Chapter No. 2227
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SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 656

Originated in Senate _____ Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 656

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE LITERARY ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF WORLD-RENOWNED POET, WRITER, COMMENTATOR, ACTIVIST AND EDUCATOR NIKKI GIOVANNI AND WELCOMING HER TO MISSISSIPPI.

WHEREAS, world-renowned poet, writer, and educator Nikki Giovanni will speak at Jackson State University on March 23, 2011, at the Rose Embly McCoy Auditorium on the university's main campus. Giovanni's visit, sponsored by the Office of Student Life, will headline the Jackson State University Student Government Association's Annual Women's Emphasis Week, which celebrates the achievements of women; and

WHEREAS, Professor Nikki Giovanni is a world-renowned poet, writer, commentator, activist and educator. The author of some 30 books for both adults and children, Nikki Giovanni is a University Distinguished Professor at Virginia Tech University in Blackburg, Virginia. Over the past 30 years, her outspokenness, in her writing and in lectures, has brought the eyes of the world upon her. One of the most widely read American poets, she prides herself on being "a Black American, a daughter, a mother, a Professor of English." Giovanni remains as determined and committed as ever to the fight for civil rights and equality. Always insisting on presenting the truth as she sees it, she has maintained a prominent place as a strong voice of the black community. Her focus is on the individual, specifically, on the power one has to make a difference in oneself, and thus, in the lives of others; and

WHEREAS, Nikki Giovanni was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, and grew up in Lincoln Heights, an all-black suburb of Cincinnati, Ohio. She graduated with honors from Fisk University, her grandfather's alma mater, in 1968, and she later attended the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University; and

WHEREAS, she published her first book of poetry, "*Black Feeling Black Talk*" in 1968, and within the next year published a second book, thus launching her career as a writer. Early in her career she was dubbed the "Princess of Black Poetry," and over the course of more than three decades of publishing and lecturing, she has come to be called both a "National Treasure" and, most recently, one of Oprah Winfrey's 25 "Living Legends"; and

WHEREAS, many of Giovanni's books have received honors and awards. Her autobiography, *"Gemini"* was a finalist for the National Book Award; Love Poems, "*Blues: For All the Changes," "Quilting the Black-Eyed Pea," "Acolytes"* and *"Hip Hop Speaks to Children"* - A Celebration of Poetry with a Beat were all honored with NAACP Image Awards; *Blues: For All the Changes* reached number 4 on the *Los Angeles Times* Bestseller list, a rare achievement for a book of poems. Most recently, her children's picture book *"Rosa"* about the civil rights legend Rosa Parks, became a Caldecott Honors Book; and Bryan Collier, the illustrator, was given the Coretta Scott King Award for best illustration. Shortly after its release, *"Bicycles" Love Poems* reached number 1 on Amazon.com for Poetry. Her most recent publication is *Lincoln and Douglas: An American Friendship* with illustrator Bryan Collier; and

WHEREAS, Professor Giovanni's spoken word recordings have also achieved widespread recognition and honors. Her album *"Truth Is On Its Way"* on which she reads her poetry against a background of gospel music, was a top 100 album and received the Best Spoken Word Album given by the National Association of Radio and Television Announcers. Her "Nikki Giovanni Poetry Collection" on

which she reads and talks about her poetry was one of five finalists for a Grammy Award; and

WHEREAS, Giovanni's honors and awards have been steady and plentiful throughout her career. The recipient of some 25 honorary degrees, she has been named Woman of the Year by *Mademoiselle* Magazine, *The Ladies Home Journal*, and *Ebony* Magazine. She was tapped for the Ohio Women's Hall of Fame and named an Outstanding Woman of Tennessee. Giovanni has also received Governor's Awards from both Tennessee and Virginia. She was the first recipient of the Rosa L. Parks Woman of Courage Award, and she has also been awarded the Langston Hughes Medal for poetry. She is an honorary member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and has received Life Membership and Scroll from The National Council of Negro Women. A member of PEN (poets, playwrights, essayists, editors, and novelists), she was honored for her life and career by The History Makers. She has received the keys to more than two dozen cities. A scientist who admires her work even named a new species of bat he discovered for her! *Black Enterprise* named her a Women of Power Legacy Award winner for work that expands opportunities for other women of color; and

WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we acknowledge the literary and civic accomplishments of this respected journalist and educator:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby recognize the literary accomplishments and contributions of world-renowned poet, writer, commentator, activist and educator Professor Nikki Giovanni and welcome her to the State of Mississippi, on the occasion of her address to Jackson State University on March 23, 2011.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Nikki Giovanni and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
March 18, 2011

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
March 23, 2011

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES