

# Toni Morrison

Toni Morrison was born Chloe Anthony Wofford in Lorain, Ohio. She read voraciously as a child and entered Howard University in 1949. It was there that she changed her name from “Chloe” to “Toni”, explaining once that people found it to difficult to pronounce “Chloe.” She then continued studies at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. From 1955–57 Morrison was an Instructor of English at Texas Southern University and taught in the English department at Howard. In 1964 she moved to Syracuse New York, working as an editor. She edited many books by black authors such as Toni Cade Bambara and Gail Jones. While teaching at Howard University and raising two children, she wrote her first novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970). In 1988, Morrison received the Pulitzer Prize for the novel *Beloved* (1987), after an open letter, signed by forty–eight prominent black writers, was published in the New York Time Book Review. Toni Morrison was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993. She is a member of the National Council on the Arts as well as a member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Morrison has actively used her influence to defend the role of the artist and encourage the publication of other black writers.