

Price goes from music icon to millionaire

By Mary Wells

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WASHINGTON (NNPA) - During a career that has spanned 54 years, music icon Lloyd Price has used life experiences and business acumen to transform his music career into a wildly successful and growing food company. He is responsible for many firsts among African-Americans in both the music and business worlds.

In 1952, as a 17-year-old lad from Kenner, La., he wrote and sang his way to stardom and music history when he sang about the strong attitude, grace and beauty of a Southern Louisiana Cajun Queen in the tune "Lawdy Miss Clawdy." When music producer Dave Bartholomew and Fats Domino saw a special talent in this new artist, they teamed to co-produce this song and Fats played the piano on the record.

The song became the "Song of the Year" and stayed on top of the music charts for seven consecutive weeks, according to Bill Waller of Price's office. Many music historians say "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" helped to give birth to the Rock 'n Roll Era.

"This was the first time that teenagers had their own music to dance to," Price said in a three-hour phone interview with the *Washington Informer* recently. "Before I recorded 'Lawdy Miss Clawdy,' teenagers listened to what their parents listened to. The song caught on with teenagers, Black and White. White teenagers had nowhere to buy Black records, so they sent Black teenagers into Black music shops to buy the 'Lawdy Miss Clawdy' record for them."

According to Art Rope of Specialty Records, which released the recording, Price's record was the first Black record to sell a million copies.

There was great demand for Price to perform, so he spent the next few years performing, writing music and producing his songs until he was drafted into the U.S. Army.

From 1953 to 1956, Price performed in the Army during the Korean War, much of the time in Japan and the Far East.

In 1959, Price wrote his version of "Stagger Lee" in February and he wrote "Personality" in June. He was on the pop charts with "Where Were You (On Our Wedding Day)," "I'm Gonna Get Married," and "Come into My Heart."



"Lawdy Miss Clawdy" and Lloyd Price get back together again on various food products.

Price recorded 11 straight single records with each record surpassing 900,000 in unit sales.

Since Price first wrote "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" in 1952, the song has been re-recorded 169 times by different music icons, including Elvis Presley, Paul McCartney, Little Richard, Mimi Hendrix, Fats Domino, Travis Tritt, and James Brown.

Price was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1998, but the man who became a multimillionaire did not stop there.

In 1974, Price and Don King teamed together and co-produced a music festival and boxing event called a "Rumble in the Jungle" featuring Muhammad Ali vs. George Foreman in Zaire, Africa. It became the world's first satellite transmitted live boxing event in history.

"King and I are still the best of friends and we both were invited to George Bush's second inaugural festivities in January '05," Price said.

Price is now enjoying his food enterprise, which includes retailing products made from sweet potatoes, cereals and cereal bars.

His Lawdy Miss Clawdy Sweet Potato Cheesecakes and Lawdy Miss Clawdy Sweet Potato Cookies are sold in Wal-mart stores.

"I took just the colorful box which packages the Lawdy Miss Clawdy Sweet Potato Cookies with my father's picture on the box to the Bentonville, Ark., office of Wal-mart," Price explained. "They were impressed just from looking at the packaging of the cookies... There were no cookies in the box... but we signed a contract."

Lloyd Price Icon Food Brands Inc. is the first and

only African-American food company that offers cereal products for a general market. Those products include

a Louis Armstrong Honey & Almond Crunchy Granola Bar and a Sugar Ray Robinson Raisin & Almond

Crunchy Granola Bar.

Price plans to open dessert stores known as Len Yap Dessert Stores, similar to Starbucks Coffee Shops, which will be available to franchise owners who can invest a minimum of \$25,000. "Len Yap" is a Creole term for dessert.

"As kids we always asked for Len Yap," said Price, recalling his youthful days with his 13 siblings.

Price is proud of his new ventures.

"With these dessert products and granola cereals made by Lloyd Price Icon Food Brands, we are going up against the big boys and not mom and pop stores. African-Americans spent more than \$68 billion for food in 2004 and each year more billions were spent. We will be competing with General Mills and the big boys, not

just for the African-American dollars but for the trillion dollars a year spent on food," he said.

"We will provide nutritious organic cereals, Lloyd Price Icon Energy-2-Eat Bars which are now sold in 7-Eleven Stores, and Lawdy Miss Clawdy Sweet Potato Cheesecakes and Cookies, along with Lawdy Miss Clawdy Sweet Potato Pies and muffins to be mainstreamed on Wal-mart shelves and in freezers."

The company's website is www.lawdymissclawdy.com for more information on products and franchisees or about the Southern tour of the food products, which will start in Louisiana, Georgia, Mississippi, Florida and Alabama, with several personal appearances by Lloyd Price.

Mary Wells writes for the *Washington Informer*.

Your Horoscope Says... July 5-11

ARIES

You may feel a bit crabby about your health this week. If you feel you need a physical checkup, make the appointment this week. If you want to feel and look better this week, skip some lunches and take walks instead.

Soul Affirmation: My life gives me limitless possibilities.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 30, 40

TAURUS

A new version of an old project lands on your desk this week, and you are not happy about the added responsibility. Recognize it as an opportunity to find the good in all situations. Think of ways to enjoy this task and you'll feel happier at the end of the week.

Soul Affirmation: I enjoy learning new things about myself this week.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 39, 48

GEMINI

Pleasure is on your agenda and you'll find many ways to indulge your craving for quality leisure time. It's a good idea to keep a cautious eye on your budget; don't scrimp, just don't overspend. Get-togethers with friends and family will add to your happiness, especially in the evenings.

Soul Affirmation: The key to my happiness lies in my sympathy for others.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 32, 50

CANCER

Communications flow smoothly this week and your intuition is high. A wild idea for moneymaking could come to you, but you should let it walk on by. Stick to your current plan and use your imagination for ways to streamline your work.

Soul Affirmation: I seek to understand, not to judge.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 31, 53

LEO

The companionship of a dear friend or partner is special this week. You'll be deeply grateful that you have this person in your life. Friend-

ship like this is a blessing, and you are truly blessed with many people who love and care for you. Letting them know how much you care will warm and charm the hearts near to you.

Soul Affirmation: Facing down challenges makes me feel good about myself.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 24, 54

VIRGO

You continue in your togetherness cycle. Communications between partners are tender and cooperative. You who are single are attracting new admirers every week. The feeling that you share the thoughts of another will be very strong this week. Call this person and validate your intuition. A new invitation arrives in the mail this week.

Soul Affirmation: I know that enjoyment is a state of mind this week.

Lucky Numbers: 40, 47, 49

LIBRA

What's this? A fly in your personal soup? Fish it out, and don't sweat the small stuff this week. Keep your optimism revved up by remembering how unstoppably brilliant and wonderful you are. You can handle any situation with poise and grace. This week, practice your grace under a little pressure. You'll be amazed and proud of yourself because of how well you manage!

Soul Affirmation: The true path is mapped out by my impulses.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 22, 35

SCORPIO

Phone calls or letters come in from friends you haven't seen lately, and you'll feel very happy with all their news. You continue to feel very close to a partner, and romantic chat touches on deep subjects this week. Continue to explore your levels of intimacy. "How deep is your love?" and "Ain't no mountain high enough."

Soul Affirmation: Often, it's not what I say but the way I say it that gets the message across.

Lucky Numbers: 16, 49, 51

SAGITTARIUS

This is a gold-star week. You'll be positively glowing at any and all social events. Many gifts, both tangible and intangible, come to you this week through friendship and from close ties. Enjoy your fabulous self very much. Your sweetheart may want to talk about a deeper commitment.

Soul Affirmation: I keep my eyes wide open for a special person who is also looking for me.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 37, 41

CAPRICORN

More luck, more opportunities, and more love are in the stars for you this week. Enjoy this up cycle, and let the things you do with your gifts and talents have lasting effects. Social gatherings are favored. Wear your brightest smile and trust your intuition.

Soul Affirmation: I find a source of strength in someone I love.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 40, 49

AQUARIUS

Give yourself a chance to learn all you can about love this week. This is a week when you are open to new ideas. Make those ideas center on relationships. Financial matters are worrisome, but they can wait.

Soul Affirmation: I keep my eyes open for business opportunities this week.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 21, 29

PISCES

Your thoughts turn from spending and socializing to a more spiritual area this week. While you may feel that you still have much to do in the next few weeks, this week is good for taking some time for yourself, and for insightful meditation. Love and romance vibrations remain constant; count your blessings!

Soul Affirmation: I say nothing but kind things about those I have to deal with.

Lucky Numbers: 19, 28, 37