

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Statement on the Death of Nikki Giovanni

December 11, 2024

In 2020, Nikki Giovanni's majestic voice echoed her powerful words, "and sometime, there has to be something called courage. You have it in your hands."

Born in segregated Knoxville, Tennessee, she became a renowned activist, professor, and literary legend who had that courage in her hands and in her heart.

A pioneering poet of the Black Arts Movement and the civil rights era, she used her pen to advance racial and gender equality and confront violence, hate and injustice, alongside some of the most esteemed artists and icons of the past century.

Author of over 25 books, her wit and intellect earned her numerous accolades, including the Langston Hughes Medal, an Emmy Award, and a Grammy Award nomination. A three-time cancer fighter, Nikki offered words of wisdom that gave hope to countless others fighting disease and despair.

Jill and I send our love and condolences to her family—including her wife Virginia, her son Thomas, and her granddaughter Kai—and all those who loved and admired that something special, her courage.

May God bless Nikki Giovanni.

NOTE: The statement referred to Virginia "Ginney" Fowler, wife, Thomas W. Giovanni, son, and Kai Giovanni, granddaughter, of Ms. Giovanni.

Categories: Statements by the President : Nikki Giovanni, death.

Names: Biden, Jill T.; Fowler, Virginia "Ginney"; Giovanni, Kai; Giovanni, Nikki; Giovanni, Thomas W.

Subjects: Civil rights movement; Deaths, Nikki Giovanni.

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