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USF St. Petersburg Poised for Expansion

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Up Date

INAUGURAL POET MAYA ANGELOU DRAWS A FULL HOUSE AT USF

Maya Angelou, best-selling author, historian, actress, playwright, civil rights activist, educator and inaugural poet, addressed a standing-room-only crowd Feb. 9 in USF's Special Events Center.



Maya Angelou was the keynote speaker for Black Emphasis Month at USF.

The lecture was part of USF's Black Emphasis Month celebration, which bore the theme "...And Still We Rise," taken from a poem by Angelou.

Before the lecture Angelou received a standing ovation as she danced and sang in different languages. She rendered selections about love from black authors, including herself, Georgia Douglas Johnson, Langston Hughes and Paul Lawrence Dunbar.

Angelou emphasized the importance of literature in encouraging African-Americans to be proud of their history and heritage.

"How we survived is the truth found in our literature," she said. "African-

can-Americans did not just spring up like the grass. We're like the trees. We have roots."

More than two dozen other events marked Black Emphasis Month. Discussions ranging from "The Three Stages of Growth of Malcolm X" to "The Double Standards of U.S. Immigration Laws: Who Gets In and Why," were designed to create dialogue among

participants. "Police and the African-American Community" examined a university professor's experience as an undercover officer of the Tampa Police Department.

Each Tuesday and Thursday of February at noon, USF faculty members and Bay area African-American professionals, conducted seminars on issues pertaining to blacks in medicine, communications and engineering.

USF also sponsored activities aimed at educating and entertaining the

community, including the annual Miss Uhuru pageant, an oratorical contest and the African-American Cultural Festival and Soul Food Luncheon. The university also premiered its first Nubian Nights Ball: An African-American Tradition.

According to Black Emphasis Month committee member Wanda Lewis-Campbell, the group's intentions were met.

"The month was designed to highlight and celebrate the accomplishments and achievements of African-Americans," said Lewis-Campbell. "Not only with ourselves but with others."

BORKOWSKI REMOVES STUDENT GOVERNMENT LEADERS

USF President Francis T. Borkowski deactivated the executive branch of the student government in February in response to a conflict between the student body president and a group of black students.

The students charged that SG President Lesia Miller was insensitive to the needs of black students, citing the absence of blacks in her cabinet and pointing out that numerous black students had been fired from student government positions.

The dispute came to a head when a fired supreme court clerk, who is black, was escorted from the student government offices by campus police on Jan. 29.

Three days later, about 50 students staged a sit-in outside the student government offices and called for Miller's resignation. Miller refused.

Seeing no end to the conflict in sight, Borkowski deactivated the student government.

"I regret having to take the action we did, but we wanted to preserve diversity," Borkowski said.

A commission made up of students and faculty members has been formed to evaluate student government procedures.

USF ST. PETERSBURG POISED FOR EXPANSION

USF's St. Petersburg campus received the final allotment of 35 acres of land on Feb. 4 from the city of St. Petersburg, allowing the campus to move ahead on its plan for expansion.

The City Council voted unanimously to convey the tracts to the Board of Regents, fulfilling an 18-year-old agreement to provide land for the campus. Some parcels have been individually conveyed since 1975, but last week's agreement will transfer the balance of the land in one fell swoop. The land brings the total number of campus acres to 46.

"This gives us the opportunity to develop campus plans and place buildings where we could not before," said campus dean H. William Heller.

Those plans include preparing to serve a projected student enrollment of 9,000 by the year 2003, which is triple the current amount of students. Addi-

tional classroom buildings and parking spaces will be needed to handle the increase. The United States Geological Survey, marine science department and student activities center also will expand, and a professional ethics institute is planned.

The city also pledged to work with USF St. Petersburg in getting more directional signs to the campus. Campus officials want to obtain an interstate sign for I-275 as well as city signs. In addition, the city agreed to dredge shoal areas in Bayboro Harbor that interfere with the campus's watercraft program.

"There was an awful lot of support shown to the campus by the mayor and City Council members, the city administrators and other friends of the campus," said Heller.

"It's wonderful that people recognize the value of having a major university right in their own backyards."