

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Vernon Oliver Price

PERSON

Price, Vernon Oliver, 1929-

Alternative Names: Vernon Oliver Price;

Life Dates: December 1, 1929-

Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois, USA

Residence: Chicago, IL

Occupations: Gospel Singer

Biographical Note

Gospel singer Vernon Oliver Price, known widely in the Church of God in Christ for her role in music and education, was born on December 1, 1929, in Chicago, Illinois, to Maudell and Mauris Oliver. She graduated from Chicago's DuSable High School in 1948.

Price began singing at Bishop William M. Roberts's Fortieth Street Church of God In Christ (COGIC) (later Roberts Temple COGIC) on Chicago's South Side under the leadership of Minnie Pearl Roberts Thomas when she was three years old, where she was later joined by her sister Loretta Oliver. In 1941, Price became a member of the choir at Bishop Louis Henry Ford's Saint Paul COGIC, also on Chicago's South Side. She also was a guest artist on Mother Lucy Smith's All Nations Pentecostal Broadcasts with such artists as Little Lucy Smith, Reverend James Cleveland, and The Watson Family. As a teenager, she was in the DuSable High School choir under the tutelage of Mildred Bryant Jones and sang with the Emma Jackson Singers, Ernestine Washington, and Emily Bram Bibby. She also trained with Anna Broy Crockett Ford, whom she later served as assistant director of the COGIC International Music Department. Price went on to serve as choir director of Saint Paul COGIC, church soloist for over eighty years, and jurisdictional soloist for the COGIC First Jurisdiction of Illinois for over sixty-five years. Price appeared on Jubilee Showcase and has performed at numerous hospitals and nursing homes. She also ministered at Illinois's Joliet, Statesville, and Dwight Penitentiaries for forty-five years and served as volunteer Protestant chaplain for the Jordan Penal Group.

Price and her sister Loretta Oliver joined Milton Brunson's Thompson Community Singers in the 1950s and later became members of Lou Della Evans Reid's Gospel Music According to Chicago Choir. Oliver also sang as a member of the Duncanaires.

Price has performed with Reverend Clay Evans's Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church Choir and African American Religious Connection Mass Choir, the Jessy Dixon Singers, A. R. Leak's "It's Time Truth Speaks" radio broadcast, the COGIC Inner-State (Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin) Meeting, the O'Neal Twins, Mattie Wrigley, Mattie Moss Clark, Luvonia Whittley, Iris Stevenson McCullough, Judith McAllister, and Albertina Walker.

Price released her album Thank You Lord in 2010, produced by her son Louis Price, who was the lead singer of the Temptations from 1977 to 1980 and a member of the Drifters in the 1980s and released his eponymous debut album, Louis Price, in 1991. Price performed in The Chicago Defender's Home Service Show gospel festival at the Trianon Ballroom in 1964 and at The Soul of Chicago in 1993. Price served for over thirty years as a member of the COGIC Board of Education and as a Heritage Singer.

Price is a resident of Chicago, Illinois. She and her late husband, John Haywood Price, had several children, including R&B singer Louis Price.

Vernon Oliver Price was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on March 4, 2022.

Related Entries

DuSable High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

40th St. COGIC [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1932 to 1941]

Singer

Saint Paul COGIC [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1941 to ?]

Singer, Choir Director

Various Gospel Acts [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

COGIC International Music Department [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Assistant Director

COGIC First Jurisdiction of Illinois [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Soloist

Various Prisons [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Minister, Chaplain

Self [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Singer

COGIC Board of Education [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Member