

Radio legend John Berks dies

By  Danette Breitenbach

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Veteran broadcaster, John Berks, has died aged 80, reportedly following a long illness.



Source: © EWN [EWN](#)

Berks, known by listeners as Long John Berks (LJB), is credited with revolutionising morning radio in South Africa, in particular as the morning talk show host at 702, where his pranks and quick wit made him a household name.

In a statement carried on EWN, Primedia group CEO Jonathan Procter paid homage to the legendary broadcaster.

"Primedia is sad to hear of the passing of John Berks, one of 702's most legendary morning talk show hosts, loved and respected in '702-land' and across the nation.

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

"On behalf of the Primedia Group I would like to extend our condolences to his family and friends," says Procter.

“ The legendary 702 broadcaster passed away on Saturday at the age of 80 after a long illness.

<https://t.co/oKBwE3EW93>— 702 (@Radio702) [June 6, 2022](#) ”

Paying tribute

Berks' career began at LM Radio in Mozambique in the 1960s.

LM Radio paid tribute to him: “The Team at LM Radio is sad to learn about the passing of the legendary John Berks. May his soul Rest In Peace. John was one of the greatest broadcast professionals in the country! He once famously stated, “without radio, you have lost a friend...” We are richer for having had LJB in our lives.”

He is being remembered as one of the most listened-to broadcasters in the country's history with tributes coming from colleagues and listeners.

“ John Berks has passed. A legend in radio. His gift was humour and irreverence in an age when, even that, was seen to be rebellious. A friend and a mentor and a legend. Manda has been a heroine caring from him. Love to his friends and family.— John Robbie (@John_C_Robbie) [June 4, 2022](#) ”

Gareth Cliff: “To a legendary radio broadcaster and man, who inspired and entertained many South Africans over the years...Rest In Peace John Berks.”

Jeremy Mansfield: “This country has lost its finest broadcaster ever with the passing of John Berks. He gave me my first break in morning radio and taught me all I know about radio comedy. It was a privilege and honour to serve under you, sir. Wishing your family long life. Also well wishes from Frikkie Geyser.”

“ A radio giant has fallen! A pioneer of talk radio in SA. He created the most authentic theatre of the mind experiences for his listeners. A sense of humour like no other. He had such a massive influence on my radio career. John Berks you were one of a kind! [#RIPBerksie pic.twitter.com/b3FGZvBfj0](#)— Aki Anastasiou (@AkiAnastasiou) [June 4, 2022](#) ”

Radio Hall of Fame

In his career, Berks worked for Swazi Music Radio, Springbok Radio, Capital Radio 604 Transkei and Radio 5. His prank show segments *Fun Calls* and *Telephone Time* on the radio were among the country's most popular shows.

In 2020 Berks was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Berks was born in Krugersdorp on 24 September 1941.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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