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## Famed Poet, Author Maya Angelou to Speak at Illinois Wesleyan, Nov. 15

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Famed Poet, Author

## Maya Angelou to Speak at Illinois Wesleyan, Nov. 15

local  
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Education List  
Chicago

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Poet. Educator. Historian. Best-selling author. Actress. Playwright. Civil-rights activist. Producer. Director.

Renaissance woman Maya Angelou, one of the great voices of contemporary literature, will deliver a public lecture at Illinois Wesleyan University, Friday, Nov. 15, 7 p.m., at the Shirk Center, 302 E. Emerson St., Bloomington. Doors will open at 6:15 p.m. for unreserved seating.

Tickets for her address, "Remarks by Maya Angelou," will go on public sale, Friday, Nov. 1, at the Main Desk of IWU's Memorial Student Center, 104 E. University St., Bloomington. Tickets are \$10 each and are limited to two per person. Tickets are available for a limited number of seats and standing room only.

Tickets will be distributed to the IWU community, Oct. 29-30, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. in the Nell Eckley Lounge, Memorial Student Center, 104 E. University St., Bloomington. One free ticket is available with an IWU "ID," with a second ticket available for purchase for \$5. There is a two-ticket limit.

Prior to her address, Angelou will meet with IWU English literature and poetry students at 4 p.m. in the Anderson Lecture Hall, C-101, on the first floor of the Center for Natural Science. This session is not open to the public. It is available to news media on a five-minute photo opportunity basis only.

Parade Magazine in its Sept. 22 edition called Angelou "poet laureate of the world."

Angelou is only the second poet to write and recite an original work at a presidential inauguration. She recited her poem, "On the Pulse of Morning," at President Bill Clinton's inauguration in January, 1993. Angelou won a Grammy Award, the recording industry's top honor, for her recording of "On the Pulse of Morning." (Robert Frost was the first poet so honored at President John F. Kennedy's inauguration in 1961.)

In 1981, Angelou was appointed to a lifetime position as the first Reynolds Professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University in North Carolina.

### Best-Selling Author

Among Angelou's best-selling works are:

- I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, 1969
- Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'Fore I Diie, 1971 [Editor's Note: "Diie" is the correct spelling]

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- Gather Together in My Name, 1974
- Oh Pray My Wings are Gonna Fit Me Well, 1975
- Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas, 1976
- And Still I Rise, 1978
- The Heart of a Woman, 1981
- Shaker, Why Don't You Sing?, 1983
- All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes, 1986
- Now Sheba Sings the Song, 1987
- I Shall Not Be Moved, 1990
- Wouldn't Take Nothing for my Journey Now, 1993

### **Angelou's Background**

Born in St. Louis, Angelou spent her childhood in Stamps, Ark., and San Francisco.

Interested in a stage career, Angelou studied drama and dance. She received a dance scholarship in 1952 to study in New York. Subsequently, she joined the 22-country European tour of George Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess."

After marrying a South African freedom fighter, Angelou lived in Cairo and Ghana, where she worked as a journalist. She became the first woman editor of "The Arab Observer" (Cairo), the only English-language news weekly in the Middle East. In Ghana, she was feature editor of "The African Review" (Accra). She also worked as a teacher and assistant administrator at the School of Music and Drama at the University of Ghana.

In the 1960s--at the request of civil-rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.--Angelou became the northern coordinator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), King's civil-rights group.

President Gerald Ford appointed Angelou in 1974 to the U.S. Bicentennial Commission. President Jimmy Carter named her to the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year.

Angelou has been a ground breaker for black women in the film industry, especially through her work in script writing and directing. She wrote the screenplay for "Georgia, Georgia," which was the first original script by a black woman to be produced. She also has done musical scores for her own films and others. As a writer/producer at 20th Century Fox TV, she brought to television her film, "Sisters, Sisters."

Angelou is a veteran of countless TV appearances. She was the subject of an hour interview

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with Bill Moyers of the Public Broadcasting System. Her renowned autobiographical account of her youth, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, was a two-hour TV special on CBS in 1979. Among her other TV accomplishments are the five-part mini-series, *Three Way Choice*, aired on CBS, for which she was the author and executive producer, and "Afro-American in the Arts," a PBS special for which Angelou received the prestigious Golden Eagle Award.

Teaming up with comedian Godfrey Cambridge, Angelou wrote, produced, and performed in the revue, *Cabaret for Freedom*. She also appeared with Cambridge in the Jean Genet's play, *The Blacks*. This production later won an Obie Award.

In 1974, Angelou adapted Sophocles' *Ajax* for the mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. Her musical, *And Still I Rise*, for which she was librettist, lyricist, and composer, was first staged in 1976.

She wrote and presented a British Broadcasting Corp. (BBC) documentary, *Trying to Make it Home*, in 1988. She directed the Errol John play, *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl*, which opened in May, 1988, in London.

Among Angelou's awards and honors are:

- Chubb Fellowship Award, Yale University, 1970.
- National Book Award nomination for *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, 1970.
- Pulitzer Prize nomination for *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'Fore I Die*, 1973.
- Tony Award nomination for her performance in *Look Away*, 1973.
- Emmy Award nomination for her performance in *Roots*, 1977.
- Horatio Alger Award, 1992.

*Ladies Home Journal* has honored Angelou with its Woman of the Year in Communications Award in 1976 and in 1983 the magazine included her as among the Top 100 Most Influential Women.

Angelou has received more than 30 honorary doctoral degrees from institutions such as Smith College, Mills College, and Lawrence University.

In 1987, Angelou was honored with the North Carolina Award in Literature.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 1,900 students in a College of Liberal Arts, College of Fine Arts, and a four-year professional School of Nursing. A \$15 million athletics and recreation center opened in the fall of 1994; and a \$25 million science building opened in the fall of 1995. The \$4.6 million Center for Liberal Arts--a facility housing 60 faculty offices, six classrooms, and other facilities for social science, humanities business and economics, and interdisciplinary studies'

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faculty--is slated to open next August. The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching promoted Illinois Wesleyan to a "Baccalaureate I" institution in 1994, a classification that places it among 161 highly selective National Liberal Arts Colleges in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*, another respected college guide, rated IWU "highly competitive (+)" in its latest edition.

**News Coverage Guidelines:** Ms. Angelou's schedule will not permit her to hold a news conference or grant individual interviews. She has requested absolutely no video or audio taping of her address--except by members of the news media. News media representatives are limited to video or audio taping only the first five minutes of her presentation. No exceptions will be made. Ms. Angelou also requests that no professional flash photographs be taken after the first five minutes of the address; this applies to news photographers.