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Family, friends mourn Phuket's DJ Doris

PHUKET: Phuket's expat community is in mourning following the death of popular radio DJ Paul 'DJ Doris' Norris, who was killed in a motorbike crash early on Sunday morning (January 12).

Thursday 16 January 2014, 09:01AM

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Paul 'DJ Doris' Norris in full flow. Photo: Andy A. Helbling Photography

Police said that taxi driver Jongsak Bussarakam told them that Mr Norris was driving his motorbike from Rawai when he reached the Naka Market traffic light intersection. He turned right, heading toward Naka Market, and was hit by Mr Jongsak, who was driving toward Chalong.

Confusion remains over whether the traffic lights were working at the time and whose right of way it was, however Mr Jongsak has been charged with careless driving causing death.

Lt Ekkarat Chatthai of Wichit Police confirmed to The Phuket News that police were continuing to gather evidence and were waiting for the result of an autopsy. Mr Norris' body was repatriated to Scotland yesterday (January 15).

Mr Norris's older sister Gillian Burt, living in Scotland, told *The Phuket News* that the family were shocked and stunned by the news of his death.

"We are being comforted by all the tributes and just thinking of Paul makes us smile as he was the master of storytelling. He would be overwhelmed by everyone's comments. Life has changed forever and he was a really special person.

"He called home hours before his accident to ask about Mum and his last words to her were

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'I love you'. We get comfort in that."

On Facebook she wrote, "Our hearts are broken at the sudden loss of my special brother Paul. Thanks to everyone for their heartfelt messages and to all in Phuket for their hard work at arranging such a sad departure for Paul. We are waiting for you DJ Doris. Love forever, big sis."

Mr Norris's girlfriend Tracey Burr told *The Phuket News*, "I am so devastated. I cannot add anything except to say he was a special part of our family and loved very much by me and my daughters Leigh-Anne and Lily. Part of our hearts have gone with him."

Close friend Thomas Corley, owner and manager of The Irish Times in Patong, said Mr Norris ran their Wednesday pub quiz for around four years but stopped shortly after a motorcycle accident he had in Patong in June.

"He's just a down to earth guy, it's hard not to get on well with him. You'd count on him for anything."

Mr Corley said Mr Norris would visit the pub once or twice a week aside from the quiz for a coffee or a drink, and said he was a very good friend of the Corley family.

"He's going to be deeply missed."

Martin Carpenter, Phuket's British Honorary Consul, described Mr Norris as a "kind-hearted gentleman" and a good friend who he met around 15 years ago.

"This has affected many people, and many people are deeply saddened by this event.

"In situations like this when you know the person, one can't help but to feel an emotional connection with the family and friends involved."

Mr Carpenter was also involved in the process of "getting Paul back to his family".

Close friend of 14 years Thomas Crawford said Mr Norris was "always generous, and never too above himself to take advice."

"He was hyperactive which was contagious. He was a great pool player; all in all I loved the man. To his family they had a great and loving son."

Debbie Dionysius, newly appointed director of Sports Marketing at Thanyapura Sports & Leisure Club, said Mr Norris was "a truly well-liked guy; a very popular man."

"He really made people feel special when he was talking to them, and not a lot of people have that skill."

She credits Mr Norris for getting her back into running after a long break. In 2010 both her and Mr Norris made a pact to walk a 13km race at Saphan Hin, but Ms Dionysius said she was holding Mr Norris back because they were walking at the back of the pack.

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"He made me run. I hadn't run in about 12 years. But he said, 'C'mon Deb, if I can do it, you can do it.' He was an incredibly good motivator."

She said Mr Norris was "absolutely" the instigator for her to get back into running and by the following February she ran her first 21km race.

"It's an unbelievable shame. In all the years I've been here I've never see the expat community react with such compassion to any other expat member who has passed away."

Mr Norris first moved to Thailand from his native Scotland around 17 years ago. After one year in Bangkok he arrived in Phuket to become the resident DJ at a new club called Chicago's Fun Bar, where he remained for three years.

After another two years working at a variety of places around Phuket, Mr Norris headed home to Scotland for five years.

In 2008 he returned to the island, and started work at a radio station that would later become 91.5FM. He became a very popular presenter and ran both the breakfast and afternoon shows at different times during his career.

Mr Norris had a serious road accident in June last year, and was put on a life support machine overnight for injuries he sustained while attempting to navigate the pot holes behind Jungceylon.

He returned home soon after for a 'two month sabbatical', and returned to Phuket and the radio station in October 2013.

An event titled a "Celebration of Paul's Life" will be held next week, with details yet to be confirmed.

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