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David Milenberg

### Credit Raycom for bringing us Dick Vitale

Charlotte-based Raycom, which cut the deal to create Tuesday's Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, can be credited — or blamed — for bringing Dick Vitale to sports television.

It all began when Rick Ray, who formed the sports programming and production company in 1979

with his wife, Dee, contracted to televise several North Carolina basketball games for ESPN. Among them was a contest against the University of Detroit, which Vitale once coached.

"ESPN didn't know who the first

announcer was going to be. They hired an ex-ABC announcer who they knew was probably going to do the play-by-play," Ray said. "But who was the color guy going to be? They ended up sending this unknown guy . . . who had been the

coach of Detroit. It was Dick's first game for ESPN. It was also on Raycom."

Raycom was sold to Atlanta-based Ellis Communications in 1994. Ray stepped down as president and chief executive of the company last November.