

Nikki Giovanni, acclaimed poet, educator and activist, dies at 81



New York, December 10 (RHC)-- Nikki Giovanni, one of the most celebrated poets in the United States, has died of cancer at the age of 81.

Giovanni was dubbed the “Princess of Black Poetry” after she published her first collection of poems, “Black Feeling, Black Talk,” in 1968. She went on to publish more than 30 books, including a memoir that was a finalist for the National Book Award and a children’s picture book titled “Rosa,” about the civil rights

legend Rosa Parks.

Nikki Giovanni was a distinguished professor of English at Virginia Tech University, where in the fall of 2005 she removed a student from her introductory creative writing course and reported his disturbing behavior to her department head. That student went on to kill 32 people and wound 17 others in a campus shooting at Virginia Tech, after which Giovanni became a fierce advocate for gun control.

In 2013, Nikki Giovanni joined us in our Democracy Now! studio, where she shared some of her poems.

Nikki Giovanni: "Poetry is as necessary
To life
As salt is to stew
As garlic is to pasta
As perfume is to summer nights
As shaving lotion is to mornings
As your smile is to
My happiness

"Poetry is as significant
To life
As yeast is to bread
As butter is to toast
As grapes are to wine
As sugar is to lemons
How else will we get
Lemonade

"Poetry is to me
Your voice
Your touch
Your laughter
That feeling at the end of the day
That I am
Not alone"

Nikki Giovanni has died at the age of 81 of cancer.

[SOURCE: DEMOCRACY NOW]

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