

## **Ken Tanner**

**January 7, 1939 – June 27, 2022**

Ken Tanner was larger than life. He had a smooth, muscular southern voice that could be easily recognized. In the early 1980s, he came to prominence with Raleigh, North Carolina-based WRAL-TV and the Tobacco Radio Network. Ray Wilkinson hired Ken and Dix Harper as a three-man crew to cover southern agriculture. All three became NAFB Presidents in their careers. They covered major crops with daily reports on cotton, tobacco, and peanuts.

Ken's first love was sports broadcasting and was a contender to be play-by-play announcer for the Atlanta Braves. In the final decision, he was beaten out for the job by Bob Uecker.

We called Ken, "Father Tanner" because of his original studies to be a priest in Catholic seminary. In the early 1960s, he left the seminary and joined the U.S. Marines, serving in the military during the Vietnam conflict.

Many stories can be told of Ken's international travel with commodity groups as he was a good reporter and the life of the party. His booming voice was his strength but sometimes a liability as everyone in the room or bus could hear his comments. He once said, while traveling in Turkey with the American Soybean Association as part of a large media contingent: "Let'[s go file our radio reports while the legitimate media files their fingernails!"

--written by Ken Root