

‘Bowl for Ronnie James Dio’ raises cancer research funds

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
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Heavy metal star’s wife Wendy Dio chats with the ‘Sun’

The *Sun* recently had the honor of speaking with Wendy Dio, wife of the late rock star Ronnie James Dio, who was diagnosed with gastric cancer on Nov. 13, 2009. On May 16, 2010, Ronnie James Dio lost his battle to the disease.

After his death, Wendy Dio set up the Ronnie James Dio Stand Up and Shout Cancer Fund in memory of her late, great husband. The annual “Bowl for Ronnie” Celebrity Charity Bowling Tournament is held in October to raise funds for cancer research.

Many rock stars and celebrities came out to support the event, which took place Oct. 25 at the Pinz Bowling Center in Studio City, Calif. in honor of the legendary rock singer. This week, we conclude a two-part interview with Wendy Dio.

PART TWO OF A TWO-PART INTERVIEW

Sun: When it comes to cancer awareness, what more would you like to see? What more could you have done for Ronnie had you known more about this horrible disease?

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Dio: I would have had him done ultrasounds, blood tests, just simple tests like going to the doctor and getting those tests done. When he was having indigestion problems, I took him to our local doctor and he actually gave him a blood test and he told us there was something there and told Ronnie to get a colonoscopy.

I got the bad news and didn't tell Ronnie, and that weekend, I looked around for the best hospital. He started going for treatment and chemotherapy every two weeks, but unfortunately, it was already at stage four, it was already too late. We didn't know that, we worked really hard at it every two weeks — he had six hours of chemo in Houston and we would fly back. A lot of the drugs they gave him didn't cure it, but it did help. At that time, he even went and accepted the Golden Gods of Rock award just three weeks before passing away.

Sun: Wow. What else can anybody do to be proactive? How can people play a big part in this?

Dio: One good deed they could do is volunteer one day out of their life, once a year would be great. There's so many things we can do [and] that is something good.

Sun: Now, I know we talked about Ronnie, but how has it affected you in other ways that are hard to put into words?

Dio: Well, you know the only thing about Ronnie passing when he did was that he went out on a high note. He just got back together with the Black Sabbath guys under the moniker of Heaven and Hell; they just completed a very successful tour. He was in a very happy state of mind and was on top of his game again. [He was] very happy to be back with the Sabbs, and I think that's the only thing you can think of, because I don't think Ronnie could have lived with the thought of getting old and losing his voice or not being able to perform again.

He loved his fans, he loved performing, and he was a very special person. It's been almost nine years now, and it's still there, and sometimes, it seems like it was just yesterday — other times it feels like a long time ago. But I just try to keep his memory and music alive. He's got so many great friends who are supportive [and] are on the cancer board who've known Ronnie for the past 30 years. We do those things and do as much as we can to keep his memory and music alive.

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Sun: Has the idea of a benefit concert been kicked around?

Dio: We did do one. I did a tribute record which actually sold very well. Everyone got involved with one – Metallica, Scorpions, Lzzy Hale of Halestorm, Motorhead. It was a great concert — we had Corey Taylor of Slipknot sing for us, along with Halestorm. Lots of people came in like Rob Halford, and we want to do something for 2020. What a great way to raise money and have fun [while] at it and keep Ronnie's memory and his music alive.

Sun: Wow, that would be great to check out and it's such a great way to raise awareness. Not only that, but to use rock n' roll/metal to do it.

Dio: Yes, it would be. Ronnie always said that you don't look at a person from the outside, you look at them from the inside of their heart. That's what really counts. He tried to say that with his album covers, and there's more to what we really see with just our eyes — it's what's in our hearts that truly counts.

Sun: Well, Wendy, I truly appreciate this. Again, thank you.

Dio: Thank you so much for your support, and I really enjoyed talking to you. You take care.

For more information, visit www.diocancerfund.org . To read the first part of the interview, visit: www.gallupsun.com

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