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Jacob Lawrence (American, 1917-2000)

*The Builders: The Family, 1974*

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Jacob Lawrence (American, 1917-2000)

*The Builders: The Family*

Serigraph on Paper, 1974

Gift of the L.C. and Maragaret Walker

Family Foundation

1999.29

Jacob Lawrence was the first African American artist to be represented by a major commercial gallery. *Builders (The Family)* was produced while he was a Professor of Painting at the University of Washington in Seattle. This print is a later addition to his career-long series of works featuring builders. From the mid-1940s until the 1990s, the focus of many of Lawrence's paintings and prints was builders. For him, builders served as symbols of man's aspiration—"man building," as he described it.

The color screenprint depicts four dark skinned figures walking past a construction site—likely a family. The man is dressed in a black suit,

black shoes, yellow tie, and tan hat. The woman wears a red and white dress, yellow jacket, and red cap. The little girl stands to the left of mother, holding her hand. She wears a yellow dress, white tights, brown shoes, and a red cap. A small boy wears brown pants, tan shoes, a yellow shirt, and blue jacket. He stands to the right of the father and holds his hand.

In the background, there are three men working at the construction site. There are two men in blue jumpsuits, one has dark skin and the other white. A third dark skinned man wears a gray jumpsuit and holds a saw.

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