

## **PRESS RELEASE**

September 9, 2014

### **ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS HONOR DR. CLEMENT ALEXANDER PRICE HISTORIAN AND AUTHORITY ON AFRICAN AMERICANS IN NEW JERSEY**

**Newark Historian is Lauded for his Years of Distinguished and Scholarly Service & Works**



Dr. Clement A. Price (front, center), Historian and Scholar, was honored during the Freeholder Board's September 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting at the Hall of Records. He is pictured above with: Front Row (left to right), Freeholder President Blonnie Watson and Freeholder Vice President Patricia Sebold. Back Row (left to right), Freeholder Gerald Owens, Freeholder Carol Clark and Freeholder Leonard Luciano. PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON

(Newark, NJ) – The Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders honored Dr. Clement Alexander Price, Rutgers University's Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor of History and Director of the Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience, and authority on the history of African Americans in New Jersey. The presentation was held during its Wednesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, at the Hall of Records. Dr. Price was presented the Board's Commendation for his years of distinguished service and scholarly works by Freeholders Patricia Sebold, Vice President of the Board from Livingston and Freeholder Blonnie R. Watson, President of the Board from Newark.

Freeholder Vice President Patricia Sebold led the accolades and opened the presentation by acknowledging Dr. Price as an individual in the community who continues to make a significant difference. She further stated that he continues to find ways to reinvent himself. As a public servant herself, as well as a retired English Teacher, Freeholder Sebold coined her link to Dr. Price as "kindred spirits". While Freeholder President Blonnie Watson, co-sponsor of the commendation, referred to Dr. Price as Newark's own personal griot. In her comments she explained in West African culture, a griot's function is to keep an oral history of the tribe or village and to entertain with stories, poems, and songs.

Dr. Clement Price is received his B.A. in History and M.A. in History from the University of Bridgeport in Bridgeport, Connecticut and his Ph.D. in History from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey in New Brunswick. Further, he holds honorary degrees from William Paterson University, Drew University, New Jersey Institute of Technology and Essex County College.

Dr. Price is the foremost authority on the history of African Americans in New Jersey by virtue of his *Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro-Americans in New Jersey* (1980), *Many Voices, Many Opportunities: Cultural Pluralism and American Arts Policy* (1994) and numerous other scholarly works.

The recipient of many awards for academic and community service, Dr. Price holds the following: the City of Newark's official historian, 2014; The New Jersey Nets Basketball Black History Month Award at the Prudential Arena in Newark, New Jersey, February, 2011; the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Leadership Award from Essex County in February, 2010; a Lifetime Achievement Award from Local Initiatives Support Corporation, (LISC) New Jersey in November, 2008; and New Jersey Professor of the Year by The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) in 1999.

Additionally, he is a member of the Scholarly Advisory Committee to the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture; a member of the advisory council for the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History; a Trustee of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; a trustee of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation; former chairman of the Save Ellis Island Foundation and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. He was agency lead for the National Endowment for the Humanities on President Obama's 2008 transition team and he has been re-appointed by the President as Vice Chair of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Recently appointed Newark City Historian and chairman of the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Newark's founding in 1666, Dr. Price is recognized as a walking encyclopedia of Newark city history.

Along with the late Giles R. Wright, Dr. Price is the 1981 co-founder and co-organizer of the Marion Thompson Wright Lecture Series, one of the nation's oldest and most prestigious conferences in observance of Black History Month. He is co-editor with Spencer Crew and Lonnie Bunch of the forthcoming three volume work *Slave Culture: A Documentary Collection of the Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer's Project, 1936-1938*. In addition to the many honors and scholarly publications, Dr. Price has had many media commentaries, public service programs, lectures and presentations to his credit, as well as many project grants awarded in recognition of his research.

He is a resident of Newark's Lincoln Park section along with his wife, former Newark Museum Director and Chief Executive Officer Mary Sue Sweeney Price.

In a poignant moment, Dr. Price addressed a captivated audience in awe of his wealth of knowledge of the city and county. He began by thanking the board for recognizing him as a historian and stated, "I take very seriously the history of the American Republic, the history of this county and the history of this city". He noted when he emerged on the scene in Newark in 1968, the city had a reputation for not being welcoming to outsiders and coming from Washington D.C., he considered himself an outsider. However, in contradiction to the reputation, fortunately, the city embraced him as a native son, from that time until now. He went on to say, "I very much appreciate the friendship, fellowship and especially the encouragement from that moment until this evening over the years from the city and county."

Dr. Price humbly gave credence to his predecessor, former city historian, the late Charles Cummings. As chairman of Newark's 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Dr. Price talked about the kinds of things people might want to know about a 350 year old city. He feels challenged in finding historical place markings of value in the city since many neighborhoods were torn down erasing many memory markers. He relented this effort is being made to ensure our children will get a sense of a memory of modern founders who knew an old city with a rich history. The year 2017 will mark 40 years of what some called a riot, a rebellion and anarchy. Through this effort, Dr. Price wants to reintroduce the city to the fellow residents of Newark and Essex County at-large.

The presentation was also attended by Freeholder Carol Clark who referred to Dr. Price as "A Treasure in Essex County", Freeholder Gerald Owens and Freeholder Leonard Luciano.

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