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## Division 18's Ed Tanner Looks Back on Pro Football Career

By RICH MORALLO

PHOTO BY RICH MORALLO



Metro Bus Operator Ed Tanner



PHOTO COURTESY OF ED TANNER

Ed Tanner as a star of the  
John Marshall High School  
Barristers football team.

(March 17, 2004) First-half football action. Ed Tanner's team kicks off. Fast, fleet, he sprints toward the ball carrier. At the 35-yard line, he flings himself at the kick-off returner, stopping him in his tracks.

Tanner's teammates congratulate him for the spectacular tackle as ABC TV cameras roll. It's Monday Night Football, September 1982.

Today, South Bay Division 18 Operator Ed Tanner still relishes that highlight of his NFL career.

"My Houston Oilers teammates just loved it. I was the RTD bus driver who just tackled a New York Giants veteran," says Tanner, who currently transports people on the 30-mile Line 260 through Cudahy, South Gate, East Los Angeles and Monterey Park to San Marino and Altadena.

### John Marshall H.S. star

A 1975 graduate of John Marshall High School, Tanner had been playing football since he was a yag-high youngster growing up in South Central LA.

"My mom wanted me to go to college, and knew my athleticism would get me there," he says. Indeed, after a couple of years at Los Angeles City College, Tanner won a scholarship to Kentucky State where he continued playing football and earned a B.A. in special education.

When he couldn't find employment helping the physically-handicapped, Tanner started with the Rapid Transit District in 1980, driving the old Line 84 along Western Avenue.

Then a friend told him about tryouts for the Houston Oilers, and after a local coach vouched for him with the Oilers organization, Tanner knew he was going to compete.

## **Intense training**

"I took a four-month leave of absence from the RTD and then spent most of my time training at Van Ness Park, the field right next to Arthur Winston Division," he recounts. His intense sprinting, weight-lifting and five-mile jogs conditioned and strengthened him.

In May 1982, Tanner entered the one-day trials in Houston with 1,600 other athletes.

"I remember dashing 40 yards in 4.24 seconds, faster than the times of even the Houston Oilers regulars," he said. At the end of the day, he and only two others were picked.

Tanner played on special teams as a running back and wide receiver for the Oilers (now the Tennessee Titans) through the 1982 season.

Later, he was released from the Oilers. His professional football career ended in the now-defunct United States Football League when he was cut during the New Jersey Generals' training camp.

Tanner returned to the MTA in 1998 and has been honored once as Operator of the Month at Division 18.

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