

## PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

### NIKKI GIOVANNI

writer, activist, educator

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

Page | 1



#### Background Information

Born: June 7, 1943

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

#### Giovanni's Resistance

Giovanni was a poet and used her poetry as a tool in her resistance. She was extremely committed to the civil rights movement and the idea of Black Power. She used her own experiences to drive her work and this was evident in them. As her life changed and evolved, her poems reflected that, making them much more relatable and real. Her first three collections were focused on revolution and the interpretation of experience through a Black consciousness. Her next few collections shifted towards 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 towards politics, honoring Black American heroes. She used her talents as a poet to both discuss politics, as well as to honor those around her who were doing great things. Giovanni was 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>.

