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Lorraine Hansberry

Today we're going to talk about Lorraine Hansberry...in just a minute.

Lorraine Hansberry was born in Chicago in 1930. Her father opened one of the city's first banks for Black customers, and notable figures like W.E.B. Du Bois and Langston Hughes frequently visited their home. When the family moved to a White neighborhood to challenge segregation, the case went all the way to the Supreme Court, eventually helping to ban housing discrimination.

Hansberry moved to New York City in 1950, where she began writing and participating in civil rights demonstrations.

In 1959, Hansberry made history as the first Black woman to have a play produced on Broadway. *A Raisin in the Sun* tells the story of a working-class Black family in Chicago, inspired in part by Hansberry's upbringing. Later that year, Hansberry became the youngest and first Black playwright to receive the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award. She went on to write and produce one more play before she died of cancer at the age of 34, leaving behind several unfinished works that her ex-husband and creative partner eventually published.

Though her career was brief, Hansberry opened the door for countless Black artists to make their own way in the theater world.

Where do you see the legacy of Lorraine Hansberry today?