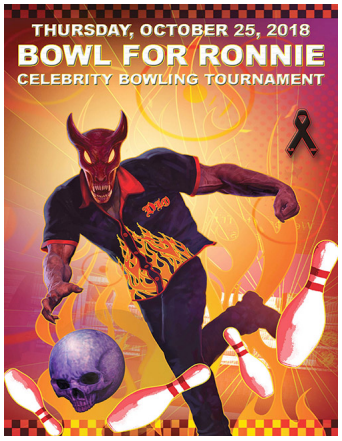
Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
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ROCK STAR’S wife Wendy DIO chats with the ‘Sun’

Cancer is one disease that does not discriminate against gender, race or color. It’s affected everyone in some way or another, and takes the young and the old, the rich and poor, the famous and ordinary. It knows no bounds and impacts every part of our lives — even in the music world.

To rock fans, Ronnie James Dio was the pinnacle of the heavy metal genre — his bands Black Sabbath, Dio, and Heaven and Hell are everyday names in the rock world; his vocal range was like no other; and his iconic “horns up” finger gesture is widely known today. On Nov. 13, 2009, Ronnie James Dio was diagnosed with gastric cancer, and on May 16, 2010, the star lost his battle to the disease.

After the legendary rock singer's death, the Ronnie James Dio Stand Up and Shout Cancer Fund was formed in his memory, and a "Bowl for Ronnie" Celebrity Charity Bowling Tournament is held in October to raise funds for cancer research.

This year, the event will bring out several celebrity rockers and will take place Oct. 25 at the Pinz Bowling Center in Studio City, Calif.

The *Sun* had the recent honor of speaking with Wendy Dio, wife of the late rock star Ronnie James Dio.

Part one of a two part interview

Sun: First off Wendy, my deepest condolences on the loss of your husband, and second, it's an honor to be speaking with you and thank you for doing this.

Dio: You're very much welcome, and thank you for allowing me to talk about this event.

Sun: Tell me, how did this all began — did it begin with you?

Dio: Actually, it did. We decided to have a memorial on Ron's fifth year of passing, and then I found that there were people coming from Sweden, from back east, and everywhere. Well, they're in town and we should put on something for them to do for the weekend. Ronnie was an avid bowler and he actually won an award from the T.J. Martell Foundation for Cancer in the '80s when we were doing a fundraiser for them. So, we thought we'll do a bowling [event] on Friday, memorial on Saturday, and a ride for Ronnie on Sunday. It took off so well, we decided to keep those two as annual events, the bowling in October and the ride in May.

Sun: Wow, that's so awesome. I had no idea Ronnie was a bowler.

Dio: He’s actually pretty good at bowling and a really good table-tennis player, too. We should have a tournament on that, too, another time.

Sun: Now, I can understand the rock stars who played with him coming out and supporting this event, but were there those who came whose lives were impacted by cancer?

Dio: Yes, I think these days, there’s not anyone who doesn’t know somebody that has passed away from cancer, it’s a horrible disease. We’re working with UCLA to try to find a swab test, that would give early detection for men’s cancer, like stomach cancer, colon cancer and pancreatic cancer. We’re very much behind this and have already given them $100,000 so far and will be presenting them with another check next May. We’ve raised over $2 million so far.

Sun: Now, this is the fourth year for the event, right? Did it just take off from the start?

Dio: Yes, it is. It was just a start and it’s grown every year. More and more celebrities get involved. We had Jack Black bowl one year, and radio host Eddie Trunk has always been the host for us. We have an online auction going on right now to win a spot on the celebrity team, which is always a fun thing. It’s a fun evening for people mixing with celebrities. We have pizza and drinks for them, awards and raffles. It’s such a good cause to raise money and awareness for cancer.

Sun: Wow, that is so cool. I’m glad you mentioned awareness, whether over there in Southern California or here in New Mexico — we have to strive for it.

Dio: I think that the more people do the awareness, maybe one day, we can find the cure. Although sometimes, I’m worried about the pharmaceutical companies, if they want to find a cure, because everything is so expensive. It’s a big business for them, that’s why we look at the people doing research we give money to, that they really are trying to find a cure for cancer. I know how much money it costs, when we we’re going through it with Ronnie, one time, I had to go get a special pill he had to take, and they said it would be $600 dollars. I said we have insurance and they said that’s our copay. I was thinking, what about the normal working person? They can’t afford that. I think those are things we have to lobby against.

Sun: Let me ask you this, how has it affected you? In what ways other than the tragic loss of Ronnie?

Dio: If I knew what I know now about cancer — because I knew nothing about cancer at that time. I knew he had some problems with indigestion and I took him to a specialist, but if I knew, I would have had him take a colonoscopy. If I knew the symptoms, I would have had him get checked before it's too late. Do it for yourself, do it for your loved ones, it's very important; early detection saves lives.

Next week, we'll talk more with Wendy Dio, wife of the late, great rock star Ronnie James Dio, who was lost to cancer. For more information, visit: www.diocancerfund.org .

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