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CELEBRATING MAYA ANGELOU AT 80

“In all the days of my life, I’ve never met a woman who was more completely herself than Maya Angelou,” states Oprah Winfrey in her foreword to the new biography, *Maya Angelou: A Glorious Celebration*, by Marcia Ann Gillespie, Rosa Johnson Butler and Richard A. Long (New York City: Doubleday, 2008). The volume, released on the occasion of Angelou’s 80th birthday this spring, includes more than 150 portraits of her, as well as family photographs and facsimiles of key letters and manuscript pages.

In March, Angelou enthralled nearly 4,000 health and service professionals with her keynote address at the Aging in America conference of the National Council on Aging and American Society on Aging (ASA).

During her speech, Angelou read her powerful poem “A Brave and Startling Truth,” which declares, “Yet it is only love/which sets us free./A Brave and Startling Truth/When we come to it.” The poem, from her poetry collection *Celebrations: Rituals of Peace and Power* (New York City: Random House, 2006), goes on:

*When we come to it
When we let the rifles fall from our shoulders
And children dress their dolls in flags of truce
When land mines of death have been removed
And the aged may walk into evenings of peace . . .*

At the request of Angelou, who turned age 80 on April 4, the full poem is posted on the ASA website at www.agingtoday.org. ❖