

A radio legend has fallen

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Jonathan Procter, the CEO of Primedia, has paid homage to John Berks, on behalf of the group. This after the veteran broadcaster passed away on Saturday 4 June, at the age of 80, after a long illness.



John Berks and Walter Sisulu

Procter said: "John Berks was a key pillar in the growth and development of 702, Primedia, and the broadcasting industry as a whole. An iconic radio broadcaster and talk-show host, he helped to shape the evolution and character of radio in South Africa and has left an indelible mark, not only on 702 but on the broadcasting industry as a whole."

John was regarded by many as the pioneer of talk radio in South Africa. His passion for and dedication to SA was celebrated when, in 2010, he was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Station manager of 702, Mzo Jojwana says: "We have been touched by the outpouring of sympathy and messages we have received from 702 listeners, colleagues, past and present, and the public in general. Paying tribute to John Berks, on 702's Soulful Sunday, Paul Mtirara, spoke of him as an "... institution of radio. He has inspired countless radio hosts, not only at a Primedia but across the industry."

John Berks crept into the hearts of 702-landers with his formidable music knowledge, 'one of a kind' sense of humour, and side-splitting prank calls. The popular talk show host also got South Africans talking about critical social and political issues.

He lit up the airways with his provocative truth to power interviews with political and business leaders. During his time at 702, he interviewed significant political figures including Walter Sisulu and Chris Hani.



John Berks and Chris Hani

His radio career, which spanned four decades, began at LM Radio in Mozambique in the 1960s. He also worked for Swazi Music Radio, Springbok Radio, Capital Radio 604 and Radio 5.

He joined 702 in 1981 and was to become one of South Africa's most popular radio presenters ever.

Procter said: "John Berks once said 'without radio, you have lost a friend.' He has left a lasting legacy in the broadcasting industry."

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