

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To celebrate the life and achievements of Nikki Giovanni as a poet, author, professor and civil activist.

WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni organized the first African American arts festival in Cincinnati, Ohio;

WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni was a centerpiece of the Black Arts Movement;

WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni participated in National Poetry Month Celebrations in Anacostia;

WHEREAS, advanced art in the District of Columbia by reciting her poetry at the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts;

WHEREAS, Mayor Vincent Gray proclaimed July 13th “Nikki Giovanni Day” in the District of Columbia;

WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni founded her own publishing company, Niktom Limited, which advanced the work of Black women writers, including Gwendolyn Brooks, Mari Evans, Carolyn Rodgers, and Margaret Walker;

WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni sold out theaters across the country, reciting her poems focused on race, politics, gender and love;

WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni self-published her first two books, “Black Feeling Black Talk” and “Black Judgment” and is the author of more than 30 books, many of which are for children;

WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni’s autobiography “Gemini” was finalist for the 1973 Book Award;

WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni held teaching positions at Rutgers, Queens College and Virginia Tech;

WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2004 for her album, “The Nikki Giovanni Poetry Collection”;

51
52 WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni was a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Honor from Dillard
53 University, the 2016 Literary Lifetime Achievement Award from the Library of Virginia, and the
54 Caldecott Honors Award;

55
56 WHEREAS, in 2022, Ms. Giovanni was conferred the title of University Distinguished Professor
57 Emerita by Virginia Tech in recognition of her exemplary service to the university;

58
59 WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni was a lifelong advocate of LGBTQ+ rights and visibility;

60
61 WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni was the recipient of the Langston Hughes Medal; four lifetime
62 achievement awards, including the Maya Angelou Lifetime Achievement Award; the Rosa Parks Woman
63 of Courage Award; three governor’s awards in arts and humanities; seven N.A.A.C.P. Image Awards;
64 three lifetime, and thirty-one honorary doctorates;

65
66 WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni was named Woman of the Year by Ebony Magazine, Mademoiselle
67 Magazine, Ladies Home Journal, and the Cincinnati YWCA;

68
69 WHEREAS, Oprah Winfrey honored Ms. Giovanni as one of 25 “Living Legends”;

70
71 WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni was an Emmy Award winner, including most recently a 2024 Emmy
72 for Exceptional Merit in Documentary Filmmaking for her film “Going to Mars: the Nikki Giovanni
73 Project”;

74
75 WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni is the namesake of a newly found species of bat, *Micronycteris*
76 *giovanniae*;

77
78 WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni published her book “Blues: For All the Changes” about her battle with
79 cancer;

80
81 WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni was honored with historical markers in Knoxville, Tennessee, and
82 Lincoln Heights, Ohio;

83
84 WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni was named one of the Library of Virginia’s “Virginia Women in
85 History”;

86
87 WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni is set to release a posthumous book of poetry, “The Last Book,” in fall
88 2025;

89
90 WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni was a member of the Prince Hall Order of the Eastern Star and the
91 Wintergreen Women Writers Collective;

92
93 WHEREAS, Ms. Giovanni is the recipient of the keys to the city for Dallas, Miami, New York
94 City, and Los Angeles;

95
96 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, that the Council of the
97 District of Columbia recognizes the inspirational and fascinating life of Nikki Giovanni and honors her
98 legacy of literary achievement.

99
100 Sec. 2. This resolution may be cited as the “Nikki Giovanni Memorial Recognition Resolution of
101 2024”.

102
103
104

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the District of Columbia Register.

DRAFT