

## Local Politics Matter

# To be Young Gifted and Black

## A Timeless Anthem for our Youth

When I was a young pre-teen there was a beautiful song that has stuck with me through the decades. I think that it has stuck with me because we have yet to “Get It”. We have yet to step up to who we are while using the beautiful gifts that we have been given. Yes it has been decades since I first heard those words that constantly ring in my ears:

Young, gifted and black  
 Oh what a lovely precious dream  
 To be young, gifted and black  
 Open your heart to what I mean  
 In the whole world you know  
 There are billion boys and girls  
 Who are young, gifted and black  
 And that's a fact!

"**To Be Young, Gifted and Black**" is a song sung by [Nina Simone](#) (1969) with [lyrics](#) by [Weldon Irvine](#). It was written in

memory of Simone's late friend [Lorraine Hansberry](#), author of the play [A Raisin in the Sun](#). It is a song that is timeless, a song that we should continue to celebrate, a song that all of our children should be familiar with.

Maybe this song goes unnoticed because it was written a year after another song that has gone down in the annals of African American history. That song, “Say it Loud I’m Black and I’m Proud” is considered the unofficial anthem of the “Black Power Movement”. While most African Americans are familiar with the legendary hit by James Brown, the Godfather of Soul, many of us have managed to miss the beautifully uplifting song that Nina left us. During these times when we see image after image of young African American men living in communities where the unemployment rate for youth who look like them hovers



around 50%; neighborhoods that are both drug infested and riddled with crime; neighborhoods that lack adequate educational and recreational facilities; Nina reminds us that there is hope. There is hope because you are equipped to not only handle these challenges you are equipped

to overcome them. You just need to be reminded of who you are. You are “Young Gifted and Black”. The world is waiting for you.

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