



Gwendolyn Brooks

-- A BIOGRAPHY --

Gwendolyn Brooks was the first Black person to win a Pulitzer Prize (1950). She was born in Topeka, Kansas, June 7, 1917, but lived in Chicago, Illinois, since she was a few weeks old. She is a graduate of Chicago's Wilson Junior College (now Kennedy-King College), and has been awarded over 70 honorary degrees. She has taught at the University of Wisconsin (Madison), City Colleges of New York, Columbia College of Chicago, Northeastern Illinois University, Elmhurst College, Chicago, State University. since 1968 she has been Poet Laureate of Illinois, succeeding the first Poet Laureate, Carl Sandburg. In 1988 she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. She has published many books, including poetry for adults and children, one novel, writing manuals, and two volumes of autobiography.

In 1985 she became the 29th and final appointment as Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress. She is a member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Among her awards are: the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Award, the Shelley Memorial Award, the Anisfield-Wolf Award (for which she was many years a judge),(for three years she was a Rhodes Scholar judge), the Kuumba Liberation Award, two Guggenheim Fellowships, (1946 and 1947) the Frost Medal from the Poetry Society of America, a National Book Award nomination for "In the Mecca," the National Endowment for The Arts Lifetime Achievement Award. She is the only American to receive the Society For Literature Award, University of Tessaloniki, Athens, Greece (1990). In 1994 the National Endowment for the Humanities appointed her 23rd Jefferson Lecturer. The Academy of American Poets gave her its 65th Fellowship on May 16th of 2000.

Gwendolyn Brooks

-- A BIOGRAPHY --

In Illinois, she has enjoyed many special honors: in Harvey, there is the Gwendolyn Brooks Junior High School, in Aurora, the Gwendolyn Brooks Elementary School, in DeKalb, the Gwendolyn Brooks Elementary School. On the campus of Western Illinois University in Macomb there is the Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center; in Chicago's Cabrini Green community, the Edward Jenner School auditorium was named after her; and her name is engraved on the Illinois State Library in Springfield which was renamed the Gwendolyn Brooks Illinois State Library in June, 2003.

Gwendolyn Brooks was the daughter of the late David and Keziah (Wims) Brooks. She was married to Henry Blakely, author of "Windy Place," and is the mother of Nora Brooks Blakely, founder and producing artistic director of Chocolate Chips Theatre Company in Chicago, and Henry Blakely Jr., a web designer and digital artist.

Publications

Poetry

A Street in Bronzeville, 1945
Bronzeville Boys and Girls, 1956
Selected Poems, 1963
The Wall, 1967
Riot, 1969
Aloneness, 1971
To Disembark, 1981
The Near-Johannesburg Boy
and Other Poems, 1986
Gottschalk and the Grande
Tarantelle, 1988

Annie Allen, 1949
The Bean Eaters, 1960
We Real Cool, 1966
In the Mecca, 1968
Family Pictures, 1970
Beckonings, 1975
Black Love, 1982
Blacks, 1987
Winnie, 1988
Children Coming Home, 1991

Gwendolyn Brooks

-- A BIOGRAPHY --

Other Publications

Maud Martha, 1953
1971 A Broadside Treasury (Editor), 1971
Report from Part One, 1972
The Tiger Who Wore White Gloves, 1974
A Capsule Course in Black Poetry Writing (with Don L. Lee),
Keorapetse Kgositsile and Dudley Randall), 1975
Primer for Blacks, 1980
Very Young Poets, 1983
Contributions to numerous publications

The World of Gwendolyn Brooks,
Jump Bad: A New Chicago
Anthology (editor), 1971
Young Poets' Primer, 1981
Report from Part Two, 1995

Honours

American Academy of Arts and Letters Grant, 1946
Guggenheim Fellowship, 1946 and 1947
Pulitzer Prize in Poetry, 1950
Thormod Mosen Award (from Chicago's "Poetry"), 1964
Ferguson Memorial Award, 1964
Poet Laureate of Illinois, 1968
Anisfield-Wolf Award, 1968
Black Academy Award, 1971
Shelley Memorial Award, 1976
Frost Medal, Poetry Society of America, 1988
National Endowment for the Arts Lifetime Achievement Award, 1989
Nat'l Endowment For The Humanities Jefferson Lecturer, 1991 &
1994 Aiken-Taylor Award, 1992
National Book Foundation Medal, 1994
National Medal of Arts, 1995 (from the President)
Academy of American Poets 65th Fellowship, 2000
Living Legend-Library of Congress Medal, 2000
Over 70 honorary doctorates

Memberships

National Women's Hall of Fame
Society of Midland Authors