

2025 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 229

Celebrating the life of Nikki Giovanni.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 6, 2025

WHEREAS, Nikki Giovanni, an acclaimed poet, activist, University Distinguished Professor Emerita at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and beloved teacher and mentor to countless students, died on December 9, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Nikki Giovanni was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, and graduated with honors from Fisk University, where she studied history; and

WHEREAS, after graduation, Nikki Giovanni began writing and publishing books of poetry and was a well-known voice of the Black Arts Movement; she ultimately published 20 poetry books and several illustrated children's books; and

WHEREAS, Nikki Giovanni first came to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) as a visiting professor in the Department of English in 1987, then became a full-time professor in 1989; her words, both written and spoken, marked many of the institution's historic events during her tenure; and

WHEREAS, Nikki Giovanni taught poetry and writing courses and mentored many students, some of whom became award-winning authors; and

WHEREAS, Nikki Giovanni was well known internationally, receiving more than 30 honorary degrees and multiple NAACP Image Awards, and she was also a finalist for a Grammy and for the National Book Award; and

WHEREAS, in 2005, Nikki Giovanni created a Virginia Tech poetry competition named for its benefactor and former university president, the late Charles W. Steger, which awards monetary prizes for student poetry; and

WHEREAS, while Nikki Giovanni retired from Virginia Tech in 2022, she continued writing, performing, and traveling to speak at events; and

WHEREAS, Nikki Giovanni will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her family, close friends, and the entire Virginia Tech community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of Nikki Giovanni; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Nikki Giovanni as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect for her memory and contributions to the Commonwealth.

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