



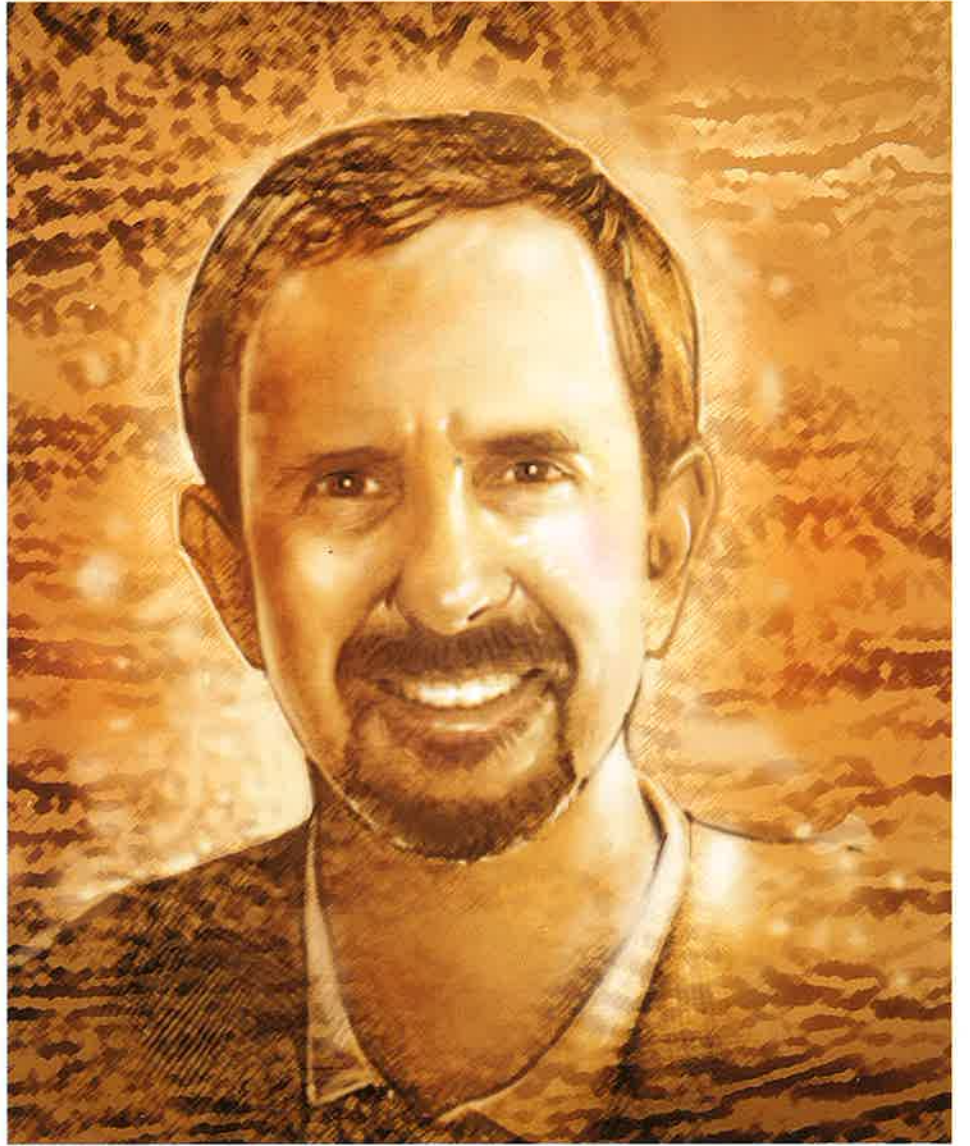
LARRY DANIELS

50 Years Of Integrity, Passion And Class



While learning to drive a tractor at age eight in California's San Joaquin Valley, young Larry Daniels never dreamed that as a teen he would ease away from the dust and toil of farming to pursue a career in radio. A simple spiritual moment of motivation led Larry to his first job at a local station. From there, a coincidental encounter with Buck Owens, with whom Larry shared a common bond for understanding and appreciating one's audience, eventually paved the road to Arizona, where Larry was instrumental in leading KNIX/Phoenix to unprecedented local and national stature. After nearly three decades with KNIX, Larry formed his own successful consultancy, and

this year commemorates his 50th year in radio. Always ready to embrace the creative process, Larry is eager to solicit input on all ideas, including his own, to improve them. Long regarded as one of radio's most thoughtful, well-reasoned broadcasters, this Country Radio Hall of Fame inductee also possesses an intangible intuition that complements his formidable strategic skills.



One day in high school in Tulare, our teacher was talking about radio and a thought just popped up in my mind: "I wonder how I can get into radio?" And there was this message that came to me, "Go ask your teacher." She said, "There's a station three blocks from here, why don't you go ask them?" It was lunch hour, and so off I ran to KGEN-AM. I told the GM Bob McVay that

Then he said, "Can you start tomorrow?" I still get goose bumps just thinking about it.

I was paid \$1 an hour. Three months down the road, they had taught me a lot. Because KGEN was a daytimer, I got to practice at the control board at night. One Saturday I was carrying out trash and the DJ didn't show up. Mr. McVay turned to me and asked, "Larry, can you do it?" I said, "Yes, sir!" So he put

announced the song and just went into the next one. That's how it all started.

Within two years, KGEN switched to all-Country. I guess I was a hard worker, and the manager named me PD. I was just 18 or 19. A few days later, I got this phone call from a pay phone alongside Highway 99. The guy says, "Hello, so you guys have gone Country, huh?"

the Buckaroos. We recently lost Doyle, and that was very tough. He was a wonderful person and a great friend.

After Buck bought KUZZ, he came to me and asked if I could teach radio to his sons Buddy, 17, and Michael, 15. So after school they would come down to the station, and they'd help me take out the trash, too! I

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I'd come down every afternoon after school to file records, carry out the trash — whatever they needed — if they'd just teach me radio. There was this quiet silence, and I thought, "Oops, this is not gonna work."

me in the control room. The record was playing, and at the end I got scared; I didn't know what to say. Mr. McVay stood right behind me and said, "Well, Larry, don't just sit there, say something." So I turned the mic on, back-

Well, you probably don't know me. My name is Buck Owens." He was just starting out, but I knew who he was because I'd seen him on his daily Bakersfield television show. Buck asked if he could come on by, and when he did he brought out a record and said, "Larry, I met this new singer I worked with on a show in Oregon a few days ago. She's going to be a big star someday. You need to play this one." It was Loretta Lynn's first record on Zero Records.

We became big friends, and one afternoon I asked Buck if I could interview him. "Sure," he said. But I'd never interviewed anybody before. I was so scared that Buck had to ask the questions, and he wound up interviewing me! Buck was very radio-friendly and just a fun, great person. In 1961 I went to KUZZ/Bakersfield to do afternoons and within six months the manager named me PD. In 1965 Buck bought the station, and that was such a thrill. He always told people he inherited me.

worked with them a bit and then put them on the air together as a team in afternoons. Buddy was extremely funny on the air, while Michael was very disciplined and into strategy, and I told my wife then that I thought someday I'd be working for him. In 1971, Buck bought two stations in Phoenix, and asked me if I would come to work at Country KTUF and KNIX. Within a year I asked them if they wouldn't mind switching the FM to Country because I thought FM is going to be big.

In 1978, Michael Owens became my boss — just as I had predicted. He had this theory: "Whatever is right for our listeners, let's do it." We focused on our listeners constantly. Michael let me hire the best people, and they all were such an inspiration for me. We believed in brainstorming a lot, and came up with the best idea when we worked together. That's the way Michael wanted it. It probably came from Buck originally because Buck focused on his fans so much. After his performances, he'd take off his hat, shake their hands and talk with them. He was great with people.

I find that stations who talk directly to their listeners in a kind and loving way are the ones that win big. I'm a big believer in putting the listeners in front of all your planning. If you treat them like friends on and off the air, you are going to win them over.

I never thought I'd be inducted into the Country Radio Hall of Fame. As a child, I figured I'd be working on a farm out in the field all my life. I've been really blessed to be in radio. It's been my first love, obviously, and to have been led right into it is unbelievable ... I think predestined. There's a message sent to each of us. All we have to do is listen. **CAC**



Bakersfield Sound: Daniels (above) with KNIX execs Bob Podolsky and Michael Owens on the station's 20th anniversary; laying down the bass for Merle Haggard in 1965; and staying in tune with Buck and Michael Owens during Daniels' 10th anniversary with KNIX.



Bakersfield had five nightclubs with live bands every night. Buck had bought the Pine Burr Dance Hall in Goshen, CA and his band would play there Friday and Saturday nights. Soon his career was starting to shoot up; he was having one hit after another. One day he said, "Larry, could you put a band together and go play the Pine Burr every Friday and Saturday? I'll book the talent and you can back them up." He taught me to be a musician, and every once in awhile he would get me up there to sing with him. I played rhythm guitar, and hired Doyle Holly to be my bass player and some other incredible musicians. A couple of years later, Buck was looking for a bass player and I recommended Doyle, and he became one of