

Letters to the Editor

ANGELOU 'CLASSIC' CAN'T BE BANNED

Terry O'Neal, a Stockton resident, sent a version of this letter to the Wisconsin School Board Committee regarding the removal of Maya Angelou's autobiography ("I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings") from the high school curriculum. Angelou's mother, the late Vivian (Lady B) Baxter, lived in Stockton for 23 years and has a city park named after her.

Stories are either fact or fiction. Even fictional stories entail a great deal of truth.

A story that is nonfiction tells an account or representation of a subject that is presented as fact.

Maya Angelou's biography, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," happens to tell, as W.S. Merwin said, "Her own account of growing up. It has a number of attributes, and it's a historically relevant story about a black woman growing up in the United States."

In the 19th century, many black women were raped and sold as breeders. This is our history, whether people want to accept it or not.

You might be able to remove it from the schools. But truth cannot - and will not - be erased from existence, just like slavery and racism haven't been.

"I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" is a classic American narrative of a young black girl's struggle growing up in the South with enormous odds against her.

Not only is the saga a poignant one, but it's a story of strength and endurance. It's inspirational to read about Angelou's journey through life. How she has overcome obstacles is truly amazing.

Maya Angelou is one of the greatest voices in African-American literature. She is a legend, and there's absolutely nothing that anyone can do to change it.

We can pick and choose our own battles. We can't pick and choose our history.

Terry O'Neal

Stockton