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Chapman University Media Relations

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## Maya Angelou Receives Honorary Doctorate

**ORANGE, Calif., Feb. 26, 2007** Dr. Maya Angelou, the poet, author, educator, playwright and civil rights activist, was honored by Chapman University on February 22 with an honorary doctorate in humane letters. Author of such bestsellers as *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and acclaimed as one of the great voices of contemporary literature, Dr. Angelou appeared at Chapman to give a lecture to students and faculty as a part of the university's annual Phenomenal Womens Week, presented by Associated Students, the Chapman student government.

Dr. James L. Doti, president of Chapman, and Chapman dean of students Dr. Joe Kertes presented Dr. Angelou with the degree as the standing-room-only crowd in Memorial Hall cheered. Twenty or thirty years from now, Dr. Doti said to the predominantly student audience in the hall, you will remember this night that Dr. Maya Angelou graced our stage as a high point in your college experience.

Dr. Angelou's talk to the Chapman community focused on the power of one person to change the world. How can you know the power of one person? she asked. Each one of us has the chance to be a light on someone's path. Each one of us had the light shine on us, or we wouldn't be here. She spoke of her childhood, growing up in the tiny town of Stamps, Arkansas: Just looking at me then, it would have been impossible to say She's going to be somebody. Without the lights that I received from others, I would have been just one more poor black girl.

A high point of Dr. Angelou's appearance was her recitation of the poem she wrote for the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, *A Brave and Startling Truth* which she offered for posting on the Chapman website so that all students would have the chance to read it. As the inspiring poem concludes: We must confess that we are the possible/We are the miraculous, the true wonder of this world.