

# Maya Writer and Activist Angelou (1928–2014)

Maya Angelou was a celebrated writer, performer, and social activist. She rose to international prominence as an author after the publication of her groundbreaking autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Her story of personal strength amid childhood trauma and racism resonated with readers and was nominated for the National Book Award. Angelou was awarded more than 30 honorary degrees in her lifetime.

In 2010, President Barack Obama awarded Angelou the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country's highest civilian honor, and in 2022, Angelou became the first Black woman featured on a U.S. quarter as part of the U.S. Mint's American Women Quarters™ Program.



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