

DENNIS JAMES



Q: Tell us about *The New Price Is Right* and how you got to be the MC.

D: Years ago I did a show for Goodson-Todman called *Name's the Same*, and I was on many, many Goodson-Todman shows but not working for them. When I was working for Kelloggs, we sponsored *What's My Line?* and I was a spokesman for Kelloggs for 11 years. About January of this year I replaced Monty Hall on *Let's Make a Deal*. It so happens that Bill Todman caught that show. Monty got ill and they called me at the country club, and I jumped in and did it. Todman wanted Mark Goodson to see it. So he asked if there was any videotape. Well, I had a videotape of my own. I record almost all of the shows I do. And so I mailed that tape out to them, and that is how the deal came to be. They signed me to do it. I'm very excited about it.

Q: Do you remember where you first heard of television?

D: Yes, I was in radio in New York doing soaps and commercials, and my brother was with Dr. Dumont in New Jersey. They wanted to do experi-

mental TV in 1938. So he said, I have a brother in show business and maybe he'll help us. So I jumped in and said sure. It was fascinating to me, and I did two shows a week. One was called the *Dennis James Sports Parade* and the other was called *Television Roof*. On the *Sports Parade*, I used to interview a sports luminary for five minutes and then participate with him in his sport for 10 minutes. If he was a wrestler, I wrestled with him. If he were a fencer, I fenced with him. If he were a tennis player, I'd play tennis with him. Not one of them well done. But I would do it. The other show was a variety show because I was a disc jockey at WNEW. I could ask stars to come on television and guarantee them that nobody was going to see them anyhow. But I would play their records on radio, and they would come on and do this television with me—like The Pied Pipers and Connie Haynes and Sinatra and people like that. There were 300 sets in operation at that time in New York, and about 200 of them were not working because they were changing over channels.

Q: How many "firsts" do you have on television?

D: Well, they say about 25. I was one of the very