

## PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

### NIKKI GIOVANNI

writer, activist, educator

*"We have a world to conquer...one person at a time...starting with ourselves"*

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#### Background Information

Born: June 7, 1943

Giovanni received a bachelor's degree in history from Fisk University in 1967<sup>1</sup>. Afterwards, she attended the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University. She has received a number of honorary degrees from colleges and universities across the country.

#### Giovanni's Resistance

Giovanni is a poet and has used her poetry as a tool in her resistance. She is extremely committed to the civil rights movement and the idea of black power. She has used her own experiences to drive

her work and this is evident in her writing. Her poems have reflected her life as it has changed and evolved, making them much more relatable and real. Her first three collections focused on revolution and the interpretation of experience through a Black consciousness. Her next few collections shifted toward her experiences as a single mother.

Some of the poems were for children, while others' themes revolved around loneliness, ruined hopes and family affection. In the 1970s, her poetry shifted back toward politics, honoring Black American heroes. She has used her talents as a poet both to discuss politics and to honor those around her who were doing great things. Giovanni is an incredible performer of her own poetry. In 1970, she founded her own publishing company<sup>2</sup>. She has also taught at multiple universities and is currently teaching at Virginia Tech.

#### Achievements

Giovanni has won a number of awards, including Woman of the Year from *Ladies Home Journal* in 1973<sup>3</sup>. She used her talents to inspire others. Her personal experiences made her words even more powerful, allowing her to speak from the heart, and others realized that. By staying with what she knew best, she was able to truly speak about the issues facing Black Americans.

<sup>1</sup> Nikki Giovanni. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://poets.org/poet/nikki-giovanni>.

<sup>2</sup> Nikki Giovanni's Biography. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/nikki-giovanni-39>.

<sup>3</sup> Nikki Giovanni. (2019, July 23). Retrieved from <https://www.biography.com/writer/nikki-giovanni>.

