

Alice in Walkerland!

Alice Walker has been defined as one of the key international writers of the 20th Century. She made history as the first African-American woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for Fiction as well as the National Book Award in 1983 for her novel *The Color Purple* — one of the few literary books to capture the popular imagination and leave a permanent imprint. The award-winning novel served as the inspiration for Steven Spielberg's 1985 film and was adapted for the stage, opening at New York City's Broadway Theatre in 2005, and capturing a Tony Award for best leading actress in a musical in 2006.

An internationally celebrated author, poet and activist, Alice's books include seven novels, four collections of short stories, four children's books, and volumes of essays and poetry. She has written many other best sellers, too, among them, *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992), which detailed the devastating effects of female genital mutilation and led to the 1993 documentary *Warrior Marks*, a collaboration with the British-



CELEBRITY INTERVIEW

by Kam Williams

Indian filmmaker Pratibha Parmar, with Walker as executive producer.

In 2001, Alice was inducted into

So, the best way to get children to read, is to read. They will absolutely copy you. That way, you don't have to worry about what's supposedly age appropriate, a child will pick something up when the child is ready.

the Georgia Writers Hall of Fame and, in 2006, she was honored as one of the inaugural inductees into the California Hall of Fame. In 2007, her archives were opened to the public at Emory University.

In 2010, she presented the keynote address at The 11th Annual Steve Biko Lecture at the University of Cape Town in South Africa, and was awarded the Lennon/Ono Grant for Peace, in Reykjavik, Iceland. Alice donated the financial award to an orphanage for the children of AIDS victims in Kenya.

She has served as a jurist for two sessions of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine, and writes a regular blog on her website: www.alice-walkersgardens.com. Here, she talks about her career and about the documentary "Alice Walker: Beauty in Truth" which premieres on PBS on Friday, February 7th at 9 p.m. ET/PT (check local listings)

Kam Williams: Hi Alice. I'm so honored to have this opportunity to interview you.

Alice Walker: Oh, I'm so glad to be talking with you, too, Kam.

KW: The only time I came close to meeting you before now was back in the Eighties one summer, when I was invited to a party out in the Hamptons that you were rumored to be attending.



Alice Walker

AW: Oh, I did have a few friends near there, one in Montauk, another on Fire Island. But oh, that was a long time ago.

KW: I'll be mixing in my questions with some from readers. Harriet Pakula-Teweles asks: how do you feel about having the biopic coming out about you?

AW: Well, it's very interesting because I almost never do anything for Black History Month, because I feel it's just another way

to separate us. It's amusing to me that it would be coming out as a Black History presentation on PBS. But on the level of the film, I like it. And I love the producer [Shaheen Haq] and the filmmaker [Pratibha Parmar]. I think they were incredibly devoted. They did it on a hope and a prayer, and at one point had to rely on crowd-sourcing because of the huge expenses.

See WALKER page 6

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