

KKF
EESW/MSH

RESOLUTION NO. _____ - 2025

RECOGNIZING Yolande Cornelia “Nikki” Giovanni Jr. as a 2025 Black History Month honoree and **EXPRESSING** the appreciation of the Mayor and Council for her bold, unapologetic activism and support of the Black community.

WHEREAS, Nikki Giovanni was born June 7, 1943, in Knoxville, Tennessee, and shortly after her birth her family relocated to historic Lincoln Heights and bought their home in 1952 where, as a child, Ms. Giovanni gained her renowned name, Nikki, from her eldest sister, Gary Ann; and

WHEREAS, Nikki returned to Tennessee in 1964 to attend Fisk University and obtain her undergraduate degree in history, afterwards returning back to Cincinnati, which she always knew as home; and

WHEREAS, after the deaths of some very close to Nikki, she published her first volume, Black Feeling Black Talk, shortly after which her career took off; and

WHEREAS, Nikki received several invitations to speak and read from The New York Times and Amsterdam News, received the key to the Village of Lincoln Heights (one of several keys to cities she would receive), was inducted as an Honorary Member into Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., and received a Life Membership and Scroll from the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW); and

WHEREAS, Nikki settled her life in Blacksburg, Virginia, where she taught English at Virginia Tech and met her partner, Virginia Fowler, and they were married in 2016, after which Nikki continued to teach until 2022 when she retired; and

WHEREAS, Nikki was a poet, writer, children’s writer, activist, and a public intellectual who stood against all odds placed in front of her, including during the Civil Rights Movement when Nikki was a star of the Black Arts Movement, a wave of black nationalism during the Civil Rights era; and;

WHEREAS, Nikki passed away on December 9, 2024, from complications related to lung cancer; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio:

Section 1. That the Mayor and this Council hereby recognize Yolande Cornelia “Nikki” Giovanni Jr. as a 2025 Black History Month honoree for her fearlessness, activism, and courage for the Black community.

Section 2. That this resolution be spread upon the minutes of Council and that a copy be provided to Yolande Cornelia “Nikki” Giovanni Jr. through the office of Councilmember Meeka Owens.

Passed: _____, 2025

Aftab Pureval, Mayor

Attest: _____
Clerk

Submitted by Councilmember Meeka Owens