

Maya Angelou Visits Portland Oct. 30

The poet author and national treasure speaks to The Skanner News

By Helen Silvis
Of *The Skanner News*

Dr. Maya Angelou is scheduled to speak in Portland, Oct. 30, at the Arlene Schnitzer Hall. Born in St. Louis, Mo., in 1928, she has traveled widely and earned renown as an author, poet, dancer, actor, producer and civil rights activist. She has counted among her friends many of the most influential people of the 20th Century and beyond, including with Malcolm X, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., and James Baldwin. It was Baldwin who encouraged her to write her autobiography. The first volume, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," was published in 1970 to enormous acclaim. That work, and her 30 subsequent biographies, poetry and novels, have inspired readers the world over.

Dr. Angelou's awards and honors include three Grammys, a Pulitzer, 30 honorary degrees – including one from Portland State University— the Presidential Medal of Arts in 2000 and the Lincoln Medal in 2008. At the request of President Bill Clinton she composed and recited a poem for his 1993 inauguration, "On the Pulse of The Morning." In 2010, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. She talked The Skanner News Monday Oct. 1, about President Obama, reading, and what the good life means to her.

The Skanner News: Dr. Angelou, I came to see you speak many years ago at the University of Portland. Have you visited Port-

land often?

Maya Angelou: Oh many, many times. It is one of my favorite cities, Portland – it's very beautiful. I am happy to come.

I used to have friends Portland, who I'm sorry to say have passed on. But I have friends in other parts of Oregon and I'm sure they will come to Portland. There is a wonderful painter and artist. Her name is Lynda Lanker and she has a new book out on heroes— "Tough by Nature." It's a

when I am in Portland I will go and see the Maya Angelou. I'd like to meet the people and have some chat with them.

TSN: You started off by supporting Hillary Clinton in the run-up to the last presidential election. So what do you think about President Obama now?

MA: I think he has done much better than he gets credit for. But I also think President Obama did not expect the opposition he encountered.

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wonderful book. You'd really like it.

And then, there is a great philosopher living in Oregon: Gary Zukav, who was just on Oprah's program. He is one of those great minds, and he is a friend of Oprah's and a friend of mine. He is the author of "The Seat of the Soul," and his new book is "Spiritual Partnership: The Journey to Authentic Power." He is brilliant, really brilliant and I don't use that word casually.

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Let me tell you first about Secretary Clinton. When she first moved to Arkansas, I think a number of people expected that, this cute little blonde coming down there as the wife of the governor, that she would have governor's teas on the lawn or something. Instead, she became very interested in the conditions in prisons and she tried to improve those conditions. And she worked for healthcare. I was very impressed.

Later when she came to Washington as the First lady, I thought, "Now I will really see what she is made of."



Dr. Maya Angelou

And when she got there, I think she set the journalists' backs up. Because she said, "If you're expecting someone to come here and talk about making chocolate chip cookies, you don't want me."

I saw her and I said: "If you ever run for anything, I've got your back. So I did sup-

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