

25104365D

1 SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 229

2 Offered January 30, 2025

3 *Celebrating the life of Nikki Giovanni.*

4 Patrons—Rouse and Deeds

5 WHEREAS, Nikki Giovanni, an acclaimed poet, activist, University Distinguished Professor Emerita at
6 Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and beloved teacher and mentor to countless students,
7 died on December 9, 2024; and8 WHEREAS, Nikki Giovanni was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, and graduated with honors from Fisk
9 University, where she studied history; and10 WHEREAS, after graduation, Nikki Giovanni began writing and publishing books of poetry and was a
11 well-known voice of the Black Arts Movement; she ultimately published 20 poetry books and several
12 illustrated children's books; and13 WHEREAS, Nikki Giovanni first came to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia
14 Tech) as a visiting professor in the Department of English in 1987, then became a full-time professor in 1989;
15 her words, both written and spoken, marked many of the institution's historic events during her tenure; and16 WHEREAS, Nikki Giovanni taught poetry and writing courses and mentored many students, some of
17 whom became award-winning authors; and18 WHEREAS, Nikki Giovanni was well known internationally, receiving more than 30 honorary degrees
19 and multiple NAACP Image Awards, and she was also a finalist for a Grammy and for the National Book
20 Award; and21 WHEREAS, in 2005, Nikki Giovanni created a Virginia Tech poetry competition named for its benefactor
22 and former university president, the late Charles W. Steger, which awards monetary prizes for student poetry;
23 and24 WHEREAS, while Nikki Giovanni retired from Virginia Tech in 2022, she continued writing, performing,
25 and traveling to speak at events; and26 WHEREAS, Nikki Giovanni will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her family, close friends,
27 and the entire Virginia Tech community; now, therefore, be it28 RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of Nikki Giovanni; and,
29 be it30 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to
31 the family of Nikki Giovanni as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect for her memory and
32 contributions to the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

SR229