

INDIANA UNIVERSITY KOKOMO

LEGACY



SUMMER 2023
A MAGAZINE FOR
ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

A close-up portrait of Nikki Giovanni, an older woman with short, curly grey hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a blue and white checkered shirt with a colorful patterned scarf. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with a building and a flag.

NIKKI GIOVANNI

IN HER OWN WORDS

POET. TEACHER. ACTIVIST.



LEGACY

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS
OF INDIANA UNIVERSITY KOKOMO

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A SNAPSHOT OF OUR *SPRING* SEMESTER

In this issue, we highlight our long-time friend and colleague, American poet Nikki Giovanni, and her return to campus this spring. Read on for details about her emotional and insightful presentation to the community, her reflections on her life and work, and a behind-the-scenes look at the master class she hosted for the next generation of creative writers at IU Kokomo.

In addition, we'll explore the newest co-ed varsity sport to debut at IU Kokomo – eSports – and learn about the program and its potential impact from our first eSports coach, Nick Liegey. We'll also share highlights from the Cougars' successful spring athletics seasons – from golf, to track and field, and everything in between.

A deep dive into our Multicultural Center and its programming will showcase how IU Kokomo is building community for all on campus, and an overview of the Kokomo Experience and You (KEY) will highlight the program's success this semester, and its starring role in our recent Chancellor's Guild Dinner.

And of course, we can't overlook our 54th Commencement: We'll share details about this beautiful, celebratory day on campus, the Chancellor's charge to make a difference, and the impact the class of 2023 is already making on our community and our world!

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Gearing up for what's next

My installation as IU Kokomo's eighth chancellor took place in October, and I will be wrapping up my first year as chancellor in August. You might think I'm settling into this new role, but we don't settle here at IU Kokomo. It's not in our nature.

Instead of settling in, we are gearing up, launching initiative after initiative, setting our sights on becoming a destination campus for students and employees – or, as I put it in my last column, turning this hidden gem of a campus into a famous gem, known around Indiana and around the Midwest.

To kick things off last fall, we launched an ambitious campaign in which we set out to improve IU Kokomo in "100 Ways in 100 Days," and we succeeded, adding student scholarships, a campus fiesta during Hispanic Heritage Month, "Pedagogical Partnerships" and podcasts on pedagogy to improve the student experience, free yoga classes for employees, and much more.

Those 100 days are over, but the improvements are not. To paraphrase Al Pacino's famous line – we're just getting warmed up!

What's next for IU Kokomo?

Our first eSports team will take to the (virtual) court in the fall. eSports is the fastest growing sport in the world, and a new batch of Cougar athletes will be part of the wave.

Innovation Hall, scheduled for completion in December, will be home to an arena for this eSports team, as well as a Tech Innovation Studio, Business Intelligence Lab, and the KEY Center for Innovation. It will be located in the west wing of the Kelley Student Center.

New lifelong learning initiatives, including AIM (Achieve. Improve. Master.) and the KEY Academy, will be in full force this year.

Finally (well, for now), we will be engaging all of you – our valued alumni – with invitations to concerts, plays, athletic events, sky watching opportunities, and more, as well as private events in our beautiful Kelley House.

I look forward to collaborating with you as we continue to take IU Kokomo to new heights.



Mark Canada, Ph.D.
Chancellor

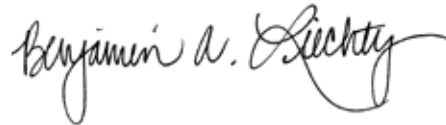


Recognition of faculty and staff who submitted ideas to the 100 Ways in 100 Days initiative, February 2023.

Alumni Day

On February 18, more than 50 alumni attended Alumni Day at the final women's and men's home basketball games. This was not only a great way to show the student-athletes celebrating Senior Day the power of the IU alumni network but also to demonstrate how much alumni support each other and current students. Alumni were recognized during the men's game and were encouraged to remain connected to IU Kokomo. It was incredible to visit with so many alumni who attended.

Many of us did not have the opportunity to support student-athletes when we were students at IU Kokomo. As IU Kokomo continues to transform and progress, it is important that we as alumni show our support for these individuals and for our growing athletic programs. Next year, we will have several opportunities to attend athletic events, be that for Homecoming (October 2023), Alumni Days at games, or even coming to see our alumni athletes return to campus to scrimmage against current players. These opportunities and other events geared toward alumni help contribute to the rich lifelong experience that makes IU Kokomo a destination campus. And with your help, we can continue to make that connection even deeper.



Benjamin Liechty, B.A. '06
Director of Alumni Relations



thanks

to our outgoing board members



BRIANNE BOLES (B.G.S. '03, M.P.M. '09) led recruitment efforts to achieve the largest new member cohort in 2022, while also serving as this committee's chairperson in 2021-22. She assisted in IU Day fundraising efforts to reach a goal of \$2,100 in 2020. At the end of 2022, Brianne was appointed to serve on the IU Alumni Association's Executive Council, where she currently serves as a member of the finance committee. Brianne is the president of Developmental Services, Inc.



CAMERON HUFFMAN (B.A. '11, J.D. '14) has served as chair of the fundraising committee since 2021. His leadership on this committee helped elevate student and donor awareness of the Kokomo Region Alumni scholarship, which increased donations to the scholarship and the number of students applying for the scholarship. Cameron is an associate attorney at Kopka Pinkus Dolin, PC in Carmel.



GENIE MASON LALONDE (B.S. '70) has been in the IU family for more than 40 years. To say she bleeds cream and crimson is an understatement. She served on the Kokomo Region Alumni Board since 2018, serving as secretary, vice president, and president. She helped plan, participated in, and supported many alumni activities on and off the Kokomo campus with pride. Genie was instrumental in assisting with the creation of a board mentoring program in collaboration with Martha Warner, and participating in IU Kokomo history at the installation of Chancellor Mark Canada.

The **Indiana University Alumni Association Kokomo Region Board of Directors** has the privilege of working with incredibly talented alumni from all IU campuses. These alumni leaders give their time, their talents, and their treasure to help move Indiana University forward. They also help attract other alumni to serve on the alumni board, increase funds for the Kokomo Region Alumni scholarship, and create experiences alumni value.

Three alumni have served in various capacities on the alumni board for four or more years and achieved great things during their years of service.

BECOME MORE INVOLVED

If you are interested in learning how you can become more involved with the IUAA Kokomo Region board of directors, reach out to alumni director, **Ben Liechty**, at alumni@iuk.edu.

THE RESULTS ARE IN!

In 2022, Indiana University Kokomo asked our alumni to share their thoughts on the value and quality of their education. We're proud to see the IUK experience has made a positive impact on the lives of so many of our fellow Cougars!

If you would like to participate in future surveys, please verify your contact information is up to date by emailing alumni@iuk.edu.

My education from IU Kokomo was worth the cost.



IU Kokomo prepared me well to obtain work soon after graduating.



IU Kokomo prepared me well for my current career.



If I had to do it all over again, I would choose IU Kokomo.



COMMENCEMENT

Under perfect sunny blue skies, Indiana University Kokomo celebrated the achievements of the Class of 2023 at its 54th Commencement on Wednesday, May 10. President Pamela Whitten and Chancellor Mark Canada welcomed more than 400 graduates, their families, and friends to “a glorious day for graduation.” Andrea Saylor, Terre Haute, was the student speaker. Molly Lewis, Kokomo, led singing of the National Anthem and the alma mater, while Trisha Norfleet, Kokomo, represented the class during the induction into the IU Alumni Association.

ABOUT THE **CLASS OF 2023**

653 Graduates

40 Indiana counties

13 States

14 Countries

33.6% First generation

571 Bachelor’s degrees

66 Master’s degrees

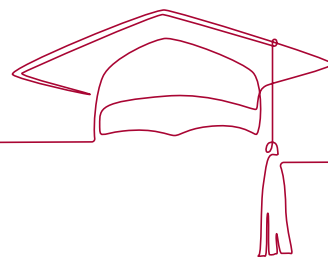
16 Associate degrees



Congratulations graduates!



**FOR MORE COMMENCEMENT
PHOTOS SEARCH @IUKOKOMO
ON FLICKR**



eSPORTS

ARRIVES AT IUK

GAME ON:
Get to Know
IU Kokomo's first
eSports coach,
Nick Liegey



THIS FALL, INDIANA UNIVERSITY KOKOMO WILL DEBUT ITS 15TH VARSITY SPORT -- COED eSPORTS.

Cougar eSports student-athletes will compete against opposing teams online in games such as NBA 2K, Rocket League, Smash Bros, and NFL Madden. IU Kokomo plans to build an eSports arena and will host tournaments and compete on campus, but the program will not be governed by the NAIA, allowing the Cougars to compete against institutions of all sizes and divisions.

eSports took a big step forward this spring with the hiring of its first coach, Nick Liegey. Liegey comes to IU Kokomo from Western High School in Kokomo.

Get to know Coach Liegey in this Q&A!

Q: How did you become involved in eSports?

A: I first got involved in eSports while working as a high school business teacher for Western High School. I came to the job with a passion for video games, but had never coached them prior to that position.

That opportunity allowed me to make some great relationships with my students, being able to improve their game and hopefully their life, as well as having fun along the way.

I grew up playing Spyro the Dragon as a 4-year-old and took off from there. As I aged, and competitive gaming started to grow, I found myself really enjoying FPS games like Call of Duty as well as being a huge fan of NBA2K. 2K was always my competitive go-to game, as I have always been a giant NBA fan growing up. Outside of my personal playing, I also am a huge gaming nerd when it comes to studying a game. I will spend countless hours watching videos and reading articles just to better my own game.

Q: What is one thing you wish more people knew or understood about eSports?

A: I think the biggest "one thing" I wish more people knew about eSports is that it is more than just playing a video game. It is competitive, like any other sport you can play or watch. eSports players practice and train just like any other athlete. They have to develop skills that are not easily obtained, work together to outplay their opponent, and offer the opportunity for more and more people to actually compete. Watching eSports players can really be an eye-opening experience, as you can see the hard work these players have put in, and the results of that effort.

Q: What has been your most memorable moment coaching eSports?

A: As head coach for Western, my most memorable moment was our Rocket League Championship. I thoroughly enjoyed working with every single player that was part of that team, and we were able to take our game to another level by the end of the season. We had a super close championship where my team ended up on top in the final match after countless overtime games in that series. Watching my team communicate, have each other's backs, adjust their game on the fly, and then fight through the adversity to pull through in the end was a really a special moment for all of us.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
KOKOMO

SUMMER

**BASKET
BALL
CAMPS**

July 17-20

Skills Camp: 9 a.m. - noon

Competitive Edge Camp: 1 - 4 p.m.
for boys in grades 5-9

Skills Camp: 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
for boys in grades 1 - 4

July 24-27

Guard Camp: 9 a.m. - noon

Shooting Camp: 1 - 4 p.m.
for boys in grades 5 - 9

Cost per camp: \$85

Camps will be held at the Student Activities and Events Center at IU Kokomo.
2300 S. Washington Street, Kokomo, IN.

Questions? Email Coach Eric Echelbarger at eechelba@iu.edu

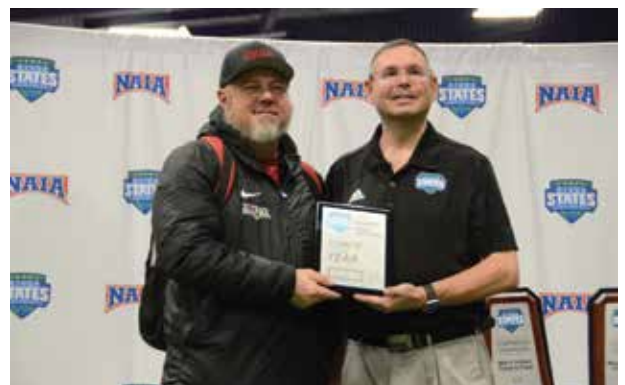
Cougars

STANDOUT STUDENT-ATHLETE ACHIEVEMENTS MARK A WINNING SPRING SEASON

On April 1, IU Kokomo Men's and Women's golf teams hosted the IUK Spring Invite at the Wildcat Creek Golf Course in Kokomo. Both Cougar teams took the top spot, with the men placing first of seven participants, and the women first out of four teams. Notably, IU Kokomo grad student Brandi Jones earned individual medalist honors – her third consecutive tournament win. Brandi finished first in the Woods Invitational, the Klash in Kentucky, and the IUK Spring Invite. To date, Jones has also won two RSC Conference Player of the Week awards. The women's team placed third at the 2023 River States Conference Championship in late April, while Jones earned individual medalist honors for the second straight year. Jones placed 19th in the 2023 NAIA Women's Golf Championship May 23-26 in Silvis, Illinois.

The men's team went from their home event to the Golden Bear Spring Classic in West Virginia, where they also came in first place. Three Cougars finished in the top five at the GBC, including Drew Wagner (2nd place), Daniel Kasten (3rd place), and Hayden Williamson (tied for 4th place). Corbin Robison also finished ninth, making him the fourth Cougar to land in the top 10. The team's final round score of 293 was the lowest tournament round for IU Kokomo in almost two years. The men's team finished in 2nd place at the 2023 River States Conference Championship in late April, improving on last year's third place finish! Robinson, Wagner, and Harley Pugh finished in the top 10, earning All-River States Conference honors and joining the All-RSC Second-Team.

The outdoor track and field teams recently participated in the Pacesetter Sports Invitational, hosted by Indiana State University. The women's team finished in 6th place out of 11 teams, while the men finished in 7th place among 10 teams. At the 2023 River States Conference Championship, both teams finished in fourth place, bringing back several top five, top eight, and event finishes.



STAY UP TO DATE ON ALL THINGS ATHLETICS AT IUKCOUGARS.COM



Davis Leads Campus Diversity Efforts



As a daughter of an Air Force member, Rosalyn Davis thought everyone grew up in diverse communities like those her family lived in during her father's service.

"I didn't understand that all communities aren't diverse until my dad retired from the military," she said.

After graduating from Fisk University, a historically Black university, she chose her graduate school because of its active diversity program, "because in my mind, the country was diversifying, and if I wasn't equipped to work with a lot of different people, I wasn't going to be the best counselor I could be."

Now, as clinical associate professor of psychology at Indiana University Kokomo, she's a campus leader for diversity efforts for students, faculty, and staff. Her goal is to make the campus a welcoming place for everyone.

"Diversity does not make things better for some while making it worse for the others," she said. "When we can better serve one group, we can take those things and expand them to everyone. We figure out how to share it with the larger community. When people are happy, everyone around them gets happier too."

Initially, the work started with conversation.

"Our initial goal was just to get us talking more," said Davis, who serves as faculty diversity liaison and is director of the Master of Arts in Mental Health program.

"We don't have robust conversation about diversity," she continued. "We talk about things we should be doing, but not about what the roadblocks are to doing more. We're hoping to talk more and be more honest with each other."

One of the most successful programs has been safe zone training, which provides opportunities to learn about LGBTQ+ identities, gender, and sexuality, and to create powerful, effective allies.

"People's reaction to it has been among the most pronounced," she said. "Participants have said they learned a lot they hadn't thought about. They were able to see the LGBTQ+ community in a way they hadn't before."

She has also led activities like Privilege for Sale, which examines what privileges the participant finds important, and leading book clubs to read and discuss volumes like *Do the Work: An Antiracist Activity Book*, that gives people the chance to consider heavy concepts with others.

More recent efforts include providing self-paced diversity training modules that faculty and staff can complete on their own schedules.

Davis has been pleased with how the campus has responded, adding that making time available has been the biggest challenge.

“People are invested, and they want to learn more,” she said.

Getting students with busy class and activities schedules, to attend programs can be challenging, she said, but she finds they are receptive to considering new ideas.

During the 2020 election, students in her introduction to psychology classes started asking questions related to that event. Because it was a critical thinking course, she offered to connect the concepts they were questioning to the class and let them decide if they wanted to move forward.

“We spent the whole semester talking about what they didn’t understand, like police brutality and LGBTQ+ issues,” she said. “We had very rich conversations, and the students did way more heavy lifting than I had to do. It was neat to see the students experience the world and look for content. We have to meet students where they are, as opposed to, ‘this is how I was taught.’”

In her graduate classes, students participate in an experiential activity in which they are a minority — like being the only woman somewhere, or the only Christian in a Mosque. For many, it’s their first experience of minority life.

“We are more diverse than some places, but we’re not super diverse,” Davis said. “We need to encourage people to step out of their comfort zone and experience other cultures. A lot of times, people won’t unless they are softly prodded. This allows them to talk to people and notice things they don’t see when they are in the majority. Once they get the prodding, they become global citizens well before we need them to.”

Experiencing new cultures makes people more empathetic.

“Learning about other communities and cultures tends to get that back to you,” Davis said. “You can appreciate what



Faculty and staff members participate in the *Do the Work* book club, which focuses on anti-racism.

you’ve done in your community, but you can also see what others have done as well.”

In addition to Davis’s diversity work on campus, she has also provided diversity training in the community, helping area businesses and organizations cultivate diversity, and learn how to prepare their environment for the changes that need to be made.

She’s also assisted in development of the Multicultural Center, which provides a place for minority and international students to find community and support with one another.

Davis said while the campus has made great strides, there is still more work to be done.

“There’s never a point where we’re done working,” she said, even though at times the work is exhausting. But it’s worth the effort when she sees minority graduates she’s mentored completing doctoral dissertations, being admitted to doctoral programs, and passing licensing exams.

“We have all of our students doing these amazing things, and that’s what keeps me going,” Davis said.

She added that diversity isn’t a job just for one person — everyone can get involved, even in very small ways.

“It doesn’t have to be this massive thing,” she said. “You don’t have to start a book club. You think about what you want to give to other people and start doing that every day. We can take our own energy and be a little better to everyone every day.”



Davis leads an anti-racism book club for faculty and staff.

N I K K I G



“Nikki has been a good friend to our campus.”

I O V A N N I

ves



How often do you get to take a creative writing class taught by a nationally recognized poet?

Students at Indiana University Kokomo have had that opportunity multiple times over nearly three decades courtesy of author and activist Nikki Giovanni. From a keynote speech at the 1994 Enhancing Minority Attainment conference, to a master class and public reading in March 2023, Giovanni has made her mark on the campus.

And even though she's not returned in an official teaching capacity, her influence remains.

"Nikki has been a good friend to our campus," said Karla Stouse, teaching professor in English and humanities. "She loves IU Kokomo. I think this opportunity came at a good time for her. She was warmly received, and people were grateful to have her here. She has always appreciated the fact that our students are interested, respectful, and keen on meeting her."



Learning from the master

About a dozen students, mostly English majors, participated in a master class with Giovanni during her March 21 campus visit. They talked about writing and reading, but also college basketball, Appalachia, space, evolution, her childhood in Knoxville, Tennessee, and the importance of speaking up for your convictions.

"If you're interested in writing, the one thing you have to be excited about is reading," she said. "What makes me a good poet is that I read good poetry. What makes my poetry good is that I know the difference between good poetry and bad poetry."

She reminded them that as writers, they are also their own first readers.

"As young writers, you have to ask yourself what kind of sense does it make, and how can I respond in a way that makes sense to me. It has to delight you. It has to make sense to you. It has to be something you say, 'I'm interested in that.' From there, you can send it out, or you can share it, or do whatever you want with it, but you are your first reader. As you are reading your book, or you are reading your poem, the first thing it has to do is make sense to you."

She told them writing is a lonely business, and as writers, they have to write about what they care about.

"Do you really think Anne Frank knew her diary would define what happened in World War II? She didn't know, she just kept a diary," Giovanni said. "When her father found it, he didn't know. He published it because it was all he had left of his family. He didn't know, and into infinity, we'll be reading

Anne Frank's diary. You have to keep that in mind, that you can't let what someone else will think of what you're doing influence you.

"Writers, we're lonely, but we're also courageous," she said. "You have to be courageous, or you wouldn't be an artist. The word is the most important thing human beings on earth have created. You remember words. Words are powerful. That's what we deal in, the most powerful entity on earth. We write courageously. Some of it's funny. Some of it's sad. We do what we believe."

English major Taylor O'Banion said attending the class was inspiring.

"This is not an opportunity I could pass up," he said. "She told us she's a storyteller, and I can see that by the way she talks. It was so entertaining, story after story, and every question answered with a story."

The presentation gave him a lot to think about, he added.

"Just seeing the way she looks at things is very different from most people you meet," he said. "You get a different point of view from artists and poets, and that's important, especially with our major, where you are studying poetry and art. It opens you up to thinking outside the box, which is what poetry is supposed to do."

Words matter

Giovanni also spoke in Havens Auditorium during her campus visit, receiving a standing ovation as she approached the microphone.

Along with reading her poems "Rosa Parks," and "A Poem for My Librarian," Giovanni talked about topics ranging from appreciation for Black women,



The importance of words, and of remembering the legacy of those who came before, were among many topics of discussion during a presentation by award-winning poet and activist Nikki Giovanni on March 21 at Indiana University Kokomo.

prejudice in Hollywood, her pride in being a member of Delta Sigma Theta sorority, Civil Rights history, women’s reproductive rights, book bans, the Fisk University Jubilee Singers, college basketball, and meeting Queen Elizabeth II. She also shared stories of growing up at her grandparents’

home on Mulvaney Avenue in Knoxville, Tennessee, and visiting the Carnegie Library near that home.

“Of all the things I pay taxes for, I think libraries are my favorite,” she said, expressing concern about current pushes to ban books, including hers.

“We have to continue to fight,” Giovanni said. “Whenever anyone wants to shut you up or control you, the first thing

they do is take away books. They don’t want you to think for yourself. Words are the most important things people do.”

Chancellor Mark Canada said as an English professor, was happy to see an auditorium full of people eager to hear poetry.

“We’re pleased to have one of the leading poets of the last half century here in Kokomo, Indiana, because we value the arts, poetry, and diverse voices,” he said.

“Of all the things I pay taxes for, I think libraries are my favorite.”

Her early days at IU Kokomo

Giovanni first came to campus at the invitation of Chancellor Emerita Erita Hill, to be the keynote speaker at the Enhancing Minority Attainment conference. That led to an appointment as a visiting faculty member during the 1995 and 1996 summer sessions.

Stouse recalled that Giovanni was recovering from lung cancer treatment when she first arrived, and a dean told other faculty members not to bother her. She met the poet at their mailboxes, and Giovanni asked her why nobody was talking to her. Stouse invited her for a cup of tea, and a friendship was born from there.

Student remembrances

When Jane Adcock signed up for one of Giovanni’s summer classes in the mid-90s, she didn’t know anything about the poet. She just needed a class to renew her teaching license, and thought the topic, children’s literature, was the right thing.

“It was probably one of the best classes I ever took,” said Adcock, who now lives in Plainfield. “I expected it to be a typical writing class. It was atypical, and wonderful. It was one of those life-changing experiences you don’t expect.”

Adcock said all these years later, she still has the papers she wrote for Giovanni’s class, with her notes and grade on them.

“She talked to us a lot about using our own childhood history in our writing,” Adcock said, adding that now that she’s retired, she’s returned to her own writing.



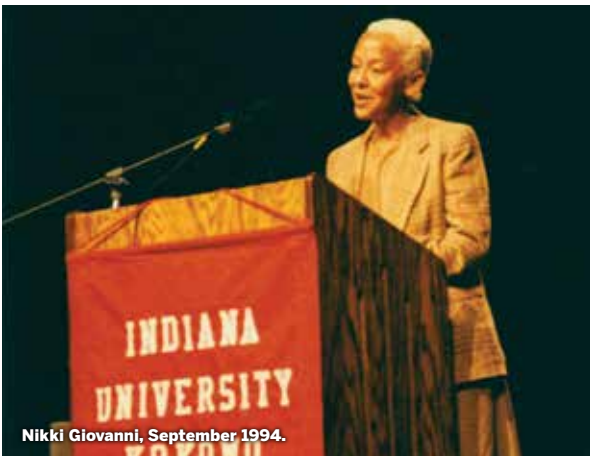
Nikki Giovanni, Enhancing Minority Attainment Conference, 1994



Enhancing Minority Conference; at Kelley House, 1994.



Nikki Giovanni with Women's Studies, September 1994.



Nikki Giovanni, September 1994.

"I love to write," she said. "I write about what's real in my life, and what's important to me, and that's what she told us to write about all those years ago."

She applied what she learned from Giovanni's class in her work running a tutoring program for people over 50.

"The tutors were matched with a child and spent one day a week working with them to understand the connection between reading, writing, and speaking," Adcock said. "Nikki's ideas came back to me, so I dug out the papers I had written and added poetry to our curriculum. She was a big influence in that program while I was there."

Adcock wrote to Giovanni for a time after the class, and regrets losing touch with her over the years. Knowing her former teacher was on faculty at Virginia Tech, she looked for news of her after the shooting on that campus in April 2007. She made a point to listen to the remarks Giovanni wrote and read at a memorial service for the victims.

"As usual, in her own way, it was poetry, and it was beautifully done," Adcock said.

Like Adcock, JoAnn Kaiser took classes with Giovanni for her teaching license. Now a teaching professor in communication arts at IU Kokomo, she was an English teacher at Marion High School, and the two classes in creative writing and African American literature counted toward her teaching license.

"I had heard about Nikki when I was a student in an oral interpretation class, and we performed her poetry," Kaiser said. "I was excited to say the least."

She recalled Giovanni's stream-of-conscious teaching style, and how she would suddenly stop after a thought and say, "that's what I want you to write about for the next class." They wrote for every class, and Kaiser still has her papers.

"She would read it and write a few comments on it and give you a letter grade," she said. "It was just fascinating; it was like being at the feet of the scholar. She was very gracious. She wanted to inspire us to be the writers we wanted to be, and there wasn't a lot of harsh evaluation, just solid feedback."

She warned them not to get ahead of themselves, though, Kaiser recalled.

"Someone asked her how we get published, and she was like, 'We're not there yet,'" Kaiser said, laughing.

Most students did not realize the public profile their professor had.

"I don't think people appreciated what IU Kokomo was bringing to us," Kaiser said. "I'm not sure people took the class because of who she was, but as we took the class, we realized how amazing the opportunity had been."

For Kaiser, it was an eye-opening look into another culture as well.

"For me, as a middle-class white woman, my perception and understanding through her eyes was amazing. Being open to that type of literature and her experience as a Black woman, as a Black academic, was interesting. It was fun to hear her talk about other people we knew as published authors."

She's used Giovanni's works in her own classes, including her response to the Virginia Tech shootings, as an example of commemorative speeches and speaking from a manuscript.

"I hope people understand her significance as a scholar and a writer," Kaiser said. "She's just a good person."

As usual, in her own way, it was poetry, and it was beautifully done.

Giovanni's continued influence

After her visiting faculty stints at IU Kokomo, Giovanni returned to her appointment as University Distinguished Professor at Virginia Tech, but kept in touch as a resource back in Indiana.

Stouse leaned on her friend's insight when developing an ethnic literature class. Giovanni insisted she had to include Isabel Wilkerson's *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*, about the time from the 1910s to the 1970s when approximately six million Black people moved from the rural American South to urban northern, midwestern, and western states, to escape racial violence and Jim Crow laws, and seek economic and educational opportunities.

"Having her as a resource to give ideas of things that should resonate set the tone for the whole class," Stouse said "She's always been helpful."

Stouse added that whenever she's asked, Giovanni has met with IU Kokomo creative writing classes via phone or video conferencing, and she also helped Stouse access advance copies of a novel she wanted to teach.

Stouse was teaching a masterpieces class that usually included Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Beloved*. She knew Morrison, a friend of Giovanni's, was about to publish a new book, *God Bless the Child*, and asked her to see if Morrison would allow them to read it before it was published.

"Nikki called Toni, Toni called a publisher, and we got a galley proof and permission to make as many copies as we needed," Stouse said, adding that Morrison's only stipulation was to give her feedback on the novel.

"When I call and say, 'could you?' Nikki always says yes," she said. "She has always gone out of her way for our students."

Later, Giovanni hosted "Sheer Good Fortune," a celebration of Morrison, and invited IU Kokomo students and faculty to attend the event at Virginia Tech, which included a

Who's Who of Black literary figures such as Maya Angelou, Rita Dove, Sonia Sanchez, Edwidge Danticat, and Yusef Komunyakaa.

"The benefit of what she does is, they see someone making a life with their writing," Stouse said. "It's not just making money; it's using the platform to share a message. They see the empowerment of that. People tend to listen to celebrities. Having your writing out

there makes you some kind of celebrity. It gives everyone an opportunity to make positive changes. That's the point of writing — to influence, to inspire, to make positive changes.

"Creative writing classes require you to use your voice to change the world. This may be the first time they realize they have that empowerment."

Giovanni's honors and accomplishments

Giovanni has published multiple books for adults and children, including essays and poetry, as well as audio recordings. Her poetry collections include her first self-published book, *Black Feelings Black Talk*, and her most recent, *Make Me Rain: Poems & Prose*.

Her poetry, essays, and recordings have covered topics including gender, race, and social issues, and she is known as a champion for civil rights and social justice. She was a University Distinguished Professor at Virginia Tech for more than 30 years, and won the 2022 Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, the inaugural Rosa L. Parks Woman of Courage Award, the American Book Award, the Langston Hughes Award, and seven NAACP Image Awards.



Jane Adcock in pink (top row, fourth from left), Joann Kaiser (bottom far right), Mid90s.



Nikki Giovanni speaks in the Main Building courtyard, Spring 1995.



Nikki Giovanni's Summer Class, 1996.



Karla Stouse with Nikki Giovanni, March 2023.

“She has always gone out of her way for our students.”

MULTIcultural Center

PROGRAMMING CREATES CONNECTIONS



Written by
—Tess Barker

The Multicultural Center (MCC) opened in October 2020 in the west wing of the Kelley Student Center. The MCC was established to promote a welcoming and positive campus climate and to cultivate a diverse, inclusive environment that supports equal access, participation, and representation on campus. Kokomo was the first regional campus to have a Multicultural Center to help replace obstacles with opportunities, so minority and underrepresented students, faculty, and staff find a sense of belonging and support. In the past two years, the MCC has established a meaningful presence on campus and has already made a significant impact on the campus community.

▶ MCC: One Location, Many Units

The MCC suite is home to three identity-based units: the Black Student Center, the LGBTQ+ Center, and Latinos Unidos: Hispanic Center (which was established a year prior to the MCC). It also houses three offices with connected and complimentary purposes: International Student Services; the coordinator for student life and campus diversity; and since May 2021, a part-time CAPS therapist. The co-location of the CAPS therapist creates an opportunity to better serve students from minority or underrepresented backgrounds.

The co-location of these centers and offices ensures that programs and services support not only certain groups of students, but the entire IUK community, and moves us toward more fully realizing our goals surrounding diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism. Programmatically, the MCC develops events that recognize the intersectionality of our multiple identities; connects the classroom with the co-curricular; and acknowledges and begins to address the impact of the past on our present and our future. Some programs are offered through the Center units, and the MCC also offers its own programming.

▶ LGBTQ+ Center

The LGBTQ+ Center promotes a community of care and support for LGBTQ+ students and allies. It works toward creating and maintaining a safe and inclusive environment for the equitable treatment of all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members. The Center enables LGBTQ+ visibility by fostering and enriching awareness, understanding, and acceptance, and hosting LGBTQ+ trainings and informative programs.



The LGBTQ+ Center partners with several campus units to extend its reach. Notable programming is its partnership with the Diversity Committee to promote Safe Zone Training, a free training for any student, faculty, or staff member. It also supports an LGBTQ+ Lending Library, started in 2022 by a grant from the IU Queer Philanthropy Circle. The lending library supplements the holdings of the IU Kokomo library with about 70 titles focused on the voices and experiences of the LGBTQ+ community. Books are available to check out by request from the Multicultural Center during normal business hours.

► **Black Student Center**

The Black Student Center (BSC) serves Black and African American students by providing a place to belong, both on campus and in the community. It facilitates opportunities for academic and social support and programming in a safe and welcoming environment to help students achieve their educational goals. The BSC works in partnership with other diversity efforts on campus to center the voices, experiences, and dynamic lives of the members of our Black community, empowering students in their endeavors in and out of the classroom.

BSC has developed regular programming to foster student connection and self-expression. A popular program is Music Monday, where a DJ plays hits while students have access to art supplies. This work is connected to a

Black Art Expo, held each semester to amplify the work of Black artists that may not be part of the mainstream. A signature program of the BSC is the Freshman Pinning Ceremony. Started in 2022, this event welcomes new students who identify as Black or African American to the IUK campus with a community-minded dinner and pinning ceremony.



► **Latinos Unidos: Hispanic Center**

The Latinos Unidos: Hispanic Center (LUHC) brings together students and their families to provide resources and support to address the unique challenges Hispanic students may face. Finding a community and support system is important to each student's success, including our Hispanic/Latinx students. LUHC supports students as they navigate the transition into college life. Here, students find a safe space, regardless of immigration status, to meet new friends, find resources for academic and personal support, and celebrate Latino culture.

LUHC provides programming to support Latino students, but also to share Hispanic culture with the campus. The Spanish Club is open to any student, whether they already speak Spanish or are a novice learner. Eventually, with successful performance in classes, students may be invited to join Sigma Delta Pi, the national honor society for students studying Spanish. Other LUHC events have included bilingual movie screenings, Latin dance instruction, and theater performances. LUHC also connects alumni with students through recognition events. The Fall Family Fiesta was a popular event during Hispanic Heritage Month – a celebration of food, family, and culture!



► **International Student Services**

International Student Services (ISS) supports, serves, advises, and assists all international students, from recruitment through graduation and beyond. ISS strives to ensure international students have the best experience while achieving their educational goals by assisting with cultural adjustment: offering events and programming, providing regulatory guidance, connecting students to available resources and academic support, and walking beside them on their academic journey.

ISS also provides programming at IU Kokomo to help students share their cultures and experiences with the broader community. For example, International Education Week highlights each of our international students with food, educational materials, and social gatherings. A new feature on the MCC social media platforms is Snack Swap, where students from two or more countries share favorite tastes from home, engaging in a cultural exchange using all the senses.



► **MCC Programming**

The MCC coordinates events and services that support the work of the units above, but also enhances campus support and understanding of DEI issues. Because learning is never done, in March 2021, the MCC piloted a week-long Equity Challenge. Hosted on Canvas as a self-paced learning opportunity, 55 IU Kokomo community members voluntarily engaged in this week-long exploration of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. The week concluded with an in-person lunch and learn to allow participants to connect and have conversation.

The MCC Equity Ambassadors are a group of students who advocate for DEI and social justice. They provide peer-led programming designed to appeal broadly to IU Kokomo students. For example, each Ambassador is responsible for at least one Lunch and Learn annually, giving them an opportunity to engage in self-reflection and growth while sharing their knowledge with campus. In 2022, they piloted a program called Pedagogical Partners to provide student-centered feedback on how faculty can support and promote an inclusive learning environment in their classrooms. Faculty, identified through IU Kokomo's Center for Learning, Teaching and Assessment, became the students as Ambassadors helped them develop their teaching in ways that promoted inclusion in the classroom.

The Social Justice Speaker Series is a signature MCC event. The Series provides opportunities for students to attend lectures and programs that enhance classroom content. Speakers are selected to intentionally connect to the curriculum. Topics included the use of Native imagery in sports mascots and the role of art in social justice movements.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE MULTICULTURAL CENTER, VISIT
IUK.EDU/DIVERSITY/MULTICULTURAL-CENTER

KEY UNLOCKS NEW OPPORTUNITIES

WHEN YOU PARTICIPATE IN **KOKOMO EXPERIENCE AND YOU (KEY)**, THE WORLD IS YOUR CLASSROOM!

This year, students have learned by experiencing places like the Kurt Vonnegut Museum, the Benton County Wind Farm, the CANDLES Holocaust Museum, the Indiana Statehouse, and Eli Lilly.

KEY students have also grown by doing, participating in a Model U.N. program, developing a community garden as an ethical community service project, and presenting at the undergraduate research conference.

The campus also launched the KEY Academy, inviting area residents and alumni to experience lifelong learning opportunities.



KEY Summer Institute, August 2022



Lucas Oil Stadium, November 2022



Ainadamar Performance, February 2023



Ornithology and Bird Banding, August 2022



Opalescent Glass, November 2022



Benton County Wind Farm, April 2023



The Chancellor's Guild Dinner

RECOGNIZING A WORLD OF IMPACT

The campus celebrated donors at the annual Chancellor's Guild dinner April 13. The event honors those who have given \$1,000 or more to IU Kokomo in the calendar year.

This year's dinner was focused on the Kokomo Experience and You (KEY) program, with food stations representing KEY trips to destinations including Walt Disney World Resort, Nashville, Tennessee, Wrigley Field, and European sites significant to World War II. Faculty and students who participated in those programs were on hand to talk about the impact of those experiences.

The Smith Fuqua Foundation and the Tipton County Foundation were inducted into the Remarkable Legacy Society, honoring those who have given \$75,000 or more to the IU Foundation for any IU Kokomo fund.

Forty-one donors were also honored as members of the Seiberling Society, for giving more than \$5,000 during the year.



Jeff (center) and Lisa (left) Smeltzer, Judy Goltko (right)



Todd Moser (left), Judge Bill Menges (right)



Dana Scruggs (front), Barb Conner (back)



Lisa Canada (left), Dr. Robert Christensen (center), Chancellor Mark Canada (right)

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