



Poet, essayist, novelist and educator Nikki Giovanni will address the Dillard University class of 2010 as commencement speaker. Graduation will be held on May 8, 2010, at 8:00 a.m. on the university's Avenue of the Oaks.

"I am in absolute awe of her prolific writing over an extended period of time," Dillard University President Dr. Marvalene Hughes said of Giovanni. "She preserves unique, evolving cultures, with a special emphasis on the exceptional cultural evolution of young blacks and how they influence the world. She is one of the most thoughtful, dynamic speakers in today's circles. We are honored to have her as our 2010 commencement speaker."

Giovanni's work has spanned five decades and earned her numerous accolades. In 1968, her first book of poetry established her reputation as a revolutionary poet and the voice of her generation. Since then, Giovanni has written or edited over three dozen volumes of poetry and essays. "Gemini" earned her a National Book Award nomination, "Love Poems" and "Blues" garnered NAACP Image Awards, and "The Nikki Giovanni Poetry Collection" received a Grammy nomination for best spoken-word album. Giovanni has won the American Book Award and received over two dozen honorary degrees to date.

After Hurricane Katrina, Giovanni shipped her personal collection of books to Dillard for use in the Will W. Alexander Library. Last year, a section of the library was dedicated in Giovanni's honor.