

Angelou

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Angelou was a member of Churn's Mt. Zion Baptist Church flock for more than 25 years. Churn officiated a more than two hour-long memorial service, during which friends and family, one-by-one, talked of Angelou's great capacity for love and strong aversion to barriers — racial or otherwise.

"All of you loved her, as we loved her, and she loved us all," Angelou's grandson Elliott Matthew Jones said, speaking on behalf of his family.

The more than 2,000 attendees who packed the chapel for the private service were testament to Angelou's boundless love. They were black, white and every shade in between; some were rich and famous, but most were local residents — folks Angelou had endeared herself to (and vice versa) over the last 32 years.

Good Morning America's Robin Roberts sat next to Dr. John and Sarah Mendez, whom Angelou worked with in the 1980s to free Darryl Hunt, a local black man wrongfully convicted of raping and killing a white woman. The children of Drs. Chad and Jane Stephens, whom Angelou helped launch a foundation to aid orphans in Kenya, sat on a row that was sandwiched between ones where the children of Malcolm X (Attallah) and Martin Luther King Jr. (Bernice) sat. Burlington-based indie film director Cornelius Muller, whose movie "Find a Way" reportedly moved Angelou to tears, settled a few chairs away from R&B songbird India.Arie.

And just behind U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx was Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, whose late husband received help from Angelou to launch the biannual National Black Theatre Festival.

Ed Wilson sat nearby as well. The venerable former Wake Forest provost and his wife, Emily, befriended Angelou when she accepted the lifelong Reynolds Professor of American Studies position at Wake in 1982.

Describing her as a generous neighbor and friend to the community, Wilson said the love the Wake Forest family, in particular, felt for Angelou was requited.

"We know that Maya Angelou belonged to America, and, indeed, the world, but we liked to



Dr. Serenus Churn preaches.



Oprah Winfrey and Bill Clinton make remarks.



Dr. Angelou's grandson, Colin Johnson, makes remarks.

think she belonged foremost — after her family — to Wake Forest," he said.

Angelou passed away — or, as Churn put it, "beautifully transitioned to the stars" — in her sleep on May 28 at the age 86. Her son, Guy Johnson, said decades of working as a professional dancer on unyielding floors and respiratory ailments had taken their toll on Angelou's body. Her spirit, though, was never infirm, he said, even after her frailties left her tethered to a wheelchair. Former President Bill Clinton discovered that the last time he saw Angelou — April 10 at the LBJ Presidential Library in Austin to mark the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act.

Clinton expressed surprise that Angelou had endured the long trip to Texas.

"Just because I'm wheelchair-bound doesn't mean I don't get around," was her riposte.

Angelou will be ever-linked to Clinton because of "On the Pulse of Morning," the poem she wrote for and delivered at his first inauguration on Jan. 20, 1993. Her bond to another memorial speaker — Oprah Winfrey — is even more well known.

Winfrey said they met in the late 1970s and bonded over the years to the

point where she became Angelou's "daughter" and Angelou became her "spiritual queen mother."

"The loss I feel, I cannot describe," said Winfrey, who reportedly spent the week leading up to Saturday's service in Winston-Salem helping to plan every meticulous detail. "Maya Angelou was the greatest woman that I have ever known."

First Lady Michelle Obama said Angelou's words — both those in her books like "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" and poems like "Phenomenal Woman" inspired her — showing it was possible for a "little black girl from the Southside of Chicago" to go all the way to the White House.

"Dr. Angelou's words sustained me on every step on my journey," the First Lady said.

Ambassador Andrew Young, who stood with Angelou during the Civil Rights battles of yesteryear, said her body of work and spirit will continue to inspire and drive future generations.

"Our sister, our mother, our friend ... Will always be with us," he said.

The service was an emotional affair for many of the participants. Valerie Ashford Simpson and Allyson Williams delivered songs through tears. Johnson, Winfrey and Cicely Tyson, who had known Angelou for more than 50 years, also choked up.

The way which Angelou loved makes it impossible to not feel an emptiness, a longing, her friends and family said.

"Her acceptance, love and care for people was unmatched ... If she made you feel half as special as she made me feel, you have been blessed," Colin Ashanti Johnson, her grandson, said.



Pools open tomorrow

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

All city pools will open for the summer on Friday, June 13.

New this year are the water "spraygrounds" at Mineral Springs and Happy Hill pools — similar to the water playgrounds at Bolton and Kimberley Park pools, but built on a concrete pad and not in a shallow pool of water.

To ensure safety, parents should swim with their children. All pool patrons must obey the lifeguards. Patrons entering the pool must be wearing appropriate swim wear with a liner or have appropriate swimwear with them to be admitted into the pool area.

All pools will offer free children's swim lessons starting June 16. Sign-ups will be June 14 at 10 a.m. at each pool. Free adult swim lessons are also available at all swimming pools.

Contact the pool you want to attend for details. All pools will offer a "Babes in Arms" program for children five and under starting June 21. Contact your favorite pool to register. The pools also have swim teams for children 17 and under, and offer diving instruction.

Non-swimmers less than 48 inches tall will be required to wear life jackets in the pools. Life jackets are not required in kiddie pools and the water play areas at Kimberley Park and Bolton Park pools.

The city will provide life jackets. Patrons may bring their own life jackets if they have a stamp indicating that they are Coast Guard approved and pass inspection from the lifeguards.

Children less than 48 inches tall will be asked to take a swim test when they arrive at the pool so life-

guards can assess their swimming ability. If they pass the test, they will receive a green wrist band that allows them to go anywhere in the pool. If they do not pass the test they will receive a red wrist band and a life jacket. They can go in the shallow end of the pool up to 3.5 feet.

Patrons over 48 inches tall will be required to take a swim test if lifeguards observe that they may be poor or non-swimmers. Those who do not pass the test will be issued a life jacket and a yellow wrist band that allows them to go anywhere in the pool except the deep end from the diving boards. Any patron who refuses to demonstrate their swim ability will be asked to leave the swimming pool facility.

Learn more at www.WePLAY.ws or by calling CityLink 311.

A&T

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The university's distance learning computer systems program ranked at No. 4 on the best computer information technology programs list and was ranked as the No. 15 best online graduate programs in U.S. News & World Report's 2015 best online graduate programs list.

To be ranked, an online degree program had to report participation in four key programs that offer educational benefits to people with military service. The rankings methodology requires programs to belong to institutions that are certified for the GI Bill; they must also belong to schools participating in the Yellow Ribbon Program or pub-

lic institutions that charge in-state tuition for all out-of-state veterans.

The Best Online Programs for Veterans are also affiliated with schools that are members of the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) Consortium and offer at least one course in the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) catalog.

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