

**Megan Brennan  
Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer  
United States Postal Service  
“Maya Angelou” First-Day-of-Issue Ceremony  
Warner Theater  
513 13th Street, NW  
Washington, DC  
April 7, 2015      11 a.m.**

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Thank you, Melissa (Harris-Perry), for that kind remark. Good morning everyone, and welcome.

One of the privileges of being Postmaster General is that I get to help celebrate the lives and accomplishments of great Americans.

And, by any measure, Maya Angelou was truly a great American.

In so many ways — through her life....her advocacy....her passion for people and for justice.....and most importantly, through her words — she inspired us.

She committed her life to ideas that elevated our sense of what it means to be human, and to advance understanding, compassion and reconciliation.

Dr. Angelou found her voice through literature...and poetry...and the spoken word. And she used her voice so passionately, for so many pursuits, and achieved so much.

She was an author who broke down the barriers of literary form. She was also a poet, an educator, a historian and a filmmaker. And she touched millions.

Throughout her many written works, she explored themes of identity, race and displacement — and did so in a distinct style that stretched over time and place.

Her stories embodied the pain of her personal struggle — but more than anything else, they epitomized the triumph of courage and the human spirit.

She said: “One isn’t necessarily born with courage, but one is born with potential. Without courage, we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can’t be kind, true, merciful, generous or honest.”

Dr. Angelou was certainly courageous, and she used her courage and her voice for the betterment of all people.

She was a champion of justice, civil rights, equality and fairness in our society. Her words sought to heal and unite, and to celebrate life.

For her many contributions to our country and culture, President Obama presented Dr. Angelou, the “people’s poet,” with our nation’s highest civilian honor — the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Today, Dr. Angelou receives the Postal Service's highest honor: the commemoration of her image on a United States postage stamp. And yet, her life — so meaningful and varied — can hardly be contained within the four corners of a stamp.

As was true in her life, it’s the words that jump out and catch your attention and make you think about the person who shared them with us. “*A bird doesn’t sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song.*” These are joyous words of inspiration.

They are words that Dr. Angelou felt captured the essence of the human spirit, and served as an answer of sorts to the title of her first memoir “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.”

Dr. Angelou certainly had a song within her... and poems, and plays, and performances, and dances. We are incredibly fortunate she sang them, performed them, wrote them, and shared them with all of us.

You will notice that there are some other words on her stamp....the words “Forever” and “USA.”

It is the Postal Service’s way of honoring and remembering those who left an enduring and indelible mark on our society, and who represent the very best of America. Today, this new Forever stamp serves as a tribute to Dr. Angelou’s humanity and contributions to our nation.

And now, on behalf of the United States Postal Service, I would like to invite the members of Maya Angelou’s family, and all of our special guests, to join me in dedicating the Maya Angelou Forever stamp.

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