

THE KING OF CARNIVAL



James J. Keras, Jr. is King of the sixty-fifth edition of Carnival. A very active civic and professional leader, Keras will serve as Carnival's spokesman for this year's celebrated retail industry. Born in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, the King was reared in Nashville and is a graduate of Columbia Military Academy and the University of Tennessee at Knoxville where he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon.

His first memories of Carnival was hearing his high school and later, his college, friends talk about the fun they had every year at Carnival. After receiving his business degree, he joined the United States Marine Corps Reserves and later returned to Nashville to work for his father in the aircraft components industry.

Business travel brought him to Memphis on a regular basis and it was here that he met and later married the former Penny Reed. Two years later the couple returned to Memphis and Keras joined his father-in-law, Charles Reed, in his successful Buick business. Five years later, the two became partners and in 1980, the company expanded when it moved from Poplar Avenue to Covington Pike and added Suburu and Nissan.

King Jim is a past President of the Greater Memphis Automobile Dealers Association and is currently on the board of the Tennessee Automobile Association. His Buick dealership is the **only** five time winner of Buick's prestigious "Best in Class" in the Mid-South for sales and customer satisfaction, making it one of the elite dealerships in the nation. Keras is a past winner of the Nissan Sales Leaders as one of the top 50 Nissan retail dealers in American and has served on regional business councils representing Buick and Nissan dealers to the manufacturer. Keras refuses to take the credit for the company's success and said *"our people won those awards, dealers don't win them alone."*

The King is a past Phoenix Club member and member of the Boys Club Central Board. He is past president of the downtown Kiwanis club and is a member of the Board of Directors of the American Cancer Society. He is a board member and officer of the

Memphis 100 Club which supports the Memphis and Shelby County police and fire departments by providing equipment as well as financial assistance in the event of accidents or loss of life in the line of duty. He is a member of the President's Council at Rhodes College and is involved in the Minority Partners Project which fosters partnerships between white and minority business owners to assist one another and help improve race relations.

The King and his wife, Penny, have three children. Poppy is a senior at the University of Montana, Ben is a sophomore at the University of Tennessee and Jay is a senior at McCallie School in Chattanooga. The entire family is active in Independent Presbyterian Church and Keras enjoys a small weekly Bible study with friends. The King is a commercial pilot and enjoys golf, snow skiing, jogging and hunting. He is a member of the Memphis Country Club and the Honors Course in Chattanooga.



King Jim and Penny (seated)
Poppy, Ben and Jay (standing)

Photo by: Kathy Daniel Patterson

