

Administration of Barack Obama, 2014

Statement on the Death of Maya Angelou

May 28, 2014

When her friend Nelson Mandela passed away last year, Maya Angelou wrote that "No sun outlasts its sunset, but will rise again, and bring the dawn."

Today Michelle and I join millions around the world in remembering one of the brightest lights of our time: a brilliant writer, a fierce friend, and a truly phenomenal woman. Over the course of her remarkable life, Maya was many things: an author, poet, civil rights activist, playwright, actress, director, composer, singer, and dancer. But above all, she was a storyteller, and her greatest stories were true. A childhood of suffering and abuse actually drove her to stop speaking, but the voice she found helped generations of Americans find their rainbow amidst the clouds and inspired the rest of us to be our best selves. In fact, she inspired my own mother to name my sister Maya.

Like so many others, Michelle and I will always cherish the time we were privileged to spend with Maya. With a kind word and a strong embrace, she had the ability to remind us that we are all God's children, that we all have something to offer. And while Maya's day may be done, we take comfort in knowing that her song will continue, "flung up to heaven," and we celebrate the dawn that Maya Angelou helped bring.

NOTE: The statement referred to the President's sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

Categories: Statements by the President : Deaths :: Angelou, Maya.

Names: Angelou, Maya; Obama, Michelle; Soetero-Ng, Maya.

Subjects: Deaths : Angelou, Maya.

DCPD Number: DCPD201400406.