



# I Rise-The Transformation of Toni Newman

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I've always found it interesting that someone had to throw Jackie Robinson the ball for there to be a Jackie Robinson. Give talent and passion the right team to play on, and, as they say, the rest is history. In no less a historical spotlight, I am proud to present you with I Rise – The Transformation of Toni Newman, the first memoir written in America by a member of the African American transgender community. It is gut-wrenchingly honest, factually supported, and well written. Dr. Marc Weiss Ph.D., Former Associate Professor of Urban Development, Planning, and Preservation at Columbia University wrote the foreword to this memoir, is a best-selling author, and a former member of the Clinton administration. I Rise is the true story of Toni Newman's transformation from an internally conflicted male to a proud, pre-operative transsexual. Born the eldest son into a strict Christian family, Toni admits knowing from her earliest days that she "was a different bird born in the wrong body." With laser-guided sincerity, curiosity, and above all, humor and compassion, Toni tells her story of being a "sissy boy," a scholarship student, a business professional, an escort, a drag queen, a NYC prostitute, an LA dominatrix, and finally, a transsexual attending law school in order to help her transsexual sisters in need. From cross-dressing and Bible Study classes in Jacksonville, North Carolina, to writing and studying while tending to the fetish fantasies of Hollywood's A-list, I Rise is far from a tale of fitting in. It is instead a unique and mesmerizing study of finding oneself in a world where gender and beauty can be hard fought for and earned. And Toni Newman, more than anyone else I know, deserves to be proud of her identity. Through the complete loss of friends, family support, employment and shelter, Toni was never deterred from seeking the path that was right for her. When a minority community so stricken by drug abuse, sexual exploitation, explosive suicide rates, and lack of education, has a voice rise out of it as courageous and profound as Toni Newman's, you do everything you can to make sure it's a home run heard the world over.

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