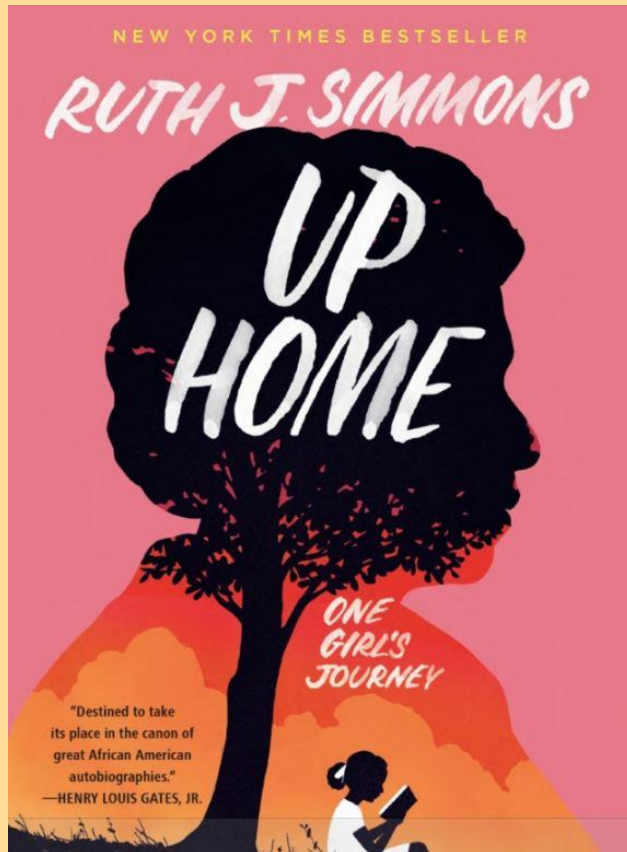


She was born at a crossroads: a crossroads in history, a crossroads in culture, and a geographical crossroad in North Houston County in East Texas.



Born in 1945, Ruth J. Simmons grew up the twelfth child of sharecroppers. Her first home had no running water, no electricity, no books to read. Yet despite this—or, in her words, because of it—Simmons would become the first Black president of an Ivy League university. The former president of Smith College, Brown University, and Prairie View A&M, Texas’s oldest HBCU, Simmons has inspired generations of students as she herself made history.

In *Up Home*, Simmons takes us back to Grapeland to show how the people who love us when we are young shape who we become. We meet her caring, tireless mother

who managed to feed her large family with an often-empty pantry; her father, who refused to let racial and economic injustice crush his youngest daughter’s dreams; the doting brothers and sisters; and the attentive teachers who welcomed Ruth into the classroom, guiding her to a future she could hardly imagine as a child.

From the farmland of East Texas to Houston’s Fifth Ward to New Orleans at the dawn of the civil rights movement, Simmons depicts an era long gone but whose legacies of inequality we still live with today. Written in clear and timeless prose, *Up Home* is both an origin story set in the segregated South and the uplifting chronicle of a girl whose intellect, grace, and curiosity guide her as she creates a place for herself in the world.