

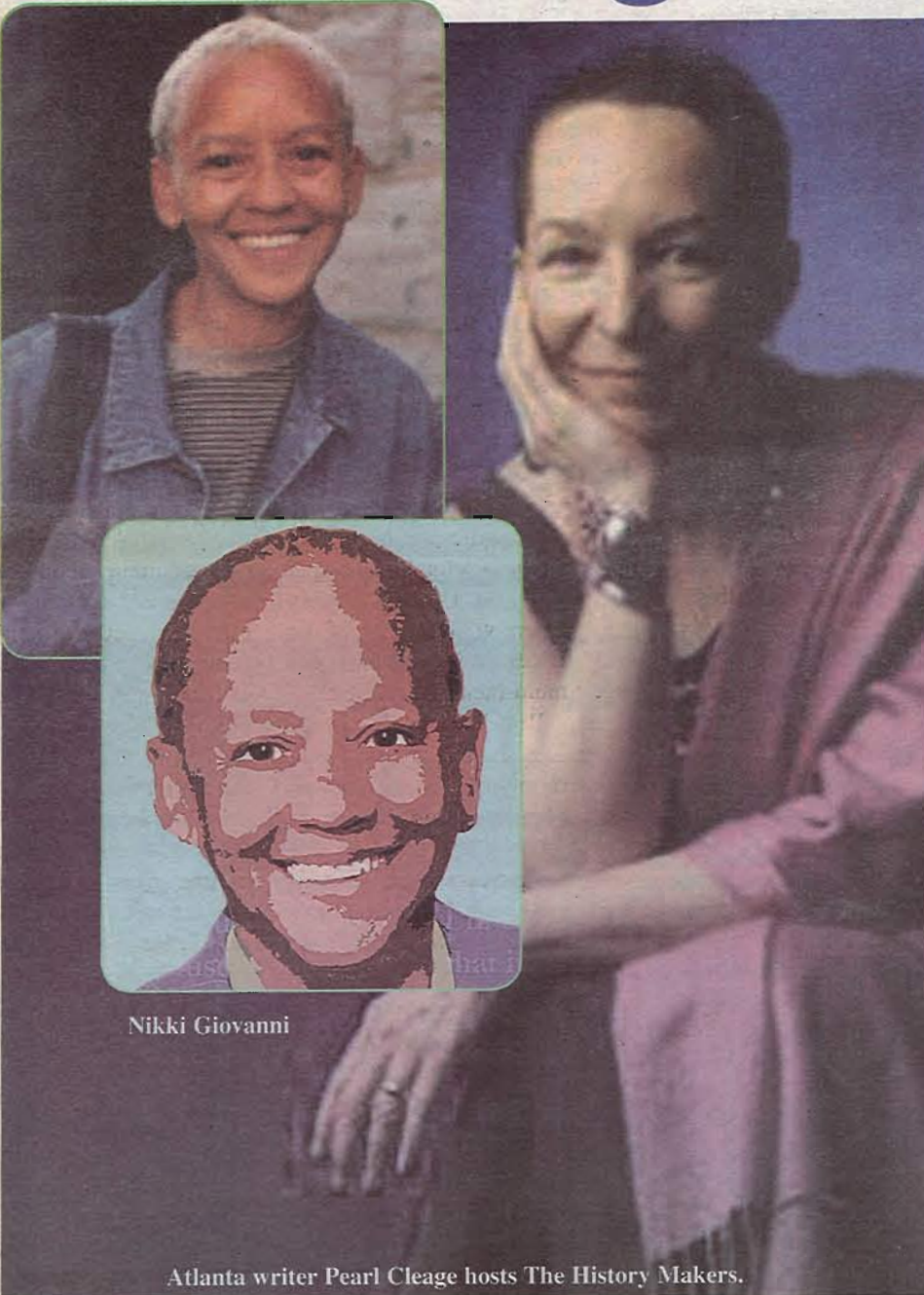
LifeStyles

- Arts: New concert listings, see page 10.
- Home: Information for the home, see page 15.

ATLANTA FILM FEST WRAPS

The Atlanta Film Festival will wrap up an impressive 150 films (features, documentaries, shorts and animation) this weekend. The festival is showing films at the Rialto Center, Atlanta-Fulton County Library Main branch and the Midtown Landmark Theatre. Check out "The Boys of Baraka," Friday, June 17 at 2:30 p.m. at The Rialto. For the full schedule go to: www.atlantafilmmfestivals.com

THE HISTORY MAKERS PRESENTS... An Evening with Nikki Giovanni



Nikki Giovanni

Atlanta writer Pearl Cleage hosts The History Makers.

By Dolores Bundy

African-Americans have made significant contributions to American life, society and culture, yet the world is still largely unaware of these contributions as well as personal stories. Although confronted with abuse, indifference, racism and deception, and their stories were not always comforting, the vitality of the

African-American people has resisted the sensationalism that often clung to them and flourished—building communities, institutions, careers and traditions. And in spite of the political, environmental, educational, and socio-economic difficulties, African-Americans have introduced to the world new thoughts, new inventions, change policy, and essentially impacted the very fabric of American

society. These are our music makers, lawmakers, medical makers, political makers, sport makers, religion makers, science makers. They are essentially *The HistoryMakers*.

The HistoryMakers, an organization that is dedicated to recording and preserving the personal histories of these well-known and unsung African-Americans, will present *An Evening With Nikki Giovanni*, (an

award-winning poet extraordinaire, spoken word artist, author and civil rights activist) Saturday, June 18, 2005 at Georgia Public Broadcasting facilitated by well-known author, Pearl Cleage.

"I am so pleased and honored to be part of this function" says Nikki Giovanni. "The HistoryMakers is good because now we're putting together, not just the stories of a few great people, it's going to be the stories of a lot of people.

"The civil rights movement was not the story of leaders," she says, "The civil rights movement was the story of people who got out and marched. So, getting these stories out and having them coded is good! Instead of being covered by the majority press through the voice of one or two people. Now The HistoryMakers are saying 'let's talk to the people who were also there— who did it!' Those are the great people!"

In fact, the public appears to be craving these historical lexicon stories that focus on slavery, the abolitionist movement, the civil rights movement, music, sports and entertainment, etc. in order to gain new perspectives on history and its overall relevance. Public appeal for these historical themes and figures are enjoying a renaissance as evidenced by the popularity of non-fictional programming and historical biographies in the popular media. There is also a push in academia to correct the historic "whitewashing" that has covered up many difficult episodes in American history, to include the African American memory and per-

spectives.

"I grew up in Knoxville, Tenn. We [in the south] are storytellers," says Giovanni. "I'm fascinated by the history of black Americans. It is a very rich area that has really not been dealt with. We have mostly dealt with black Americans from the point of view of white Americans, through white eyes. And it becomes essential that as we approach the 21st century that we look at it from the point of view of the people themselves."

The HistoryMakers, formed in July of 1999, by public historian, Julieanna L. Richardson, a Harvard trained lawyer, video producer and former American Studies major, represents the single largest archival project of its kind in the world, outdistancing the existing video oral history collections of New York's Schomburg Library and the Birmingham Civil Rights Museum.

"We are totally delighted to have Nikki Giovanni as our featured celebrity interview," says Richardson. "This is our second program, last year we did an evening with Della Reese. We are tremendously excited. Ms. Giovanni's career started in her twenties and she has successfully sustained herself. She is truly an individual to be celebrated!"

Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, a city rich in African American history, *The HistoryMakers* archive contains over 500 videotaped oral history interviews. Each *HistoryMaker* interview is approximately two hours in length with an objective to make history and social studies more rel-

evant and diverse for audiences of all ages.

"I think that today what's good is that nobody can really say that there are black leaders in the way that we used to say that Booker T. is a leader, or Dubois is a leader. That's not the case now," says Giovanni. "What we have now, are various sights and various places and various emotional states. We have business men, men of medicine, lawmakers, we have a lot of different ways of approaching problems today. And I think that's terrific! Now you can't just shoot somebody down and change everything. If we don't tell our stories then the story gets lost!"

One of the most widely read American poets, Giovanni has taught writing and literature at Virginia Tech since 1987, where she is a University Distinguished Professor. Ms. Giovanni has written more than two-dozen books, including volumes of poetry, illustrated children's books, and three collections of essays. She has also received 21 honorary doctorates and "Woman of the Year" awards from three magazines.

"I've done one of my oral history. I think it's so important because so many of our youngsters are still very very much inclined to what they hear. I don't have a problem with it that. We are an oral people and so, oral history would be a part of it."

The HistoryMakers Southeast Region Office is located at 476 Auburn Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia. For more information visit their website at www.the-historymakers.com.