The gift to name the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy honors the life and legacy of Sol Price, a social innovator of great integrity who sought to improve the quality of life in low-income urban communities.

The naming gift also established the USC Sol Price Center for Social Innovation (Price Center), which develops ideas, practices, and leaders to further advance Sol’s legacy. The Price Center has established a working partnership between the USC Price School and Price Philanthropies, founded by Sol in the 1980s, to employ holistic, sustainable approaches to transform the low-income neighborhood of City Heights, San Diego.

As a seed bed for social innovation, City Heights provides an excellent context for many Price School students to engage in internships, special projects, and research. Most recently, when the new Copley-Price Family YMCA moved from central City Heights to a location that borders two middle-class communities, Price students confirmed through quantitative and qualitative analyses that the relocation strategy had the intended effect of bringing people with diverse backgrounds together to interact and participate in programs that emphasize youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.

“Our model holds hope for helping us find common ground and ameliorating the consequences of isolation that affect us all, but fall hardest on children living in concentrated poverty,” said Price School Professor Gary Painter, Director of Social Policy at the Price Center. In addition to a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the relocation strategy, Price students presented recommendations that the Copley-Price Family YMCA is implementing.

The Price Center also supports Price faculty research conducted in City Heights covering, for example, sustainable urban agriculture, transportation and job access, the impact of a “school in the park” program, access to healthy food, children’s safety, schools as a conduit for public health, and more.

“Price faculty and student work in City Heights constitutes a rich source of knowledge that informs Price Philanthropies’ efforts to help youth and families prosper in their community while contributing to a growing body of academic research to improve the quality of life for people living in low-income urban communities.”

Jack H. Knott
Dean, USC Sol Price School of Public Policy

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“Our special relationship with Price Philanthropies and City Heights uniquely positions the Price School to conduct research directly aimed at creating a better quality of urban life and lead in the field of social innovation.”

Jack H. Knott
Dean, USC Sol Price School of Public Policy

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To read more about Price students’ work with the Copley-Price Family YMCA, visit priceschool.usc.edu/?p=29543.

To learn more about Price faculty research projects in City Heights, visit socialinnovation.usc.edu/research/projects.

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Advancing Sol Price’s Legacy of Social Innovation

Improving the Quality of Life for People in Low-Income Urban Communities