

# A Pledge for the Future

**In 2006, Maya Angelou wrote and issued the following pledge, asking others to join with her in assuring that the struggle for civil rights continues. We ask you to think about both the history and future of Civil Rights and your place in it. We call all in our community to recognize, both what those who went before us gave so that we can live as we do today, and also the ways in which injustice persists and what we must do to end it.**

Young women, young men of color, we add our voices to the voices of your ancestors who speak to you over ancient seas and across impossible mountains tops.

Come up from the gloom of national neglect, you have already been paid for.

Come out of the shadow of irrational prejudice, you owe  
no racial debt to history.

The blood of our bodies and the prayers of our souls have bought you a future  
free from shame and bright beyond the telling of it.

We pledge ourselves and our resources to seek for you clean and well-furnished schools, safe and  
non-threatening streets, employment which makes use  
of your talents, but does not degrade your dignity.

You are the best we have.

You are all we have.

You are what we have become.

We pledge you our whole hearts from this day forward.