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'WKRP In Cincinnati' Star Frank Bonner Dies At 79



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Frank Bonner is remembered for his role as smarmy salesman Herb Tarlek in sitcom "WKRP in ... [+]

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Frank Bonner, who is remembered for his role as the boorish, tasteless and vain sales manager Herb Tarlek in 1978-1982 CBS sitcom *WKRP in Cincinnati* died Wednesday as a result of complications from Lewy body dementia. He was 79.

“I’m deeply saddened to let you know that our beloved Frank Bonner passed away today at age 79,” his daughter Desiree Boers-Kort shared with a *WKRP* Facebook group. “He loved his fans and was still signing autograph requests up until the last few weeks of his illness. Thank you to all who followed his career. He will be forever missed.”

Bonner also directed six episodes of the sitcom, which followed the misadventures of the staff of a struggling rock radio station in Cincinnati. And he reprised the famous role in the 1991 reboot *The New WKRP in Cincinnati* and in a 2004 music video for Canadian indie rock band Rheostatics.



Sitcom "WKRP in Cincinnati" was a critical favorite that originally aired on CBS from 1978 to 1982.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SONY PICTURES TELEVISION.

Born February 28, 1942 in Little Rock, Arkansas, Bonner began his acting career in the experimental 1967 independent film *The Equinox: A Journey into the Unknown*, which was re-shot and re-edited as the 1970 cult classic *Equinox*.

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Prior to *WKRP in Cincinnati*, Bonner was a frequent guest star on television, including appearances on *Mannix*, *The F.B.I.*, *Emergency!*, *Cannon*, *Police Woman*, the original *Fantasy Island*, and romantic anthology *Love, American Style*.

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Following *WKRP in Cincinnati* and before the two season reboot beginning in 1991, Bonner peppered his resume with appearances on TV series like *The Love Boat*, *Newhart*, *Simon & Simon*, *Gimme a Break!*, *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* and *Night Court*. Bonner was also a recurring cast member on 1986-87 action/adventure *Sidekicks* and *Growing Pains* spin-off *Just the Ten of Us* from 1988 to 1990. And, following *The New WKRP in Cincinnati*, he made four appearances as Mr. Harrington on Saturday morning reboot *Saved by the Bell: The New Class*.

Along with daughter Boers-Kort, Bonner is survived by his wife, Gayle; daughter DeAndra; sons Justin and Matthew; seven grandchildren; and a great-grandchild.

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Marc Berman

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