**MEDAL OF FREEDOM:** The nation's highest civilian honor which recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions in the arts, science, literature, education, religion, or community service. Jordan received this prestigious award from President Bill Clinton in 1994.

**MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS:** A disease which effects the brain and spinal cord. Its symptoms include weakness of limbs, double vision, dimness of vision, vertigo, sensation of pins and needles, and inability to co-ordinate movements. As the disease progresses the symptoms become more severe. Although secretive about her health, Jordan had suffered with this disease for a number of years.

**ORATOR:** A person who has exceptional public speaking skills. i.e. Barbara Jordan

**WATERGATE:** A political scandal occurring during the 1972 presidential campaign whereby a team of burglars broke into the Democratic national headquarters. During further investigation the burglars were discovered to be connected to the committee to re-elect President Richard Nixon. With impeachment proceedings becoming more apparent the scandal eventually led President Nixon to resign from office. Barbara Jordan played a major role during the proceedings as a member of the House Judiciary Committee.

## **C**HRONOLOGY of *Barbara Jordan*

- **1936:** Birth of Barbara Jordan.
- **1952:** Jordan wins the Texas State Ushers Oratorical Contest. Jordan Wins National Oratory competition and graduates with honors from Phillis Wheatly High School then enrolls at Texas Southern University.
- **1956:** Jordan graduates magna cum laude from Texas Southern University and is accepted at Boston University School of Law.
- **1959:** Jordan receives her law degree from Boston University.
- **1960:** Jordan begins a private law practice in Houston. Helps lead a voters registration program in predominately black precincts during the 1960 presidential campaign.
- **1962:** Jordan loses her first election for a seat in the Texas House of Representatives.
- **1964:** Jordan loses her second election for a seat in the Texas House of Representatives.
- **1966:** After 2 previous defeats Jordan finally claims victory and becomes the first African American woman to ever win a seat in the Texas State Senate.
- **1972:** Jordan becomes the “first” African American from Texas to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. The greatest political scandal in U.S. history occurs known as “Watergate”. During Watergate’s impeachment proceedings Jordan is a member of the House Judiciary Committee.
- **1974:** Nixon to avoid impeachment resigns as president.
- **1976:** Jordan delivers the keynote address during the Democratic National Convention.
- **1994:** Jordan again delivers the keynote address during the Democratic National Convention. Awarded the Medal of Freedom.
- **1995:** Jordan becomes the chairperson for “Hope for Families”.
- **1996:** Jordan at age 59 dies from pneumonia.

## **Q & A** for *Barbara Jordan*

1. Describe Jordan’s early upbringing and how she became interested in politics.
2. Barbara Jordan introduced important legislation associated with civil rights. What are civil rights? What movement began to emerge during the 50’s and 60’s due to the abuse of civil rights? Who led this famous movement and what were its objectives?
3. Explain the relationship between Lyndon Baines Johnson and Barbara Jordan.
4. Throughout Jordan’s career she received a litany of awards and recognition. Name some of these awards and why they were given to her.
5. In 1976 and 1992 Barbara Jordan was the keynote speaker during what national event?
6. During the 1972 presidential campaign one of the greatest political scandals in U.S. history occurred. What was the name of this scandal? What happened during this scandal? What role did Barbara Jordan play during the scandal? What president eventually resigned from office because of this scandal?
7. Jordan achieved an impressive series of “Firsts” during her life. Describe some of her most notable “Firsts”?