



TOM REED
Producer-Host

**"FOR
MEMBERS
ONLY"**

TELEVISION



**BLACK ACCENT
LA
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Our 19th Year

PUBLISHER-AUTHOR
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*Longest Running African American
Program in L.A. Television History*

Profile



TOM REED

Born and raised in St. Louis, MO., Tom Reed attended Simmons Elementary and graduated from Charles Sumner High School. His desire then was to be a music critic and research African American music. Today he is still "researching African American music..."

While attending Sumner H.S., he was an outstanding baseball and basketball player; this led to an athletic scholarship at Reedley, CA College, where he starred in baseball and basketball.

He spent time in the United States Navy from 1956-1958, and entered the communications field while attached to AFRTS in London, England.

After being honorably discharged from service he chose to attend and graduate from the California Institute of Radio-Television, while also attending Los Angeles City College majoring in Broadcasting, receiving his Associate of Arts Degree June, 1961.

His first professional job in media, was working as a writer/researcher for Robt. (Bob) DeCoy, the producer/narrator of the award winning biographical radio series "This is Progress" on KGFJ Radio in 1960. Reed was paid \$10.00 a week and was a part-time telecommunications student at USC.

These courses were interrupted when Reed accepted employment as a jazz disc jockey and Public Service Director at KPRS AM/FM in Kansas City, MO.

After three years in Kansas City, he acquired the name "The Master Blaster," a name which followed him successfully with high ratings at WJLB, Detroit, Michigan and WLIB in New York.

In 1966, he accepted employment at KGFJ Radio in L.A., and became the "Talk of the Town" with his "rapid fire" delivery. His success was phenomenal. He had the No. 1 and 2 show consistently in the L.A. radio market during his time period.

At KMET-FM and KPFK-FM, Reed continued to conquer the market. At KMET, he was the only African American "progressive rock" D.J., for years. At KPFK he was Director of Training and Production, for the KPFK/WATTS BUREAU, a minority broadcast training facility; which led Howard University in Washington, D.C., to offer him the position of Asst. Mgr. and Associate Professor of its new radio station WHUR and Communications School in 1971.

XPRS (The Soul Express) started programming Soul music in 1971 on a regular basis, he was offered a position as D.J., and Music Director, afterwards, XPRS played a dominant role as the leader in Soul radio in Southern California.

Up until 1974, KGFJ was the leading Black Radio Station in L.A., but 1580 KDAY went Soul, and they contacted Tom Reed, "The Master Blaster" ... and what KDAY did to KGFJ in the ratings was "horrible" ... Reed says ... "we made them change their call letters to KKTT."

In 1976, Reed left radio and decided to spend more time in pursuit of higher education. While working as a D.J., Reed acquired a B.S. and M.S. Degree in Communications Science and has twelve units toward a Ph.D. at USC. He received an Honorary Doctorate in Education (Communications) from City University Los Angeles in January, 1982 and is a professional member of Alpha Epsilon Rho, the national honorary Broadcasting Society.

An outstanding writer (Black music documentaries, "Wattstax Revisited" and "Ray Charles: Words and Music" etc.) and he was Music Critic and Assistant Advertising Manager for the Los Angeles Sentinel for three years and votes yearly on the Grammys as a member of NARAS as an annotator, having written liner notes for many major Black recording artists in America.

Presently, he is producer/host of "For Members Only" L.A.'s longest running locally produced Black cultural entertainment and information television program which airs on KSCI Channel 18 and Continental Cable/So. Central which began its 17th year in 1997.

Reed's roots are well defined. One of his uncles, **Walter Davis**, singer/pianist, was the pioneering Bluesman in St. Louis, Mo. Another uncle, **Vance "Tiny" Powell** was a founding member of the **Original Five Blind Boys of Mississippi**. Powell's contribution years later, became more focused in the Blues. His Godfather was the legendary Bandleader **Charlie Creath**, who played on various Mississippi riverboats and taught Louis Armstrong how to finger the trumpet. His cousin, **Elston Howard**, was the legendary catcher/coach and first African American to play for the world champion New York Yankees.

Awards, commendations and plaques grace his walls, given to him because of his competitive spirit and his concern for his fellow man. Which is a living testimony of his track record as an outstanding communicator.

He is also the author of "THE BLACK MUSIC HISTORY OF LOS ANGELES—IT'S ROOTS" published by Black Accent on LA/Press, now in its third printing. In 1997, Excellence In Media awarded him their highest honor, a Gold Angel for his achievements in mass media and Indiana University named him a member of their National Advisory Board for the Archives of African American Music and Culture.

In 1998 he was honored during L.A. Music Week as one of the legends of L.A.'s Black music contributors. In 1999 Reed was inducted into his Alma Mater's HALL OF FAME at Sumner High School in St. Louis, MO.

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Diversity for the Radio Waves

Since 1996, when Congress lifted caps on the number of radio stations a single network could own, broadcast chains have snatched up so many local radio stations that commercial radio formats sound the same from San Diego to Schenectady.

Fortunately, FCC Chairman William Kennard is now pushing a plan that could return color to radio's barren commercial landscape. He wants to hand out hundreds of new, low-wattage FM radio licenses to "give voice to those ideas not always heard, but which many yearn to hear." The tiny stations could air anything from talk radio in Korean to open-mike sessions for singer-songwriters and comedians, parents discussing how to keep kids out of neighborhood gangs or churches serving ethnic communities. Their reach would be measured in a few miles.

At a conference in Orlando, Fla., earlier this month, large broadcasters declared war on Kennard's plan. Fearing competition that could cut into their \$14-billion annual revenues, they claimed the new stations would interfere with existing radio signals. However, none of the FCC's extensive tests have detailed interference problems so far, and any subsequent problems could be fixed simply by reducing the wattage allowed under the licenses.

Sensing that their interference argument might not fly, broadcasters are pressuring Kennard to let them buy up to 10 microradio

stations each in an auction. That would defeat Kennard's whole purpose, frustrating any opportunity for diverse voices on the dial. It would be particularly unseemly to require community groups or churches to bid alongside broadcast Goliaths, given that the FCC handed the well-heeled broadcasters, free, \$70 billion worth of "digital" spectrum licenses in 1996.

The low-wattage licenses should be allocated on a first-come basis, and at least half should be noncommercial. Owners should live near the station. Applicants who find themselves in competition for a given slot should be given an opportunity to work out conflicts by cooperation or compromise, such as splitting air time.

At the Orlando convention, many radio executives spoke as if the FCC existed solely to further their narrow self-interest. David Siddall, an attorney for a company that's upgrading the equipment of commercial broadcasters, said the "FCC's most important goal" should be giving existing broadcasters more spectrum room so they could offer new digital services like promotional photos of performers and advertisements for CDs.

Wrong. The FCC's most important goal should be protecting the public interest, which means remembering that the airwaves are a public trust. Kennard's microradio plan is a significant, if modest, step toward that goal.

SEPT. 13, 1999
L.A. Times editorial

Mr. Kennard: Pls. let me know the particulars

Thanks
Tom Reed

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