

Frances Walker-Slocum, 94, Pioneering Pianist and Teacher, Dies

By [Sam Roberts](#)

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Frances Walker-Slocum, who overcame childhood burns that left her arm impaired to become a pioneering classical pianist and the first black female tenured professor at Oberlin College and Conservatory, died on June 9 in Oberlin, Ohio. She was 94.

Her death was announced by Oberlin, where she had taught from 1976 until she retired in 1991 and was named a professor emerita.

“Miss Walker’s playing has sweep and impetuosity,” John Briggs wrote in The New York Times in a review of her debut concert at Carnegie Recital Hall in Manhattan in 1959, which included works by Liszt, Rachmaninoff and Chopin. She was known professionally as Frances Walker at the time.

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