CELEBRATION OF 50 YEARS OF

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

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Office of Alumni Engagement

AWFUBA
Association of WFU Black Alumni
Thank you for sharing this special occasion with us as we celebrate over 50 years of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and the incredible author and professor, Dr. Maya Angelou. You are here for the same reason we are...because she touched our lives. So many individuals in the Wake Forest community and beyond have shared with us their "Maya Story", how they met her, studied with her, worked alongside her or were introduced to her beautiful verses and prose as a reader. We love and honor her as well as recognize her contributions to literature, education, civil rights and the world.

Many thanks to everyone who made this special event possible. The generous offering of time, talents and resources came together to create the beautiful mosaic of the program. Please reach for your copy of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and read Chapter 23 along with us. Enjoy the panel discussion with WFU faculty as well as a current student.

Most importantly, continue the conversation today, and moving forward, by using the Discussion Guide to engage with others in meaningful conversations that promote unity, a goal Dr. Angelou worked toward for much of her life. Enjoy today's program as we celebrate the "Phenomenal Woman."

- Kelly Starnes ('93, MBA '14), President, AWFUBA

I’m not a writer who teaches. I’m a teacher who writes. But I had to work at Wake Forest to know that.
Dr. Herman Eure (PhD '74)

Dr. Herman Eure came to Wake Forest in 1969 as the first full-time Black graduate student and then the first Black doctoral degree recipient on the Reynolda Campus. After graduating, Herman initially turned down an offer to teach at Wake Forest, but then he turned a two-year commitment into a 40-year investment in the students of Wake Forest. He was the first Black faculty member and an influential force in creating the Office for Minority Affairs — efforts that have evolved into what we now know as the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Intercultural Center and Magnolia Scholars.

Dr. Eure has been an exemplary teacher-scholar, regularly recognized for his distinguished teaching in his classroom and research in the field of biology. He also served as chair of the biology department and was named the first associate dean of faculty development. Herman's mentorship and scholarship continued until his retirement in 2013, but his association with Wake Forest continues. In 2017, he received the Medallion of Merit, the University's highest honor, and was named to the Board of Trustees, where he serves as vice chair.

Dr. Melissa Harris-Perry (’94)

Professor Melissa Harris-Perry is the Maya Angelou Presidential Chair in the Department of Politics and International Affairs and the Department of Women and Gender Studies at Wake Forest University. There she teaches courses on American politics and elections at the intersections of race, place, and gender.

Professor Harris-Perry is founder and president of the Anna Julia Cooper Center, whose mission is to advance justice through intersectional scholarship and action. Along with Dorian Warren, Harris-Perry is co-creator and co-host of the podcast System Check for The Nation. In partnership with her husband, James Perry, she is principal of the Perry Partnership offering both private and political consulting. From 2012-2016 she hosted the television show “Melissa Harris-Perry” on weekend mornings on MSNBC and was awarded the Hillman Prize for broadcast journalism. She has served as editor-at-large Elle.com and for ZORA, a Medium publication for women of color. She continues to serve as contributing editor for The Nation.

Professor Harris-Perry is an award-winning author and sought after public speaker, lecturing widely throughout the United States and abroad. Harris-Perry received her B.A. degree in English from Wake Forest University and her Ph.D. degree in political science from Duke University. She studied theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York. Harris-Perry previously served on the faculty of the University of Chicago, Princeton University, and Tulane University. Professor Harris-Perry has been awarded honorary degrees from many universities including Meadville Lombard Theological School, Winston-Salem State University, Eckerd College, New York University, and Ithaca College.
Kate Pearson ('22)

Kate Pearson, a Wake Forest junior from New Jersey, is a Political Science and History double major with a minor in American Ethnic Studies. A student who demonstrates exemplary service to the community and Wake Forest, Kate Pearson was the 2020 recipient of the Sophomore Service Excellence Award for her work with the Wake Forest Student Anti-Racism Coalition (ARC).

Kate has been categorized as one of the most energetic activists for social justice on campus. As a testament to her accomplishments with ARC, Pearson was selected by University administration to serve as the student representative of its delegation at the 2019 Institute on Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation at Villanova University alongside several high-level University officials. Her internship at the Office of Diversity and Inclusion over the summer allowed these interests to intersect. By combining her love of processes and the past to her passion in the present, Kate worked toward increasing transparency, building accountability, and championing diversity.

Kelly Starnes ('93, MBA '14)

Kelly Starnes is a Regional Marketing Manager in the Rheumatology division of AbbVie biopharmaceutical company. Prior to her current position, Kelly served as a District Business Manager in the Immunoscience division of the Bristol-Myers Squibb company. She received her undergraduate degree in biology from Wake Forest University as well as her Masters in Business Administration. Proud to be a "Double Deac", Kelly remains active with WFU by serving on the Alumni Council and is the current president of the Association of Wake Forest University Black Alumni. Kelly resides in the Charlotte, NC area.

Dr. Erica Still

Dr. Erica Still, Associate Professor of English at WFU, oversees faculty recruitment and hiring practices as well as development and execution of programs to increase diversity and support for inclusivity within the College. She joined the Department of English as an Assistant Professor in 2007. In addition to teaching courses in African American Literature, she has served as a lower-division advisor, a senior faculty fellow, and a co-chair for the President's Commission on Race, Equity, and Community. She is the author of the book Prophetic Remembrance: Black Subjectivity in African American and South African Trauma Narratives and a contributor to Literary Expressions of African Spirituality. Her ongoing research interests include examining the intersection of leadership and gender narratives in contemporary African American Literature.
Devin Smith ('99)

An avid reader, Devin Smith, originally from NC, graduated from Wake Forest with a degree in business. He then went on to study film and receive his MFA in Motion Picture Producing from the American Film Institute (AFI)—the Conservatory also dear to the heart of Dr. Angelou and her legacy. Devin credits his ability to make the leap of faith and transition to Los Angeles, specifically, to two outstanding women at Wake Forest: Betsy Hoppe and Dr. Mary Dalton. Living and working in Los Angeles, Devin has enjoyed advising nonprofits, producing films and documentaries, as well as consulting on TV shows and series with some of the best and brightest filmmakers in the industry. It was an honor, and a labor of love for him, to work on this project to celebrate *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and Dr. Angelou—the phenomenal woman, poet, writer, and human whom he admired greatly.

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**Wise Words of Maya**

I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.
THE READING PARTICIPANTS

FEATURING
(in order of appearance)

Guy Johnson, Author, Poet, Beloved Son of Maya Angelou

Beth Hopkins, JD ('73), Professor Emeritus, Wake Forest Law School

Oprah Winfrey, Talk Show Host, Television Producer, Actress, Author, and Philanthropist

Yara Shahidi, Actress, Producer, Model, and Activist

Nathan Hatch, PhD, President of Wake Forest University

Jesse Williams, Activist, Actor, and Director

Craig Robinson, Actor, Comedian, Musician and Singer

Zazie Beetz, German-American Actress and Activist

David Rysdahl, Actor, Writer

Tracee Ellis Ross, Actress, Singer, Television Host and Producer

Jonathan Walton, MDiv, PhD, Dean of the WFU School of Divinity, Presidential Chair of Religion and Society, Dean of Wait Chapel

Aisha Tyler, Actress, Comedian, Director and Talk Show Host

Anthony Mackie, Movie, Television and Broadway Actor

Mary Tribble ('82), Senior Advisor for Engagement Strategies, WFU Alumni Engagement, Author

Ledisi, Singer/Songwriter, Music Producer, Author, Playwright, Film Producer, Record Label CEO

Valerie Jarrett, Businesswoman and Former Senior Advisor to President Barak Obama

Mahogany L. Browne, Writer, Organizer & Educator

Kami Chavis, JD, Associate Provost for Academic Initiatives, Professor of Law and Director of the Criminal Justice Program at WFU School of Law

Brandon Leake, Spoken Word Poet, Educator Motivational Speaker and the winner of the fifteenth season of America's Got Talent
WELCOME

THE BEGINNING
Dr. Ed Wilson ('43) Provost Emeritus and Professor Emeritus of English

LIVE PANEL DISCUSSION
Moderated by Kelly Starnes ('93, MBA '14)

Dr. Herman Eure (PhD '74)          Kate Pearson ('22)
Dr. Melissa Harris-Perry ('94)      Dr. Erica Still

unCAGED BiRDs 23:19 - A SPECIAL READING OF CHAPTER 23 OF I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS (pre-recorded)

Produced and directed by Devin Smith ('99)
Co-produced and edited by Shannon Baker Davis, ACE
Cinematography by Jerry Henry; Graphics and Animation by Katie Mantle
Assistant Editor, Michael Hubbard

DISCUSSION GROUP BREAKOUT SESSIONS*
*Due to limited space, this segment is for Pre-Registered WFU Students, Faculty, Staff and their Guests
Discussion Leaders

Brittney Bogues ('09)          Barbee Oakes ('80)
Jocelyn Burton ('80)          Robin Pearson ('93)
Kevin Cokley ('91)          Alex Reyes Schroeder ('06, JD '09)
Lomar Osbourne ('15)          Andrew Snorton ('93)
Keenon Mann ('04)          Tiffany Tate ('07, MA '11)
Multiple themes such as inequality, racism, sexual assault, trauma and displacement are found in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Which one(s) did you find most compelling and why?

Dr. Maya Angelou was inspired by the attention and care from Mrs. Flowers. Why? Talk about someone who has been an inspiration to you in a similar way.

The graduation scene described in Chapter 23 and read at the beginning of the program involves a cross-section of many citizens in the local community. What were your thoughts and feelings in reading/hearing this important passage?

How would you describe the spirit and attitude of Dr. Angelou as she encounters challenges and disappointments throughout her early life? In what way(s) do you identify with her... or not?

What individuals in your opinion, have the greatest influence on Maya Angelou’s early life and why? Was this influence good or bad? Why?
Many thanks to the following individuals and groups for giving of their time and expertise to make this event a success. What a joy it was to collaborate with each of you on what was truly a labor of love.

Maya Angelou Celebration Committee
Rosalyn Frazier ('93)
Jaymi Thomas ('10)

Association of WFU Black Alumni (AWFUBA) Leadership Team
Christian Burris ('93) Keenon Mann ('04)
Magdelon Harris ('08) Kate Pearson ('22)
Maya Hobgood ('21) Kelly Starnes ('93, MBA '14)
Chris Leak ('85) Jacob Thomas ('22)
Ayana Littlejohn (MS '18)

Anecdote Films, Film production
anecdotefilms.com

Jonathan McElderry, Executive Director, Wake Forest University Intercultural Center

Piper Starnes, Musician

Thamiah Tutt, Director, The Dr. Maya Angelou Foundation
drmayaangeloufoundation.org

Wake Forest University Library, Special Collections and Archives

Live Events Media Group

Special Thanks

Guy Johnson, the inspiration for I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings and ours as well

Ms. Lydia Stuckey, for providing the information and direction we needed to get started on the journey of planning this event. Your wisdom and insights were invaluable.

Provost Rogan Kersh, Mark Petersen, VP of Advancement, Gray Allen Godwin and the Alumni Engagement Team. Without your support and tireless efforts, this celebration would not have been possible.
In Loving Memory

Dr. Larry Hopkins '72, MD '77
December 29, 1949-November 9, 2020

Beloved husband of Beth Norbrey Hopkins ('73), Father of Michelle and David ('12, MA '15), Grandfather to two precious grandchildren

Physician
Teacher
Leader
Mentor

Board of Trustees Member
WFU Medallion of Merit Honoree
Standout Chemistry Student
Demon Deacon Running Back
Our Friend

“Whatever I can do to help others makes life worth living.”
Dr. Larry Hopkins, MD

"If you're going to live, leave a legacy. Make a mark on the world that can't be erased."
Dr. Maya Angelou