A portrait of Clement Price, a man with glasses and a mustache, wearing a dark suit jacket, a striped shirt, and a patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a light blue wall with a large, dark silhouette of a person riding a horse.

From his tours through
the streets of Newark to
his role as president of
the Fund for New Jersey,
history professor Clement
Price is helping Newark
celebrate its past and
chart a course for genera-
tions to come.

PRICE *of* PROGRESS

In a Central Ward neighborhood known as the Hill District, a Buick Riviera turns right onto 17th Avenue and pulls over in front of a Newark police precinct. "This was ground zero for Newark's rendezvous with disaster—the spot where the riots began in July 1967," says the man behind the wheel. "Try to imagine how this neighborhood looked back then—block after block of

public housing, the heat, poverty, and hopelessness. In many ways, Newark is still working to overcome those riots, which have defined the city's image since then."

While the public housing project is now an empty lot and the precinct is renamed and renovated, the spot remains an unmarked landmark—both physically and psychologically—and a critical stop on the driving tours of Newark led by Clement Alexander Price, a soft-spoken man with a hearty laugh and keen sense of purpose. A professor of history at Rutgers–Newark, a resident of the city's Lincoln Park section, and a man

who has helped make history as well as teach it, Price has come to know Newark like the back of his hand. Unlike today's private jaunt, his popular tours are usually conducted on buses for visiting groups of students, scholars, and dignitaries. In his role as guide, he's careful to measure the city's attributes against its blemishes, to bring to his narrative the cool objectivity and careful analysis he has cultivated as a scholar. But his optimism and pride in the city's renewal break through when he says, "Each time I take a group around, I spot some new construction or improvement."

That may be why, while occasionally altering

By Bill Glovin / Photographs by Bill Ballenberg

the itinerary, he always includes the site where the riots broke out. Last summer he showed 15 Dartmouth College students around the city. The group—all born long after the riots occurred—asked him to put the event into context. “I told them there was controversy over the location of a new medical college that eventually became UMDNJ as well as over an appointment to the board of education,” says Price. “But the incident that set things off was a rumor that a black cab driver had been detained by Newark cops and beaten to death while in custody. On this vacant lot to my left was a public housing project, and residents started throwing bottles at the Fourth Precinct from their windows. Others gathered in front of the station. Soon, all hell broke loose a few blocks away on Springfield Avenue. On the third day, the National Guard was called in.

“When the smoke cleared, more than 13,000 rounds of ammunition had been fired and 21 people were dead, including two children and six women—all black. A white police detective and a firefighter also lost their lives. It was later learned that the cab driver had been hospitalized, not killed. But one of any number of things would have eventually triggered the riots.

“I told the students about the federal housing policy that was a recipe for disaster, a policy that undermined self-identity and self-worth, encouraged antisocial behavior, and set cities like Newark on a catastrophic course.”

Since coming to Newark to teach at Essex County Community College in 1968, the 55-year-old professor has dedicated a good portion of his career to trying to change that course. “I’m a child of the 1960s, driven by the ideals of the civil rights movement,” says Price. “Major strides have been made in downtown Newark, and the future of the city depends in part on those strides being felt in economically depressed neighborhoods.”

Price is like a proud father as he drives past the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, the Riverfront baseball stadium, and the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart opposite Branch Brook Park. He points out such overlooked landmarks as the burned-out facade that once fronted a Broad Street church on whose steps Abraham Lincoln spoke on his whistle-stop

journey to his first inauguration; the Clinton AME Zion Church, where Sarah Vaughan first sang as a child and was later eulogized as a jazz legend; and an expansive condominium building in a remote corner of the Forest Hills neighborhood that, decades before in Newark’s era of industrial might, had been a jewelry factory churning out Tiffany’s celebrated designs.

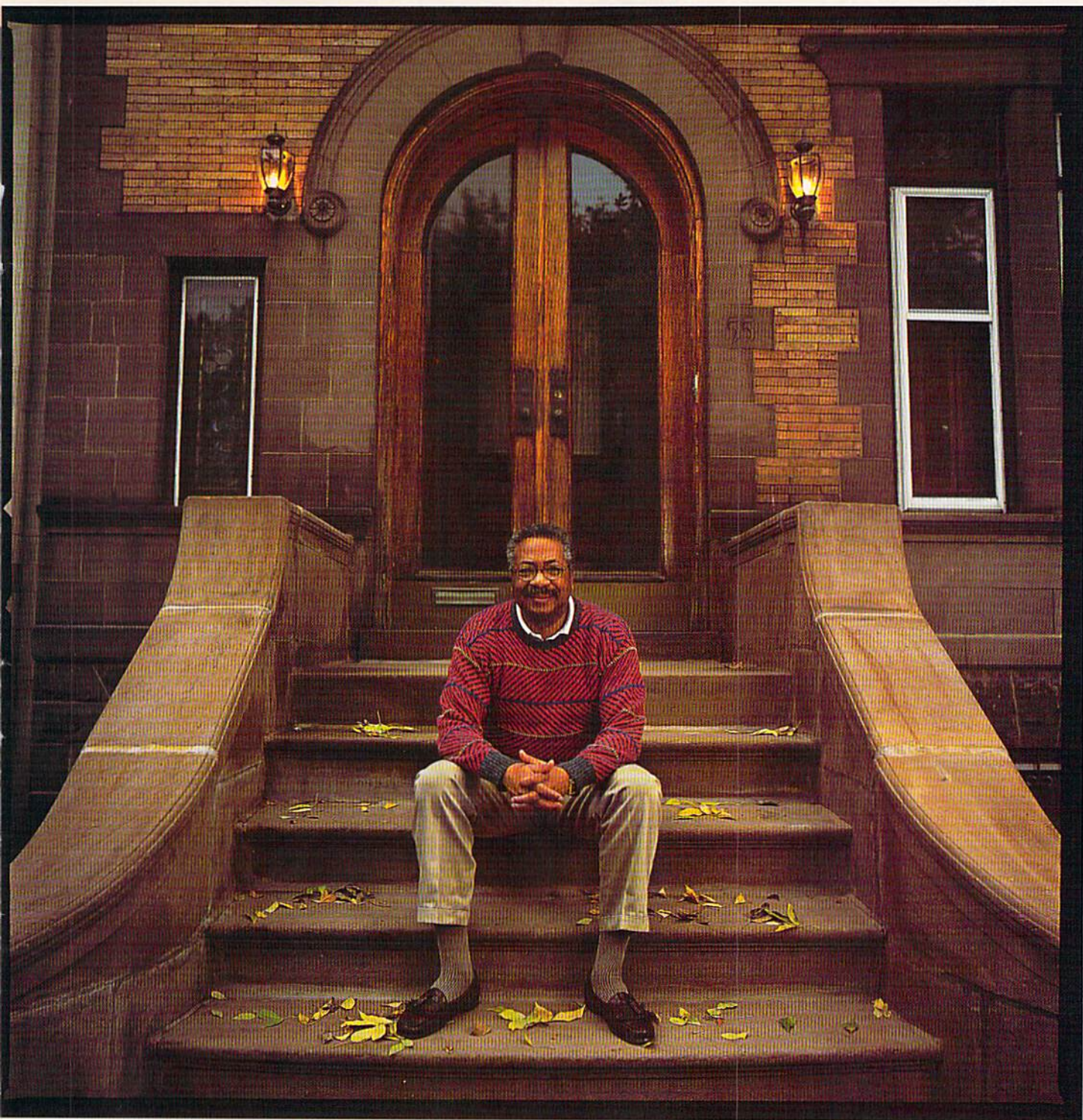
But the city’s manufacturing muscle, retail wealth, and white middle class were eventually replaced by concentrated poverty, escalating crime, and a failing public education and health system. And while major strides have been made in recent years in tackling each of these problems, the drug culture continues to haunt parts of the city. To bring attention to the problem, 33-year-old city council member Cory Booker began planting his motor home for weeks at a time in some of the Central Ward’s most drug-infested areas. But Price beat Booker to that punch in 1985 when he moved from nearby East Orange to the Central Ward, in part to make the point that a middle-class professional could live comfortably and safely only blocks from where the riots broke out. Through the years Price has put up with a crack epidemic in the park across from his brownstone and squatters living in nearby abandoned tenements, but lately he’s been encouraged by cleaner streets, a noticeable decrease in the number of crack vials, and two halfway houses on his block that have proved to be good neighbors.

On his tours, Price always stops to talk about his own historic block, which faces the four-acre Lincoln

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civil
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movement.”

With encouragement from their den-leader mother, Anna (top right), Clem (bottom left) and his older brother, James (top left), got their first taste of civic involvement and public service as Cub Scouts.





Park in an area once considered a silk-stocking district and now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. From the 1870s to the 1920s, the residential neighborhood was home to Newark's leading families: the Krueger brewers, the McCarter bankers and lawyers, the Hahne retailers, the Kremenz jewelers. Next door to Price's own small brownstone is a grander building that was once the home of John Dryden, the founder of Prudential Insurance. A few doors down is the former Colleoni apartment building, once a fashionable address but now a vacant eye-

sore. "I'm trying to get a developer interested in it," explains Price.

The park's centerpiece is an equestrian statue of the Italian soldier of fortune Bartolomeo Colleoni, a 1916 gift to the city from wealthy brewer and Lincoln Park resident Christian Feigenspan. Price traces the story of the statue, pointing out that it is one of several similar symbols from the past that can be found in parks and squares throughout the city. "The statue speaks to how much the neighborhood has changed; how the wealthy left all this

In his role as chair of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Price, a jazz aficionado, was thrilled when former Gov. Kean asked him to present Count Basie with a proclamation commemorating Count Basie Day in Newark at a Symphony Hall concert in 1983.

magnificent architecture and public art to a new generation of urban pioneers," he says.

Price focuses on Central Ward developments that have improved the quality of life for residents: well-kept low-density townhouses, a church that was converted into the Priory restaurant and jazz club, a Pathmark supermarket, and restaurant and drugstore franchises that, until recently, were conspicuous by their absence. Price knows that if economic development continues at its current pace, his neighborhood—close to the new federal courthouse and City Hall—is ripe for gentrification. "I don't want the economically disadvantaged removed and my neighborhood turned into another Hoboken," he says. "But I would like some of my neighbors to have the opportunity to make this a better place for all of us."

Mention a celebrated Newark event to Price and it's likely that he was in the middle of it. As chair of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts in the 1980s, he handed a proclamation to Count Basie declaring April 24 as Count Basie Day in 1983. As a member of the Newark Public Library's board of trustees, he helped cut the ribbon at the opening of the renovated Springfield Avenue branch in 1990. "I'm proud that we've renovated all but one of the branch libraries," he says.

Price attended NJPAC's star-studded opening night in 1997 and opening day at the Newark Riverfront Stadium in 1999. He joined the processional carrying the statue of St. Gerard through the North Ward streets during a festival in October 1999; sat within feet of Bill Clinton in the VIP section when the president addressed the city the following month; spent two hours last June briefing Dan Rather for a *60 Minutes II* segment on Newark; hosted Isaac Hayes's visit to the Newark Museum's Black Film Festival this past August, and hosted Portuguese

Nobel laureate José Saramago when he visited the city in October.

Price's connections to powerful boards and regular folks, along with his study of the black experience in the nation and in New Jersey, have led opinion makers and journalists to seek him out. When Ronald Smothers found himself looking for sources for a story on race shortly

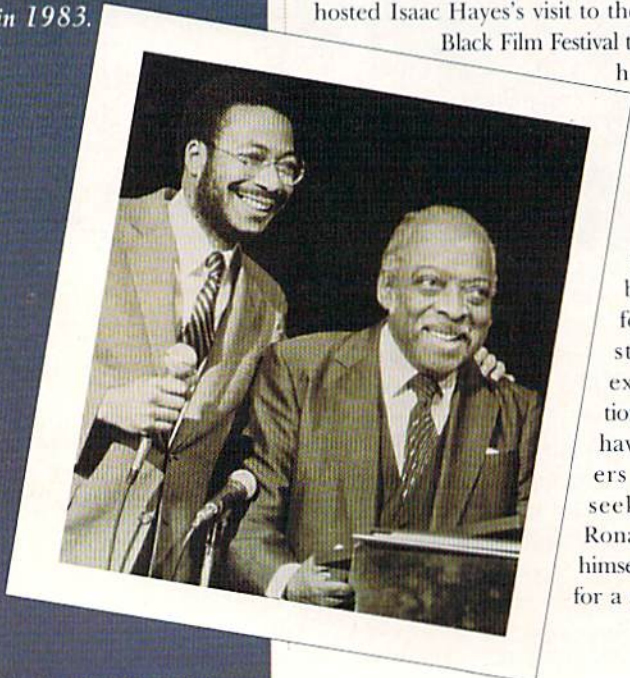
after he joined the *New York Times* in the 1970s, several people pointed him toward Clem Price, an articulate professor who had deep roots in the city—and who had attended high school with Smothers back home in the northeast section of Washington, D.C. Four years ago, after the *Times* assigned Smothers to the Newark bureau and the journalist moved to Society Hill, he began to hear the name of his old friend again.

"Everywhere I go, people seem to know Clem and his role as city advocate and ambassador," says Smothers. "As a historian, he brings the facts and a sense of the past to sensitive issues, and, as a resident, he sees firsthand the consequences of public-policy decisions. He is also someone who can make the same persuasive argument and build bridges between a white banker, a Latino councilman, and a black city official. The way things have worked out for Clem makes me think back to our high school days when we strongly suspected that helping to integrate America would one day be an important part of all our futures."

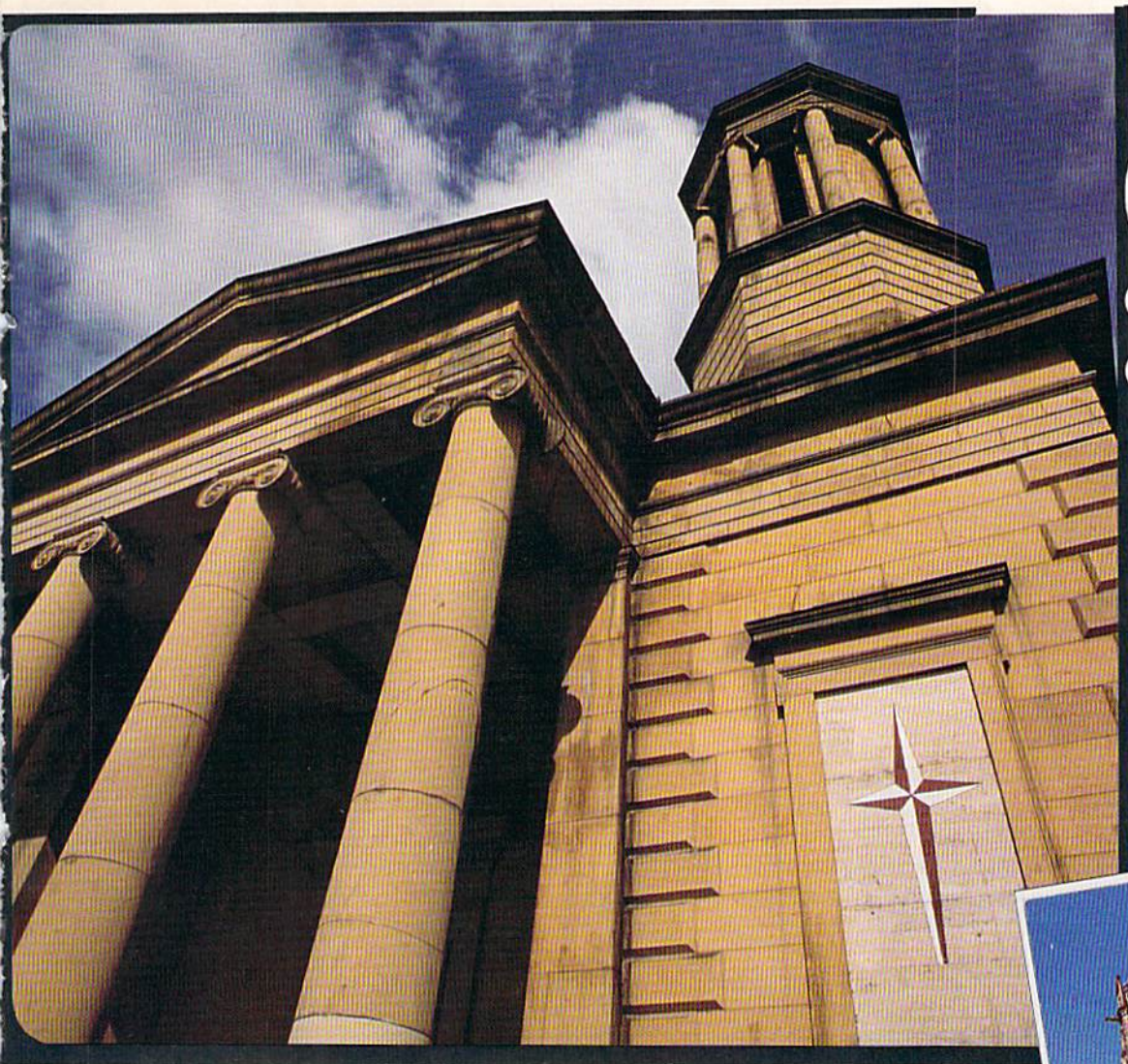
Price has worked publicly and behind the scenes on a staggering array of projects—most not listed on his 14-page curriculum vitae. When he led the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, he helped convince a consulting firm hired by then governor Thomas Kean that the state's most populated city was the best site for a proposed performing arts center. "There were more skeptics than not; plus a big push for Morristown or the Meadowlands," Price recalls. "At the time, Newark was perceived by most New Jerseyans as the gates of Hell. But I live near Symphony Hall, and I would see all these blue-haired ladies from the suburbs parking in my neighborhood to go see the state opera or the New Jersey Symphony. That indicated to me that a major arts center could succeed here."

When the owners of the New Jersey Nets began lobbying Governor Christie Whitman last year to relocate the franchise to a new arena near Penn

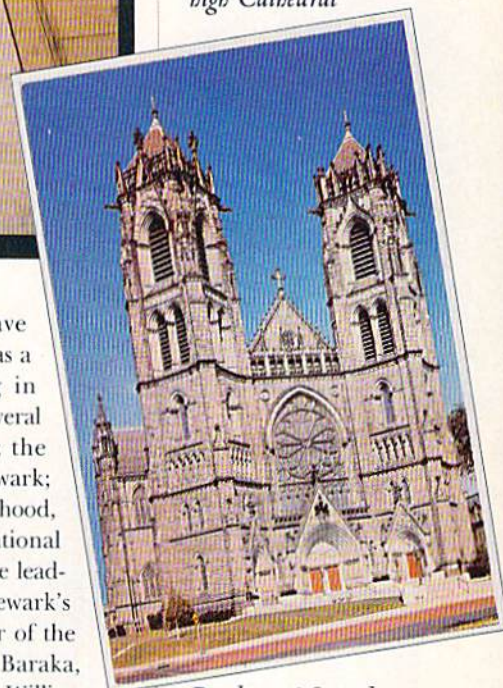
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neighborhood
turned into
another
Hoboken.
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Photograph courtesy of Clement Price



Price always points out the Broad Street church where Abraham Lincoln spoke (left) on his way to his inauguration. At the 232-foot-high Cathedral



Basilica of Sacred Heart, he escorts visitors inside to see the bronze doors and 200 stained glass windows.

Station, wealthy businessman Ray Chambers (Bus'64)—one of the team's two principal owners at the time—arranged a private meeting with Price in his Morristown office. The professor and Chambers, the Amelior Foundation philanthropist who had already led the crusade to locate NJPAC in Newark, worked out a pregame strategy to sell the city once again. "We later met with the governor and tried to convince her that a major sports facility in downtown Newark would be good for the team, the city, and the state," Price remembers. "The room was filled with some of New Jersey's major power brokers, and at one point I caught myself thinking, 'This is quite a strange setting for an academic.'"

Having no intention to run for public office and no business enterprise for which to seek special favors has earned Price much trust and influence among an ad-hoc group of dedicated city boosters. This "committed core constituen-

cy," as he calls it, is "people who have strong psychological and spiritual ties as a result of growing up or working in Newark." The constituency includes several corporate and private foundations; the Council for Higher Education in Newark; and such nonprofits as Planned Parenthood, the North Ward Cultural and Educational Center, and the YM-YWCA. Among the leaders determined to restore some of Newark's past glory are Steve Adubato, founder of the North Ward Cultural Center; Amiri Baraka, writer and community activist; Msgr. William Lender of the New Community Corporation; Gabriela Morris of the Prudential Foundation; and Lawrence Goldman, president of NJPAC.

When he walks into Vesuvius, a landmark Italian restaurant on Bloomfield Avenue, Price—a well-dressed black man entering a scene right out of *The Sopranos*—turns all heads. But Price is familiar here. He points out the table frequently occupied by the late state assemblyman Anthony

Soon after the riots, the late Henry Lewis—the first African-American conductor of a major orchestra in the United States—brought the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra to play a healing concert in the Central Ward. The concert, now a tradition, featured Price (below) in the role of guest conductor in 1999.

Imperiale, the gun-toting spokesman for Newark's white minority in the 1970s. "Imperiale once boasted to me that he was going to start SPONGE, an acronym for 'Society for the Prevention of Negroes Getting Everything,'" Price relates. "But over time, as we got to know each other better, his views softened. Good things happen when people sit down and listen to each other."

In 1993, Price's reputation as a city advocate led him to an appointment on the board of the Fund for New Jersey, a well-heeled philanthropic group of civic leaders. He was partly responsible for a grant that helped create the Newark in the 21st Century Task Force, a group that makes a carefully measured case for economic development in the city. In March 2000, the fund endowed \$2.4 million to create the Joseph C. Cornwall Center for Metropolitan Studies on the Rutgers-Newark campus. The center—named for the chairman emeritus of the fund—focuses on public policy in Newark and the metropolitan area.

In Price's office in Conklin Hall, plaques and citations, historical photographs, and paintings and posters of musicians fill almost every square inch of shelf and wall space. Two citations stand out: the 1977–1978 Rutgers Teacher of the Year Award and last year's New Jersey State Professor of the Year award. The one item he takes down to show off, however, is a photograph of the Fund for New Jersey's board, taken six years ago on its 25th anniversary. Price, who is smiling proudly in the photo, has served as the fund's president for the past three years.

Raised in a middle-class black neighborhood, Price was the middle-born child of James and Anna Price. His father worked as a civil servant and his mother as a seamstress. "I was an elementary school teacher in South Carolina for 10 years, but my husband insisted I be home for the kids," says Anna, 86. "Clem went to Sunday school and church and was a Scout."

At McKinley High School, the city's premier black high school in a segregated education system, her son wrote for the school newspaper, was a member of the track team and drill team, and joined a social club called the Templers. "The concept of integration was new at the time," says Smothers. "Our parents mostly worked in government jobs, so they didn't take part in the

demonstrations, but it was assumed that we were all going to college. And while it wasn't said in so many words, we knew that our generation would be expected to become professionals."

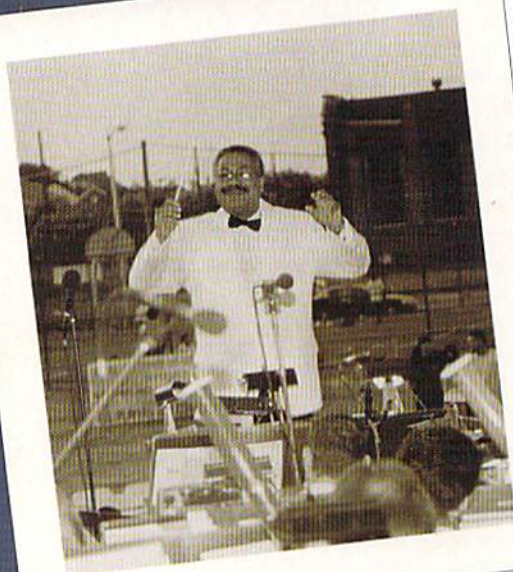
Anna Price worked for and made friends with a wealthy woman who was related to the family that owned the *Washington Post*. "Mrs. Ball was always inquiring about us," says Price. "She gave my mother classical music records, Shakespeare's writings, and other books. Many of my minority students cannot fathom the idea that wealthy white people are capable of that kind of generosity. I tell them how I directly benefited from many acts of kindness from people of all colors in my lifetime."

Price doesn't dwell on his personal experience with racism, but it's there nonetheless. It's part of why he transferred to the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut after a year at St. Augustine's College in Raleigh, North Carolina. "I didn't like living as a black man in the South during that time" is all he says, quickly moving to another subject. At Bridgeport, a history professor told him that he had a talent for writing and thinking about the past and that African-American history was an area that held great promise for a historian. After receiving his bachelor's degree in history in 1967 and his master's degree in history the following spring, he landed his first job as an instructor at Essex County Community College that fall.

Newark's college campuses were still hot with tension from the riots. At Rutgers-Newark, the city's largest college campus, black student activists charged that the university's curriculum ignored their culture. Members of the Black Organization of Students took over Conklin Hall, the campus's main classroom building, in protest. "An agreement was worked out that the campus would offer more African-American courses, and I was approached to teach courses in that area," recalls Price. "Moving to Rutgers eased my workload and provided me with

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If
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future
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Price's tour includes a stop at a former Tiffany factory, built in 1892. The building, now converted to condos, contributed to the development of the Forest Hills section.

more time to work on my doctorate."

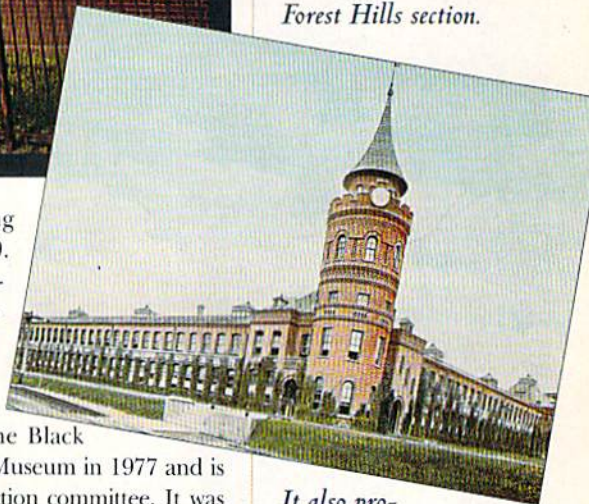
Known for his candor and conversational teaching style, Price developed courses that quickly became among the most popular on campus as he tied events from the distant past to the problems of contemporary culture. New Jersey, he told students, had been the last northern state to abolish slavery, and it maintained racial bigotry in the form of violence and more "polite" slights well into the early part of the 20th century. "Clem knew the material so thoroughly and treated his students like he treated his colleagues," says Catherine McFarland (NCAS'80), a student of Price's in the late 1970s who today is executive director of the Victoria Foundation.

After work, Price enjoyed the city's nightlife, nursing rum and Cokes through sets at the Key Club and Sparky J's, underappreciated jazz clubs just a few blocks from campus. "Some of the best jazz players in the country played there, and most New Jerseyans never knew it," he muses. At the same time, he joined the North Jersey Philharmonic Glee Club, a choral group for black

men that first formed during the segregation era in 1939. Thirty-one years after joining, Price still devotes considerable time to practicing and performing with the group.

As a devoted patron of the arts, he helped found the Black Film Festival at the Newark Museum in 1977 and is still a member of its film selection committee. It was there that he first met Mary Sue Sweeney, whom he married in 1990. A Pittsburgh native who was the museum's assistant coordinator of events at the time, Mary Sue Sweeney Price is today the museum's executive director. The media sometimes portrays the well-known pair as the first couple of Newark, a label they discourage.

In 1981, Price and a friend, Giles R. Wright of the New Jersey Historical Commission, started the Marion Thompson Wright lecture series at Rutgers-Newark to explore issues of importance to the black communi-



It also produced such items as cuff links for Teddy Roosevelt, a coat of arms for the emperor of Japan, and a Super Bowl trophy.

(continued on page 42)

The Price of Progress

(continued from page 27)

ty and to promote the city's attributes. The series, which has brought many of the world's most acclaimed black scholars to Newark, draws nearly 5,000 participants each year. Among the most devoted attendees is Newark's mayor, Sharpe James.

Price's academic focus is mainly on the black historical experience in New Jersey. In 1996, he won the Richard J. Hughes Award from the state's historical commission for his work, which includes editing *Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro-Americans in New Jersey* (New Jersey Historical Society, 1980) and writing *Many Voices, Many Opportunities: Cultural Pluralism and American Arts Policy* (American Council on the Arts, 1994). He is currently completing a book that will trace the history of the black community in Newark.

Believing that the issues vetted in the Wright lecture series warranted year-round academic focus, Price founded Rutgers' Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience in 1997. Fittingly, the institute's first major conference was on memories of the race riots 30 years earlier. Subsequent conferences have embraced such topics as female genital mutilation, Newark's Portuguese community, and American Jews. "I'm not getting any younger, and I wanted to create something that would have some lasting impact," says Price. "Hopefully, the institute will someday become my legacy."

The professor sits in cap and gown for two hours in a sweltering gymnasium, waiting to give a commencement address to the 2000 graduating class at Westside High School. Above the stage is a sign: "No Dream Too Small, No Challenge Too Great"; words that could just as well be a slogan for the city of Newark. He approaches the podium after the long processional and a seemingly endless parade of speakers, and, sensing the audience's restlessness, limits his remarks to 10 minutes.

Price relates that he still fondly remembers his high school commence-

ment; the event, he tells the new graduates, will remain an important milestone in their lives as they grow older. The region's economic boom signals an unlimited opportunity, he tells them; they have a far better chance at succeeding than almost any graduating class since the school opened in 1927.

In the hallway afterward, he greets parents, teachers, and administrators like old friends. Removing his cap and gown in the school parking lot, he admits to disappointment. "Principal

I'm not
getting any younger.

Hopefully the
institute will someday
become my legacy.



[Ferdinand] Williams told me that only 30 percent of the class is going on to college. That number needs to be above 50 percent," he declares.

Price knows better than most that despite the new skyscrapers, arts center, and athletic facilities, Newark's future is directly tied to educating its 48,000 students better. In 1994, when the state took over the city's education system, school infrastructure and basic skill levels on standardized tests had hit rock bottom, and nepotism on the district's payroll was rampant. The state abolished the elected board of education and set up the Newark Public School Advisory Board.

Three years later the state's commissioner of education, Leo Klagholz, appointed Price to a three-year term on the advisory board. "The demands of

the board took up an incredible amount of time, but over my term, I saw it evolve from an uncivil and uncooperative group to one that was very knowledgeable on issues and supportive of reforms," he says.

Education has long taken a back seat to economic development in the city's restructuring, says Price, but he is cautiously optimistic that schooling has become a subject of renewed focus. "Education is on everyone's agenda," he points out. "Corporations are claiming that a well-educated workforce is the city's missing piece, which is something we haven't heard since before 1950. Foundations are pumping energy, money, and ideas into education, and parents are taking a more active role in their kids' schools and are more learning-oriented."

Price was vice chair of the nine-member school board in the final year of his term, and he had considered running for one of three seats that were up for grabs in 2000. (The appointed board is gradually being converted back to a fully elected body.) "It is a tremendous commitment, and there were just too many other projects I couldn't continue to put off," he says, such as his recent appointment as scholar-in-residence beginning next fall at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. "Even though some people think it's undemocratic of me, I don't believe in elected school boards. In many large urban cities, the mayor appoints the school board, which is a much more effective way to run things."

Before visiting Westside High last year as principal-for-a-day and as commencement speaker four months later, Price had been a guest lecturer 10 years ago: "I was really uneasy then. The building was a mess and the students and the faculty were listless. But now the school looks great, the teachers and students seem to have great rapport, and the administration is clearly in control. I believe that there's more energy and optimism in all the schools, but dedicating resources and making sure the right kind of leadership is involved are things we need to keep a careful watch on."

As the Buick Riviera cruises along South Orange Avenue in the rough West Ward, the downtown heart of Newark—viewed from these heights as a riverside skyline symbolizing past power and future promise—seems much further than a few scant miles away. At 5:30 in the afternoon, many neighborhood residents are hustling

home from work, but some young men stand aimlessly on street corners and congregate in doorways. Boarded-up storefronts and vacant lots filled with weeds, cans, and broken glass indicate that economic development hasn't even begun to touch this community. The dichotomy isn't lost on Price. "From roughly 1940 to 1980, Newark became

saddled with the poor. Economic boom or no economic boom, the city is not going to be easily unsaddled. If neighborhoods like this are to change, future generations have to be taught to change them." □

Bill Glovin is the senior editor of RUTGERS MAGAZINE.

Campus Connections

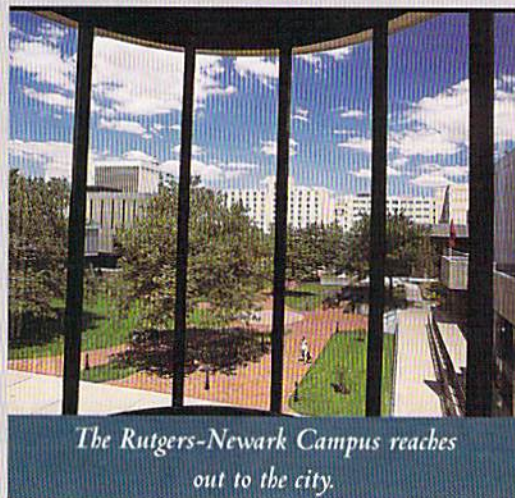
Clement Price founded Rutgers' Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience, in part, to inspire alliances with Newark. Several other Rutgers-Newark initiatives are also aimed at revitalizing the city by helping residents with health care, education, and legal and social services. Some projects rely on faculty and staff; others use students who receive course credit and valuable work experience to complement what they learn in the classroom:

The Newark Center for Families and Communities (NCFC) Founded in 1998 to encourage collaborations between educators and social service agencies, NCFC also manages community outreach programs and its own health center. Two such collaborations are Citizenship and Service Education (CASE) and the Community Scholars Program, which link students with projects that focus on literacy, health care, housing, and social work. Nursing students teach workshops on topics such as asthma, self-esteem, and personal safety, while law students provide seminars on consumer fraud, welfare reform issues, and living wills.

Other initiatives target the Central Ward's West Side Park neighborhood and the Walsh and Kretchmer Project Homes. The Newark and New Brunswick campuses have teamed to assist West Side Park community-based organizations in reviving buildings and facilities, providing continuing education courses and computer training, and after-school programs for children. For families residing in project homes, social work students and faculty offer on-site case management services in education, job training, drug abuse intervention, and child care.

University Heights Science Park After eight years of delays, construction has finally begun on the \$66 million International Center for Public Health, the park's centerpiece. Also under construction are 21 one- and two-family homes that will complete the first phase of the 125-unit Science Park Village. Rutgers is one of four higher educational institutions sponsoring the 50-acre park, a public and private development aimed at improving the Central Ward. The center, scheduled for completion by the end of this

year, will house the Public Health Research Institute, a private organization presently based in Manhattan that conducts infectious disease research, and UMDNJ's medical school and its National Tuberculosis Center. Also anticipated is a proposed high school, which will replace the current Science High School. Jeanette Haviland, the park's executive director, says that a recently approved state school construction bill and involvement by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority should help keep the project on schedule.



The John Cotton Dana Library The library is working on an initiative that will link its Institute of Jazz Studies, the Newark Museum, the Newark Public Library, and other resources through a RUNet 2000-based Web site. Another initiative (pending Rutgers Board of Governor approval) is a Center for Instructional and Information Technologies, a project that will use the library's third floor to offer workshops for schools and community groups. Robert Nahory, the library's director of media technology, research, and outreach, enlists faculty and staff, as well as community leaders, to teach development programs and summer institutes for Newark's teachers and students.