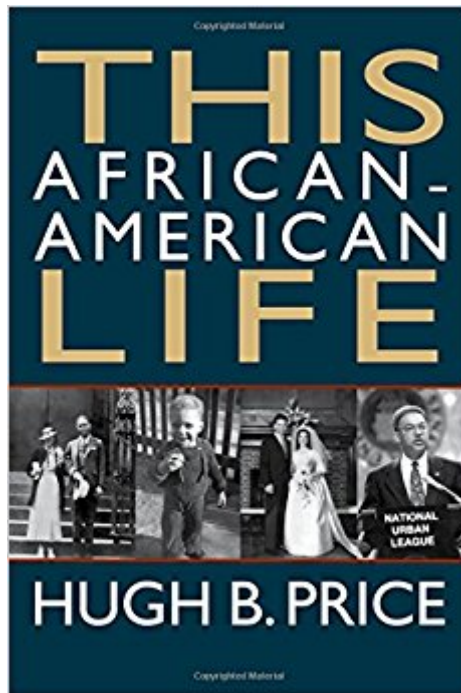




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This African-American Life: A Memoir



Synopsis

"People who believe a problem can be solved tend to get busy solving it," William Raspberry wrote in the *Washington Post* in July 1994. "Hugh B. Price is a believer." This comment on Price's inaugural keynote address as head of the National Urban League proved prescient. During his tenure as president and CEO from 1994 to 2003, Price conceived and launched its Campaign for African-American Achievement, spearheaded pressure on the federal government to combat police brutality and racial profiling, vigorously defended affirmative action, and helped repair frayed relations between the black and Jewish communities. Yet his role with the League was just one among many for this impressive man. In *This African-American Life*, Price traces his forbears, among them Nero Hawley, who fought at Valley Forge under George Washington; George and Rebecca Latimer, who escaped slavery by stowing away on a boat and traveling north as master and slave; and Lewis Latimer, who worked with Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Edison and played a pivotal role in perfecting the light bulb. Price writes about his childhood in a segregated neighborhood near Howard University in Washington, his love of baseball, and his student days in a newly integrated high school and then at Amherst and Yale Law School. He covers his varied and highly successful careers, from his early days as a legal services lawyer and director of the Black Coalition in New Haven, Connecticut, to his time as an editorial writer at the *New York Times*, as senior vice president in charge of national production at America's largest public television station, as a vice president at the Rockefeller Foundation, and as a faculty member of the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton. It's easy to sound radical, syndicated columnist E. J. Dionne wrote of Price. By contrast, ideas built on cool reason and the possibility of action often sound moderate. But they can be genuinely radical in their analysis of what's wrong and of what needs to be done.

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Customer Reviews

In his inspirational book, Price weaves his thoughts about public policy with an accounting of his amazing life. His is a life that he might not have imagined he came of age at a time when African Americans had access to new possibilities after rigid educational and occupational segregation. So what young man, a product of segregation, would have imagined himself navigating influential and integrated waters, and making a profound difference. Throughout this book, you get a sense that Hugh Price, though well grounded, is also amazed at the many ways our world has changed. This African American Life reads just like Hugh Price sounds, chock full of self-deprecating humor and tongue-in-cheek reflections. And while Price takes African American life quite seriously, he manages to take himself somewhat less so. Thus, even in his laid-back way, he is able to convey the excitement he feels at certain high points in his life, such as when he visits South Africa, or when he first, as President of the Urban League, gets a multi-car police escort. I am struck both by Price's humility and by his ability to put himself, and important issues, in context. - Julianne Malveaux, New Pittsburgh Courier. Julianne Malveaux is an economist, author, and Founder of Economic Education. --New Pittsburgh Courier

Hugh Price is that friendly uncle who has all the answers and incredible stories to share. A former editorial writer for The New York Times and former head of the National Urban League, Price has been an executive, advocate and teacher. He graduated from Yale Law School, mentored low-income youth in New Haven, Conn., and served as vice president of the Rockefeller Foundation for national educational initiatives. He's had an incredible life, but his success was not without obstacles. The Washington D.C. native has written about his life and family ancestry in a new book, This African-American Life (Blair Publishers). It spans his early life in the Columbia Heights neighborhood of the nation's capital and his experiences growing up in the segregated city in the 1950's as well as the barriers to advancement. - Karen Roberts, USA Today --USA Today

From 1994 to 2003, Hugh Price served as president and CEO of the National Urban League. During his tenure, he tripled the League's endowment, restructured its board of directors and staff; conceived and launched the League's Campaign for African-American Achievement; established the League's Institute for Opportunity and Equality, and established its headquarters on Wall Street.

Price's role at the League was just one aspect of his long and impressive life. In *This African-American Life*, Price traces his family's forbearers, which include several interesting and historically significant ancestors like Nero Hawley, who fought in the American Revolution and served at Valley Forge under Washington and George Latimer and his wife who escaped from slavery in Virginia stowing away on a boat and traveling to the North as a master and slave. When George was spotted by someone from his past, the effort to return him to his master became one of the earliest fugitive slave cases attracting the involvement of Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison. Price talks about his protected childhood in the segregated neighborhood near Howard University, his love of baseball, his experiences as one of five brothers in his freshman class at Amherst, where he also played baseball and basketball, his courtship of his wife, and then goes on to detail the varied positions he held during his professional career. Throughout his memoir, Price shows how his background led him to champion education and the creation of opportunity to help others reach the high levels he has been able to achieve during his lifetime.

A MUST READ for everyone

I thoroughly enjoyed reading Hugh Price's life story and have a much greater understanding and appreciation of his contributions and sacrifices as a notable Black American leader. Hugh's book is inspirational, especially for our youth; he demonstrates how hard work, tenacity and passion (and compassion) can propel one forward toward goal achievement and strengthening vulnerable communities. Hugh's leadership at the National Urban League and some of the cutting edge initiatives implemented under his stewardship live on today and positively impact youth. Bravo Hugh on sharing your incredible and inspiring story!

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