

DREAM

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ones out the door.

"They can talk the talk, but you're in for a disappointment if you expect them to walk the walk," Yolanda said.

She said everyone can take a step for social change because the power to choose is available to all.

Yolanda, a social activist and actress, interlaced her rousing speech with lively theatrical performances of socially conscious characters from her production "Achieving the Dream."

Her other on-screen portrayals include the roles of Judge Esther Green in the TV series "JAG," Rosa Parks in the TV movie "King" and Betty Shabbazz in the film "Death of a Prophet."

Yolanda finished her speech with a rendition of Maya Angelou's poem, "Still I Rise."

The city of Eugene then presented her with an honorary sign of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

The city renamed Centennial Boulevard as Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in July after extensive public debate on the change.

Ward 1 City Councilor Bonny Bettman said that as Yolanda continues her father's legacy, she should know that there are individuals in towns nationwide also working toward the legacy in symbolic and significant ways.

Event Coordinator Betty Snowden said she invited Yolanda to share her father's vision and challenge people to question how they can achieve the "dream" for themselves.

"I'm hoping that Eugene as a community, we will rededicate ourselves and realize we are all one people, all one family," Snowden said.

Local human rights activist Bahati Ansari said Yolanda's visit to Eugene was historical for her.



Mark McCambridge Photographer

Social activist and actress Yolanda King delivered an impassioned speech on Wednesday. "It's a dream about freedom, freedom from oppression," she said.

"Just to listen to her message, it keeps me going," Ansari said. "It inspires me to do what I'm doing."

Yolanda will continue to work for the dream. While one of her theatrical characters said "dreamwork is risky," she reiterated that people still had to believe in the possibility of a

better world and make a conscious choice to work for that vision.

"Unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final say, and so I'm a believer," she said.

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HEART

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However, Liberman's will to live a normal life has not been deterred by the surgery. On Oct. 11, the 21-year veteran of the University won a bodybuilding competition at the Seven Feathers Hotel & Casino Resort in Canyonville.

The 55-year-old native of Hollywood, Calif., took first at the Northern Pacific States Classic Natural Bodybuilding Competition by a unanimous vote of seven judges. The win came in the Masters Division, a category for athletes over the age of 50.

The surgery

Mentally, Liberman's surgery was tough. His recovery time was slow sometimes and physically painful. That, he said, was occasionally a source of a desire to pack it all in and give up bodybuilding.

Although the surgery was challenging, Liberman was helped by a cardiologist who just happened to be a triathlete.

"I started (rehab) three weeks after the operation, which is really tough," he said. "I was going to punt it for months — six months maybe. This cardiologist, after like six weeks, said 'get back in the gym. There's no reason you can't start exercising now.' He kept on my case, and any time I had a doubt, I called him up."

Liberman underwent a procedure called aortic valve replacement. The aortic valve regulates the flow of blood from the left ventricle of the heart into the aorta, which supplies the blood to all the organs of the body. The valve also keeps the blood from retreating back into the heart chamber before it circulates through the body.

The valve naturally has three "cusps" or "flaps" that open or close to move the blood. A common problem is that one of the three flaps does not develop completely, which is considered one of a number of variations of a heart murmur.

However, Liberman said that wasn't the case.

"There was no murmur," he said. "Nobody heard it. It was quite surprising."

According to www.heartsurgeons.com — the Web site for Mid-Atlantic Surgical Associates — damage to the valve can occur because of a congenital affect, aging, or from infection or scarring.

The congenital affect was one that seemed to touch on Liberman the most.

"It was so amazing," he said. "I went through my whole life, did a complete psychoanalysis on all the neuroses on both sides of my family. I understood why I am and why everybody else is in my family and let everything go."

Aortic valve replacement usually takes about two to three hours, according to the Web site. Patients have the option of having the valve replaced with either a "tissue" valve or a "mechanical" valve. Mechanical valves are made of ceramic, which will last forever. But mechanical valves require the patient to take blood thinners for the rest of their life — Coumadin is usually the prescription drug — that may prevent athletic activities for fear of blood clotting.

For Liberman, porcine, a pig heart valve, was used, which allows him to use weightlifting as an athletic source.

But that comes after a certain period of time. According to Sacred Heart cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation coordinator Sarah Grall, the sternum — which is separated for surgeons to be able to get to the heart — heals six weeks after the surgery.

She said patients are free to pursue non-weight related athletic activity before that point, but the sternum is like a broken bone. It is assisted by six stainless steel wires, but it has to heal.

Liberman had to rebuild his musculature after the surgery, but weightlifting is a safe way to do so

once the sternum is healed.

"Bodybuilding is surely a controlled type of strength training," Grall said of Liberman's situation. "Obviously, it took a lot of time and skillful training."

"It's safe. We have all of our heart patients do some kind of strength training."

O'Brien, for one, isn't surprised about Liberman's ability to get back to what he loves; namely weightlifting, surfing and skateboarding.

"I would've expected Ken to do exactly what he did," O'Brien said. "I'm not very surprised by the fact he would work hard and get back to where he was as soon as possible. Of course, that's what doctors would recommend."

"I worried about Ken (at the time of the surgery), and even though it's the kind of thing you'd expect him to do, no one really knows what's going to happen about getting a valve replaced. The odd sort of thing, it reminds me of my own mortality. We are all one accident away or one bad thing in the heart to having to cut back on who we are."

Getting back to normal

Liberman, who lives in Florence, said he goes surfing at least three times a week, sometimes four. He surfs on a short board — considered more modern — but said, "I swore I wouldn't buy a long board until I was over 65, but I finally did just because some days you can't surf at all unless you have a long board."

He can be found in the Student Recreation Center at least twice a week but never more than three times. Before the surgery, Liberman lifted often, but he has found a way to make sure he maximizes what he lifts now.

"The key advice is that you have to at least pay attention to the quality of the muscular contraction as you pay to the amount of weight you put on," he said. "I can tell you that in 80 percent of the cases, the lifter could build a better muscle — stronger, bigger, better looking — by going down in weight a little bit."

He said that he utilizes his mind to lift properly. He abides by his three "c's" when lifting: consistency, caution and concentration.

Liberman also practices yoga every day, a tool he said helps him follow his three "c's" and stay uninjured when lifting.

"A serious person lifting weights for health should put as much time into stretching as they do lifting," he said. "That's going to be more useful as you get older, and the strength will keep you from having those debilitating injuries."

"There's a yoga to it or a zen. You have to get your mind involved and make it into an art."

Liberman will be leaving the University in December to participate in the Fulbright Scholar Program. He will be traveling to the University of Mysore in Karnataka, India, to teach sociology.

He said he will return to the University upon completion of his time in India.

"He continually has new experiences," O'Brien said. "I also think he would say it's one of the things that keeps his teaching fresh. You know, all of us, from myself — I've taught 30 years — and I have to consciously make sure I get up when I go to the classroom. Ken's always raring to go."

Until he leaves for India, Liberman's students can find him lifting weights on campus. He said he often lifts with students if they happen to be in there at the same time.

"The research shows that you will indeed live longer if you go the gym and lift weights," Liberman said. "The amount of time you live longer is almost equivalent to the amount of hours you put into the gym. You're no better off if you hate it, but if you like it, you should keep on going."

"The real secret is to smile."

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