The Rep
MILWAUKEE

Play Guide

January 29–February 24, 2013

CLYBOURNE PARK

By Bruce Norris

Directed by Mark Clements

Executive Producers: Robert H. and Carol O. Manegold

CLYBOURNE PARK
PLAY GUIDE

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Milwaukee Repertory Theater presents

CLYBOURNE PARK

By Bruce Norris
Directed by Artistic Director Mark Clements
January 29 – February 24, 2013
Quadracci Powerhouse

MARK'S TAKE:

"When I first read the truly extraordinary *Clybourne Park*, it knocked me off my feet. It confronts huge subjects: gentrification, race relations, and political correctness, among others. It's hard for any play to tackle any one of those things, but to take on so many and to take them on so brilliantly and fluidly without lecturing the audience – while at the same time being hilariously funny – is an extraordinary feat. I can't wait to direct this modern masterpiece!"

-Mark Clements, Artistic Director

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SYNOPSIS

Grant Goodman, Greta Wohlrabe, Marti Gobel and James T. Alfred

This synopsis contains spoilers.

ACT I

In 1959, Russ Stoller sits in his house in Clybourne Park, a neighborhood of Chicago. In two days, Russ and his wife Bev are moving to Glen Meadow, a suburb outside of the city, where Russ will begin work at his new office. Bev, and their African-American housemaid, Francine, pack some final items. Since the death of Russ and Bev's son, Kenneth, a Korean War veteran, the home (and the neighborhood as a whole) has been a source of pain for the couple. Bev hopes the move will be a fresh start. Jim, their minister, arrives to console Russ, whose anger and hopelessness worry his wife. Russ, however, tells the minister to leave him alone. Before Jim can leave, Albert, Francine's husband, arrives to collect her. He volunteers to help with a heavy trunk that needs to be carried downstairs. Karl Lindner, a representative of the neighborhood community association, arrives with his wife, Betsy. He expresses his concern that the Stollers sold their house to an African-American family. Jim brings Francine into the conversation, asking her whether her black family would be happy moving into a white neighborhood, but Russ declares the conversation over: the sale of the house is final. Despite Karl's arguments, Russ refuses to budge. Claiming he has a responsibility to protect the community, Karl threatens to scare the buyers away by telling them why they are getting such a good deal on the property – because Kenneth committed suicide in the house. Russ thunders that he does not care about the community that turned its back on Kenneth when he returned from war a broken man, and then treated the family like "the plague" after their son's suicide. The situation turns violent, and everyone leaves. Russ tells Bev that he will bury the trunk in the backyard.

ACT II

In 2009, Steve and his pregnant wife, Lindsey, meet with their lawyer, Kathy (the daughter of Betsy and Karl), in the same Clybourne Park house where Russ and Bev once lived. They are joined by Kevin and his wife, Lena (the great-niece of Lena "Mama" Younger from Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*), and Tom from the neighborhood property owners association, to discuss a petition that protests Steve and Lindsey's proposed renovation of the house. Steve and Lindsey are moving into Clybourne Park from Glen Meadow and plan to build a larger house on the property. The property owners association, contacted by a concerned Lena and Kevin, wants to ensure that the new home is consistent with the "historically significant" neighborhood's aesthetic. While the group attempts to wade through the legalese, they are interrupted both by cell phone calls and Dan, a handyman who is working on digging up a dead crepe myrtle tree in the backyard. Lena finally loses her patience, feeling that she is the only one taking the matter at hand seriously. She takes great pride in Clybourne Park's history of African-American struggle. This house in particular has personal resonance for her, as her great-aunt lived here and was the first person of color to move into the neighborhood. A heated argument about racism, reverse racism, gentrification, sexism, and marginalization ensues, during which Dan enters dragging a trunk he has unearthed beneath the tree. The squabble succeeds in offending everyone, and they all depart. Dan manages to get the trunk open. He finds a letter written by Kenneth to his parents. As Dan reads the letter, 2009 dissolves into the day that Kenneth committed suicide. Kenneth writes a letter to his parents as Francine arrives to start the housework; his mother, who overslept, comes down from bed to reassure her son that the world is going to change for the better.

Marti Gobel, Gerard Neugent, Greta Wohlrabe and James T. Alfred

THE CHARACTERS

ACTOR	ACT I	ACT II
 **Lee E. Ernst**	 **Russ** owner of the house for sale	 **Dan** a handyman
 **Jenny McKnight**	 **Bev** married to Russ	 **Kathy** Steve and Lindsey's lawyer
 **Marti Gobel**	 **Francine** Russ and Bev's maid	 **Lena** married to Kevin
 **James T. Alfred**	 **Albert** married to Francine	 **Kevin** married to Lena
 **Grant Goodman**	 **Jim** Russ and Bev's minister	 **Tom** neighborhood association representation
 **Gerard Neugent**	 **Karl** neighborhood association representation	 **Steve** buying the house, married to Lindsey
 **Greta Wohlrabe**	 **Betsy** married to Karl	 **Lindsey** buying the house, married to Steve
 **J.R. Yancher**		**Kenneth** the son of Bev and Russ

A RAISIN IN THE SUN: INSPIRING *CLYBOURNE PARK*

Sidney Poitier and cast in a scene from the 1959 production of *A Raisin in the Sun*

Clybourne Park responds to one of the most celebrated plays in American drama: *A Raisin in the Sun*. Playwright Bruce Norris directly connects the two plays. In *A Raisin in the Sun*, the Younger family buys a house in the Clybourne Park neighborhood. *Clybourne Park* takes place in that house.

When Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* opened on Broadway in 1959, it became the first play by an African-American woman to do so. The play won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, the New York Drama Critic Circle Award for Best New Play, and was nominated for four Tony awards. On the 25th anniversary of the play, the New York Times called *A Raisin in the Sun* the play that "changed American theater forever."

In *A Raisin in the Sun*, five family members share a small, three-room apartment – Lena (Mama) Younger, her daughter Beneatha, her son Walter Lee, Walter's wife Ruth, and their son Travis. When Mama receives a life insurance check after her husband's death, each member of the family argues it should be used to further their own individual dreams. Eventually, Mama decides to use the money as a down payment for a house with enough room for the entire family. With their own house, she sees a bright future for her family.

Don't miss *A Raisin in the Sun*! Performances run March 12 – April 14 in The Rep's Quadracci Powerhouse.

The house is located in Clybourne Park, an entirely white neighborhood. When the residents of Clybourne Park learn that an African-American family bought the house, they send Karl Lindner, a representative from the Clybourne Park Improvement Association, to visit the family. He offers them money in exchange for not moving into the neighborhood. However, Lindner fails to convince the family, and, refusing the money, the optimistic Youngers move to Clybourne Park.

In the original New York Times review of the play, Brook Atkinson noted:

> In *A Raisin in the Sun* … Lorraine Hansberry touches on some serious problems. No doubt, her feelings about them are as strong as anyone's. But she has not tipped her play to prove one thing or another. The play is honest. She has told the inner as well as the outer truth about a Negro family in the South Side of Chicago at the present time … That is Miss Hansberry's personal contribution to an explosive situation in which simple honesty is the most difficult thing in the world. And also the most illuminating."

Lorraine Hansberry believed in finding the universal through the specific saying, "one of the most sound ideas in dramatic writing is that, in order to create the universal, you must pay very great attention to the specific." In a 1961 interview on *A Raisin in the Sun*, Hansberry elaborated:

Lorraine Hansberry

> I don't think there is anything more universal in the world than man's oppression of man. This is what most great dramas have been about, no matter what the device of telling it is. We tend to think, because it is so immediate with us in the United States, that this is a unique human question where white people do not like black people … but the fact of the matter is wherever there are men, there are oppressed people and … to the extent that my work is successful piece of drama it makes it a reality of this oppression true.

Since its premiere in 1959, the play has been translated into thirty languages. The play became a film in 1961, starring Sidney Poiter and most of the original Broadway cast. Since then, the play has also been made into two made-for-TV movies, once in 1989 starring Danny Glover, and again in 2008, starring Sean Combs.

HANSBERRY V. LEE: INSPIRING *A RAISIN IN THE SUN*

Hansberry's play drew inspiration from her own childhood growing up on Chicago's South Side and moving into an entirely white neighborhood at a young age. Many neighborhoods had racially restrictive covenants, agreements written into property deeds binding the owners to not sell or rent their property to specific minority groups.


28 PAGES 10¢ AND WORTH IT
THE Chicago Defender
WORLD'S GREATEST WEEKLY
CITY EDITION
Vol. XXXVI, No. 30 CHICAGO, ILL., SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1940
WIFE OF BISHOP J. A. GREGG STRICKEN
HANSBERRY DECISION OPENS 500 NEW HOMES TO RACE
Promoted
HOLD YOUTH, 20 FOR MURDER IN GANG ROW
STRATEGY BOARD IN HANSBERRY RESTRICTIVE COVENANT CASE
COURT HOLDS COVENANTS NON EXISTENT

Headline in the *The Chicago Defender* after the 1940 Supreme Court decision.

In 1937, her father, a realtor active in the NAACP, bought a house in Washington Park, a "restricted" all-white neighborhood of Woodlawn. Like most of Chicago, the neighborhood had estate covenants prohibiting sales to African-Americans. The specific covenant in Washington Park stated, "no part of said premises shall in no manner be used or occupied directly by a negro or negroes." The covenant did specify that African-Americans could be chauffeurs or house servants, as long as they did not own the house. Anyone who signed the covenant covering the same land in the neighborhood could enforce these covenants. The Kenwood Improvement Association filed a mandatory injunction for the family to vacate their home. With support of the NAACP, Hansberry challenged the injunction and took the case all the way to the Supreme Court in a case baring the Hansberry family name. Hansberry's lawyers won the case when the court rejected the specific covenant impacting the Hansberry family but did not achieve a ruling on the constitutionality of restrictive residential covenants. The Supreme Court eventually rulled racially restrictive covenants a violation of the fourteenth amendment eight years later in *Shelley vs. Kraemer* when an African-American couple purchased a home in a restricted neighborhood in St. Louis.

The property in dispute in the *Hansberry vs. Lee* case. It now has landmark status as the Lorraine Hansberry House.

"My father was typical of a generation of Negroes who believed that the "American way" could successfully be made to work to democratize the United States. Thus, twenty-five years ago, he spent a small personal fortune, his considerable talents, and many years of his life fighting, in association with NAACP attorneys, Chicago's "restrictive covenants" in one of this nation's ugliest ghettos.

That fight also required our family to occupy disputed property in a hellishly hostile 'white neighborhood' in which, literally, howling mobs surrounded our house. One of their missiles almost took the life of the then eight-year-old signer of this letter. My memories of this 'correct' way of fighting white supremacy in America included being spat at, cursed and pummeled in the daily trek to and from school. And I also remember my desperate and courageous mother, patrolling our house all night with a loaded German Luger, doggedly guarding her four children, while my father fought the respectable part of the battle in the Washington court."

-Lorraine Hansberry, Letter to the Editor,
New York Times, April 23 1964

CLYBOURNE PARK PLAYWRIGHT
BRUCE NORRIS


Bruce Norris

Bruce Norris is a 1982 graduate of Northwestern University with a degree in theater. Norris began his career as an actor, appearing in productions at Victory Gardens and the Goodman, as well as on Broadway in Neil Simon's *Biloxi Blues*. He also appeared in film, playing the stuttering teacher in 1999's *The Sixth Sense*. In the late 1990s, Norris committed himself to playwriting full time, moving from Chicago to New York. In addition to *Clybourne Park*, Norris has written *The Infidel* (2000), *Purple Heart* (2002), *We All Went Down to Amsterdam* (2003), *The Pain and the Itch* (2004), and *The Unmentionables* (2006), all of which had their premieres at Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre. His newest play, *A Parallelogram*, premiered there in July 2011. His work has also been seen at Playwrights Horizons (New York), Lookingglass Theatre (Chicago), Philadelphia Theatre Company, Woolly Mammoth Theatre (Washington D.C.), Staatstheater Mainz (Germany), and The Galway Festival (Ireland), among others. He is the recipient of the Steinberg Playwright Award (2009), The Whiting Foundation Prize for Drama (2006), as well as two Joseph Jefferson Awards (Chicago) for Best New Work. As an actor he can be seen in the films *A Civil Action*, *The Sixth Sense*, and the recent *All Good Things*.

BRUCE NORRIS ON *CLYBOURNE PARK*

"I saw A Raisin in the Sun as a film in probably seventh grade. Interestingly our Social Studies teacher was showing it to a class of all white students who lived in an independent school district, the boundaries of which had been formed specifically to prevent our being integrated into the Houston school district and being bussed to other schools with black students.

So I don't know whether our teacher was just obtuse, or crafty and subversive, but she was showing us a movie that basically in the end -- because Karl doesn't come in until the second act -- is really pointing a finger at us and saying we are those people. So I watch it at twelve years old and I could realize even then that I'm Karl Lindner. To see that when you're a kid and to realize that you're the villain has an impact.

For years I thought I wanted to play Karl Lindner but then as time went on I thought it's really an interesting story to think about the conversation that was going on in the white community about the Younger family moving into Clybourne Park. It percolated for many years and that's how I ended up writing this play."

– Bruce Norris in an interview with Rebecca Rugg, Artistic Producer at Steppenwolf Theatre Company

"It was very important to me to depict the people in 1959 as people with good intentions. They're not racists in the KKK way — they're people who think that they're doing the right thing to protect their neighborhood and their children and their real estate values. But that's a form of self-interest that has as its unfortunate byproduct a really racist outcome."

– Bruce Norris in an interview with Kurt Andersen at Studio 360

"Audiences have this sort of childlike need to identify who their hero is in a story and to root for them and get behind them, and one of my favorite things to do as a writer is to confound that impulse."

- Bruce Norris in an interview with Kurt Andersen at Studio 360

"Pretty much every big city has some version of this. Even where I grew up in Houston, it's a similar thing. There is no actual Clybourne Park in Chicago. Or, to be strictly accurate, there is a playground called Clybourn [sic] Park on Clybourn Avenue, but there is no neighborhood called Clybourne [or Clybourn] Park. That is something Lorraine Hansberry made up. If you want to have an example of the kind of neighborhood we're talking about, it would be Wicker Park or Ukrainian Village in Chicago. More Wicker Park. Wicker Park is a neighborhood that was mostly Latino for about 25 years, and it's very close to where Cabrini-Green used to be. Cabrini-Green was a big, dangerous housing project, which is about three or four blocks from where Steppenwolf Theatre is now."

- Bruce Norris speaking with Beatrice Basso of American Conservatory Theater

IDEAS IN *CLYBOURNE PARK*

"*[Clybourne Park]* confronts huge subjects: gentrification, race relations, and political correctness, among others. It's hard for any play to tackle any one of those things, but to take on so many and to take them on so brilliantly and fluidly without lecturing the audience—while at the same time being hilariously funny—is an extraordinary feat."

-*Clybourne Park* director and Milwaukee Rep Artistic Director Mark Clements

COMMUNITY

Clybourne Park asks the question, what makes a community? How do people join together with a common purpose of living together and supporting each other? Is that even possible? In Act I, the character of Karl Lindner says "fitting into a community is really what it all comes down to." How do communities welcome or exclude people based on whether or not they "fit in?"

I just have a lot of respect for the people who went through those experiences and still managed to carve out a life for themselves and create a community despite a whole lot of obstacles.
-LENA, ACT II

What, ya mean the community where every time I go for a haircut, where they all sit and stare like the goddamn grim reaper walked in the barber shop door? That community? Where, Bev stops at Gelman's for a quart of milk and they look at her like she's got the goddamn plague? That the community I'm supposed to be looking out for.
-RUSS, ACT I

LENA: Well, then they tore down Sup'r Sav'r, so -

KEVIN: You know where the Whole Foods is?

-ACT II

That's just a part of my history and my parents' history - and honoring the connection to that history – and, no one, myself included, likes having to dictate what you can or can't do with your own home, but there's just a lot of pride, and a lot of memories in these houses, and for some of us, that connection still has *value*, if that makes any sense?
-LENA, ACT II

GENTRIFICATION

gen•tri•fi•ca•tion *(noun)*

: the process of renewal and rebuilding accompanying the influx of middle-class or affluent people into deteriorating areas that often displaces poorer residents

Source: Merriam-Webster Dictionary

The second act of *Clybourne Park* tackles the polarizing debate surrounding gentrification. For some, gentrification means the revitalization of inner city neighborhoods and the creation of new buildings in place of vacant lots, new business selling an increased variety of goods, and improvements to public works like sidewalks. However, to others, gentrification means the displacement of neighborhood residents due to rising costs of living and property values. Does a neighborhood loses its historical identity when it becomes a more affluent area?

LENA: *(innocently)* It was just a joke.

STEVE: *Exactly!!*

KATHY: An extremely *hostile* joke.

LINDSEY: Directed at me.

-**ACT II**

RACIAL COMEDY

Is America ready for racial comedy? Bruce Norris asks this question in *Clybourne Park*, sparing almost no group the punch line. Juxtaposing the comedy of 1959 with 2009, Norris emphasizes America's complicated history with racial jokes.

The 1960s marked a significant shift in racial comedy – a transition from blatantly racist humor in the tradition of blackface minstrel shows, to racial humor in which exposing people's prejudice is the punch line.

What is it that racial jokes do in contemporary society? Perhaps, as Emily Hoffman comments in American Conservatory Theater's *Words on Plays*, "laughter is a release valve, and in the context of tense race relations it can provide just the sort of breathing room needed to wrestle with issues that would otherwise be too difficult or uncomfortable to touch."

It is funny. Yes it is. And and and and the reason it's funny, is, is, is that it plays upon certain latent fears of - of - of - of white people.
-**STEVE, ACT II**

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

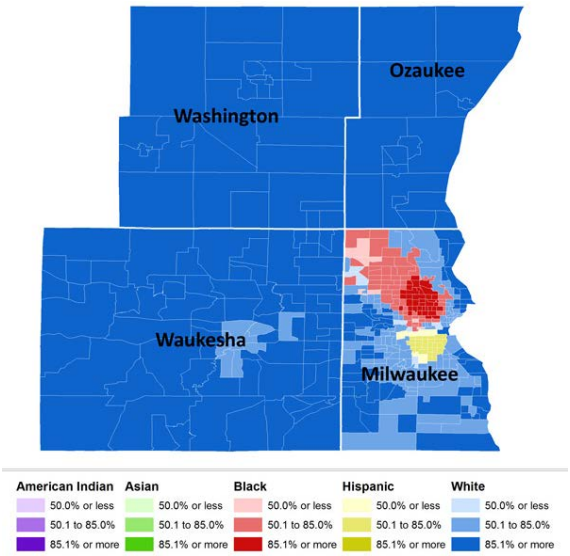
Much of the comedy in *Clybourne Park* comes from the need to be politically correct and what happens when characters cross that line. With comic moments about race, gender, disability, sexuality, etc, Bruce Norris reveals a world in which political correctness stifles conversation and yet protects people. Is political correctness necessary or does it inhibit people's ability to talk to one another?

In an interview with American Conservatory Theater, Bruce Norris commented, "theoretically [political correctness] is a step. So, now that we've all been very careful, you think that after some time goes by things will be normalized. We white people (because we are the oppressors) sit around going, "Is it time now? Has enough time elapsed? … But of course that never happens, so white people feel resentful because we realize the past is going to hang around our necks like millstones forever. There is no end. Even if we gave reparation payments, still it wouldn't be enough."

Sorry, don't we say Negro, now?
-**JIM, ACT I**

No. I'm sorry, but can we just come out and say what it is we're actually - ? Shouldn't we maybe do that? Because if that's what this is really about, then… jesus, maybe we oughta save ourselves some time and and and and just… say what it is we're really saying instead of doing this elaborate little dance around it.
-**STEVE, ACT II**

MILWAUKEE'S CLYBOURNE PARK?



A map of the metropolitan Milwaukee area based on data from the 2010 Census.

In many ways the story of 406 Clybourne Street is the story of many American cities. If, as playwright Bruce Norris says, "pretty much every big city has some version of this [neighborhood]," what is Milwaukee's Clybourne Park?

During the first rehearsal of Clybourne Park, Milwaukee Rep Artistic Director Mark Clements suggested that the neighborhood of Brewers Hill could be dubbed an example of "Milwaukee's Clybourne Park." There are also a number of other neighborhoods in Milwaukee that have changed and shifted over the past fifty years – neighborhoods like the fictional Clybourne Park in which there was once an entirely white population that changed to nearly entirely African-American populations in the 1950s and 1960s. Similar to the play, white families are now moving into some of those neighborhoods.

Named by Time Magazine in 2011 the "most segregated city" in America, Milwaukee has one of the most segregated metropolitan areas with a population of 500,000+ in the United States. Why is Milwaukee a city in which Time Magazine states, "90 percent of African-Americans live in the inner city?" According to Marc Levine, professor of history and economic development at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, "Every place has had the zoning ordinances, then restrictive covenants, the practices of realtors—the standard history. What makes Milwaukee a little bit different than these other places, which explains why we're consistently in the top five and often number one in segregation? We have the lowest rate of African-American suburbanization of any of these larger cities."

FAIR HOUSING MARCHES: MILWAUKEE'S CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Milwaukee's Civil Rights Movement focused in many ways on housing. The most publicized marches in Milwaukee were the "Fair Housing Marches" of 1967-1968, in which a young priest, Father James Groppi, led marches from African-American neighborhoods into the white South Side.

A confrontation between Milwaukee police and the NAACP Youth Council, ca. 1967-1968.

A 1968 Time Magazine article outlined the struggle: "Few northern cities have more sharply segregated housing conditions than Milwaukee, where de facto barriers for years have walled Negroes into the inner core. And last summer and fall, few cities seemed less likely to do anything about the problem. For 200 days last year, black demonstrators led by the Rev. James Groppi, 37, a Milwaukee-born Italian-American, paraded from the ghetto into the Polish-occupied South Side and the city's other ethnic sections to demand a city open-housing ordinance."

The marches gathered national attention and for 200 days the NAACP Youth Council marched to secure a citywide open-housing ordinance that would give all citizens, regardless of race, the right to rent or own property anywhere in the city. As historian Patrick Jones points out, after angry mobs from the predominantly white South Side neighborhoods greeted the Youth Council with rocks, bottles, and racial epithets, some called Milwaukee, "The Selma of the North."

For more information on the Fair Housing Marches, see the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Library's page "March on Milwaukee":
http://collections.lib.uwm.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/march

AN INTERVIEW WITH CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST
MARGARET ROZGA

A discussion with Leda Hoffmann, Milwaukee Rep Education Coordinator

The Civil Rights story of Milwaukee often focuses on housing and on the fair housing marches. For people who do not know so much about those marches, can you give us a brief overview of those events? How did housing become a focus?

When African-Americans moved from the rural South during the great migration, they were still in virtual slavery. The North offered job opportunities, especially sought-after union jobs. The African-American community in Milwaukee grew at a very rapid rate. In 1950 Milwaukee had about 20,000 African-American citizens, and in 1960 there were about 62,000. So in 10 years, the African-American community tripled. But housing did not correspond to the growth. In the 1960s, African-Americans made up 12% of Milwaukee's population, living on 5% of Milwaukee's land. The population density in African-American neighborhoods was significantly higher than it was anywhere else.

Margaret Rozga

As a member of the 1967-68 Milwaukee NAACP Youth Council, Margaret (Peggy) Rozga participated in the successful campaign to secure passage of federal and local fair housing legislation.

She later married civil rights leader Father James Groppi whom she first met when he drove a group of Milwaukee students to Alabama to work in a 1965 voter registration campaign organized by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Recently retired as a professor of English at the University of Wisconsin Waukesha, she served for five years as the advisor to UW Waukesha Students for Peace.

As the convener of the March On Milwaukee Coordinating Committee, a group of community activists and university scholars, she led the planning of a series of events to commemorate the 40th anniversary of these fair housing marches. These included a day-long community conference hosted at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and a commemorative celebration on the James E. Groppi Unity Bridge (formerly the 16th Street Viaduct). *Two Hundred Nights and One Day*, her book of poems about the Milwaukee Fair Housing struggle, now in its second printing, is available at bookstores or can be ordered online

At the same time, Milwaukee began a series of "urban renewal projects," which involved tearing down housing in old neighborhoods, mostly on the North side in African-American neighborhoods. There were no relocation benefits, and without a fair housing law, a lot of people faced difficulties finding alternative housing.

African Americans had difficulty finding housing outside the "boundary lines" of the African American community. When they could do so, it was often because real estate agencies were "block busting," calling people in the area to "warn" them of a pending sale to African Americans and ask if they would like to sell their home.

Many whites would panic, selling outright to the agencies for an average price or somewhat below average. Realtors would turn around and sell to African-American families sometimes for fifty percent more, sometimes double that sale price, making a huge profit very quickly.

NAACP march with James Groppi in the center, 1968.

The African-American families who found a place to buy or rent beyond the boundary lines would face a lot of hostility. Their kids would be assaulted and their homes would be vandalized. African-American leaders at the time said, "this isn't urban renewal, this is urban removal." It was moving people out. It was a "self-deport" strategy: make life miserable for African-Americans and maybe they will go away.

Were there legal terms in place to keep African-Americans from renting at that time? Or would people simply not sell to them?

AN INTERVIEW WITH CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST **MARGARET ROZGA** (cont.)

Fair Housing Marches, 1967.

People would not rent to them, and there was no legal recourse. It was considered a right as a property owner to say "there's no law that says I have to rent to you." A newly returned Vietnam veteran at the time named Ronald Brinton tried to rent a place at 29th and Burleigh with his wife, and was refused. I have talked to African-American students today in that same neighborhood. When you tell them blacks were refused rental in that area, their jaws drop and they start to look at their neighborhood in a really different way.

Who was mainly involved in the fair housing and civil rights movements in Milwaukee? Was there a diverse cross-section of the city, in terms of race and age?

I joined the NAACP Youth council in 1966. Before that I had been a voting rights volunteer in Alabama. The group was largely African-American, but several of my white friends joined at the same time. There were white people—a lot of young people who were interested in civil rights. So in my experience it was always a multi-racial organization. And for me, I did not want to come back from my experience in the South and think "there's no problem here," just because it was not as visible in Milwaukee.

The first act of *Clybourne Park* takes place in 1959, the same year *A Raisin in the Sun* is set. What did Milwaukee feel like to you in 1959, regarding housing?

I graduated from 8th grade at that time. There were no African-Americans in my neighborhood. In the eight years that I was at Blessed Sacrament School, I can remember one African-American student.

When I came home from my summer in Alabama – where I had been living with the black community and interacted very little with the white community – suddenly, I realized "oh, there are no black people around here." I really began to realize how segregated the city was. When I wanted to visit friends on the North Side – it was three buses across town.

When my parents died and we were cleaning out the house where we grew up, I found the deed to the property. Written across the face of the deed was "any attempt to sell this property to persons of Negro decent shall be null and void." Segregation in Milwaukee was definitely constructed.

Much like in the second act of *Clybourne Park*, these issues continue to exist throughout Milwaukee today. How have you seen things change? Does the conversation about race still revolve around housing and neighborhoods?

There are people scattered across the metropolitan area in ways that certainly were not true in 1959 and into the 1960s. There was a door that opened for a very short time, during which African-Americans who were ready to make the move could, and did. And then those unionized jobs started to leave the city and that door slammed shut. People get caught in a triple-bind. They live in the inner city where there are not jobs, they do not have cars, and there is no public transportation to where the jobs are.

It has been really interesting to work with students. There was a time I thought, "all of these dreams are going to die with those of us who were involved in the fair housing marches." I am just so glad to see that that's not going to be the case.

The students look at their own neighborhoods differently now. They used to look at it as a badge of inferiority and now they are thinking, "what is the potential here? What is the history here? What can we make of where we are now?" They are agents of their own lives and it is so wonderful.

CLYBOURNE PARK'S THIRD ACT

Act I examines 1959, Act II looks at 2009, what is next for 2059?

As Peggy Rogza commented, students who have learned about their neighborhood's history can look to the future asking, "what is the potential here? What is the history here? What can we make of where we are now?"

Looking forward, what do you think will be the future of American communities as it relates to the issues discussed in *Clybourne Park*? What are your hopes for the future?

Join us on Facebook and Twitter to continue the discussion!
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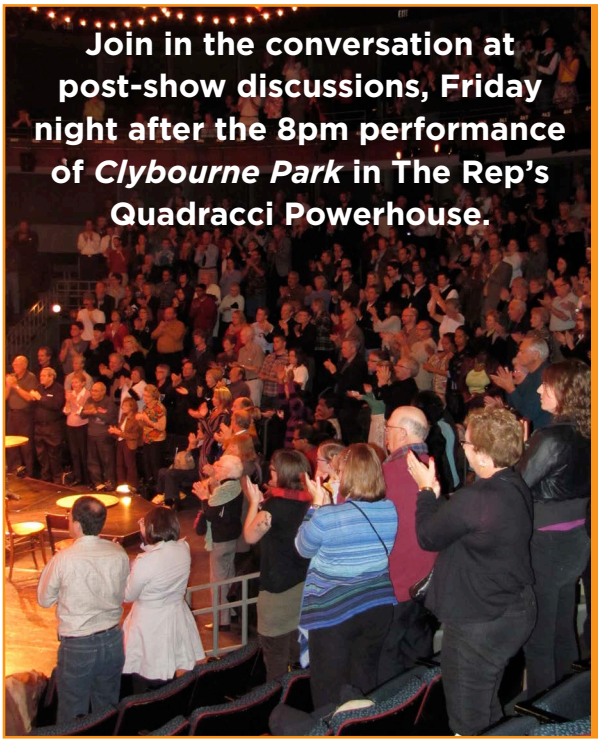
Join in the discussion and share your answers to these questions:

- If you had to write the third act to *Clybourne Park*. What would it look like? What do you expect from the future?
- What is next for Milwaukee? Your specific neighborhood?
- What do you hope the conversations about race, ability, gender, sexuality, etc will be like in fifty years? How do we continue these conversations?
- What do you hope for Milwaukee in fifty years? What would the optimal city look like to you?
- What would you like to see changed in your neighborhood? What would you like to stay the same?



Join in the conversation at post-show discussions, Friday night after the 8pm performance of *Clybourne Park* in The Rep's Quadracci Powerhouse.

Feb. 8
Margaret Rozga, Civil Rights Activist

Feb. 15
John Gurda, Milwaukee Historian

Feb. 22
John McGivern & Lois Maurer,
Producer and Director of *Around the Corner*

CREATING THE REP PRODUCTION

Clybourne Park spans fifty years in one house. Over the course of intermission, the set transitions from a lived-in house in 1959 to a previously abandoned, currently under renovation, house in 2009. Here are some ways in which the production team facilitates that transition.

Gerard Neugent, Grant Goodman, Jenny McKnight, Marti Gobel and James T. Alfred in Act I *Clybourne Park*

Actors from the Rep's Artistic Intern Ensemble facilitate the scene change, playing characters from both 1959 and 2009.

The scrim wall from Act I wheels offstage and a wall with graffiti wheels in.

The rugs in Act I cover rough spots on the Act II floor.

Over the intermission shift, the music changes from 1959 to 2009.

The ensemble removes all of the props and furniture from Act I.

Production Photos by Michael Brosilow

Graffitied window panels cover the once pristine windows. They are raised via the fly system.

The actors from Act I play different characters in Act II. Costumes highlight the differences in time period. Actors change their hairstyles and make-up, as well as their clothes. For example, Marti Gobel wears a custom-made wig in Act I, but uses her own hair in Act II.

The ensemble removes a panel to reveal a broken bench.

The ensemble adds a plywood panel to the front door.

The ensemble removes the wall panels from Act I to reveal broken-down graffitied walls for Act II.

Stair rails are removed.

Jenny McKnight, Greta Wohlrabe, Gerard Neugent, Marti Gobel and James T. Alfred in Act II *Clybourne Park*

VISITING THE REP

Milwaukee Repertory Theater. Photo by Michael Brosilow.

Milwaukee Repertory Theater's Patty and Jay Baker Theater Complex is located in the Milwaukee Center downtown at the corner of Wells and Water Streets. The building was formerly the home of the Electric Railway and Light Company.

The Ticket Office is visible on the left upon entering the Wells Street doors. In the central rotunda is a large staircase which leads to The Rep's Quadracci Powerhouse theater and lobby.

THE REP VALUES YOUR SUPPORT: Financial support enables The Rep to:

- Advance the art of theater with productions that inspire individuals and create community dialogue;
- Provide a richer theater experience by hosting Rep In Depth, Talkbacks, and creating Play Guides to better inform our audiences about our productions;
- Educate over 20,000 students at 200+ schools in the greater Milwaukee area with Rep Immersion Day experiences, student matinees, workshops, tours and by making connections with their school curriculum through classroom teaching programs such as Reading Residencies and Scriptworks;
- Maintain our commitment to audiences with special needs through our Access Services that include American Sign Language interpreted productions, captioned theater, infrared listening systems and script synopses to ensure that theater at The Rep is accessible to all;
- Educate the next generation of theater professionals with our Artistic Intern Program which gives newly degreed artists a chance to hone their skills at The Rep as they begin to pursue their theatrical careers.

We value our supporters and partnerships and hope that you will help us to expand the ways The Rep has a positive impact on theater and on our Milwaukee Community.

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