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TRIBUTES FLOW FOR DJ DORIS

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

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).

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.

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

Mr Norris first moved to Thai-

land 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.

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SPORT PAGE 47

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News



The island's annual Bike Week is back for another year > page 8

Phuket mourns popular DJ

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In 2008 he returned in 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.

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

"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 '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 Cle-



Paul Norris in action. Photo: Andy A. Heibing Photography

key, owner and manager of *The Irish Times* in Phuket, said Mr Norris ran their Wednesday pub quiz for around four years but stopped shortly after his motorbike crash last year.

"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."

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."

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

"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."

Close friend of 14 years Thomas Crawford said Mr Norris was "hypertensive, which was contagious."

"All in all I loved the man. To his family they had a great and loving son."

Debbie Dicosynus, 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 she and Mr Norris made a pact to walk a 13km race at Saphan Hin, but Ms Dicosynus said she was holding Mr Norris back because they were walking at the back of the pack.

"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 seen the expat community react with such compassion to any other expat member who has passed away."

An event titled a "Celebration of Paul's Life" will be held at some stage next week.


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Portrait of a man loved by everyone

Treasurer Fisher, a close friend of Paul Norris for 16 years, wrote this for The Phuket News. Not an obituary, it is more a pen portrait of the man, his life, his out-there sense of humour and the loyalty he engendered in all those who loved him.

I HAVE LOST MY OLDEST and closest Phuket friend, Paul Norris.

Paul and I first met 16 years ago at Chicago's Pub Pub on Soi Samsat. I was employed to design the events and promotions and Paul was in "the pulpit" playing the tunes.

We often did a double act, starting and modifying the in-jokes, and generally being mental.

How mental? During a bad storm season, Paul once turned up for work and dozed off all night in Wollies, a Sou'wester hat made from newspaper, a bright yellow poncho, a rubber ring, a mask and snorkel.

I left Chicago's to take over Margarita Bar across the road but our friendship remained tight. I consulted with him on almost every decision I made about the place.

Paul was always generous with his time and totally coherent when talking about what he knew. I have not done better. He had an uncanny perception of what made people party.

He was really something special; he shook up the island's resident DJs with both his tunes and his fabulous personality. He became a mentor to many young Thai DJs who are still working at the better clubs such as Tai Dan.

Recently he started the Sunday Night Old Record Club at Tai Dan, a dream project for him. The DJs there still refer to him as "Ajan DJ".

He had a break from the island for a few years and eventually returned when I invited him to come back

and become a radio DJ. He was nervous but after a few weeks doing my show with me he was ready to fly.

But while he was good on the radio, it was always live where he shone and where he felt most at home, and in the last few months he was on fire.

We were planning some themed events to launch later in the year and on the night of the accident he rang me excitedly, asking me to register a new domain name for this.

I put it as a note on my desktop to do first thing. I was looking at that note when the first message about his awful accident arrived.

All who met Paul loved him. His humour was quick, always on the mark and infectious, too. I never spent a bad minute in his company. You can't say that about many people.

How people can make me cry with laughter but he did. He was physically funny; his impression of a certain Italian restaurateur and another of the difference between Italian and Scottish footballers coming out of the tunnel would fold me over every time.

I loved him like a brother and will miss him perpetually.

We are compelled to survive his loss and thus must take comfort where we find it. There's comfort in the knowledge that, while his portion of life was short, he drank from its cup to the maximum and lived life on his own terms, a life many would envy.

On the night of his accident, we ended our phone call with the usual parting insults.

Paul: "Right, f--- off, I'm bored with talking to you."

Me: "Alright Big Nossie do one."

Only true friends can speak to each other like this. And neither he nor I would have wasted our final farewell to be any other way, with laughter on both sides as we ended the call.

New rules on yacht stay to be reversed?

Alasdair Forbes & Wiparatana NaThalang
editor@classactionmedia.co.th

Following strenuous representations by yacht owners and marine businesses, Numbitha Sirikup, Director of the Phuket Customs Office has said that she will write "as soon as possible" to Customs HQ in Bangkok to recommend that regulations on keeping foreign-flagged yachts in Phuket be rolled back.

The regulations were changed with effect from December 26, and caused consternation and anger among yacht owners and skippers, and the island's marinas.

Previously, foreign-flagged yachts were allowed to stay in Phuket for up to six months before the owner had to decide whether to take the boat out of Thai waters or import it (paying the taxes).

The new regulation requires that owners or skippers must "re-register" their boats every two months for a maximum total of six months.

Already many yacht owners are saying that if this regulation is enforced they will be heading for somewhere more yacht-friendly such as Langkawi in Malaysia.

In Pattaya, where the two-month rule has been in force for years, a marina manager, speaking on condition of anonymity, said his marina has "99 per cent Thai-flagged boats". Skippers of foreign-flagged boats don't bother to go into Pattaya or Bangkok any more.

Ms Numbitha, after listening to views this afternoon, told *The Phuket News*, "The rules for temporary tax-free importation of boats is aimed at supporting only tourism, not for commerce or maintenance."

"The law is the same - temporary importation is limited to six months. The owner can ap-



Mert Uluşay, GM of the Royal Phuket Marina, pictured, is worried he could lose many wealthy customers if the new regulations are not reversed. Photo: Gerry Cummings

ply to stay another six months in some circumstances."

Two changes to the regs came into force on December 26. First, boats have to be "re-registered" every two months and second, although the boat's captain may do the paperwork when the boat first arrives in Phuket, the renewals must be done by the owner.

"The period of stay is also linked to the expiry of the importer's permit to stay in Thailand," she added.

Asked why the rules had been changed she said, "I don't know. I think they were

just correcting the regulations, which are the same for temporarily importing a car."

"But I understand that the two months doesn't make sense for Phuket so I will give [Bangkok] an explanation as soon as possible so that at least the captain can do the renewal instead of the owner."

Yacht owners and marinas were agitated when the new regs were announced.

Mert Uluşay, general manager of the Royal Phuket Marina, said, "We expect our business is going to go down and we expect that boats com-

ing from places like Singapore for the six months of the high season will now stay for three months maximum and decide to go somewhere other than Thailand."

"This ruling, if it goes ahead, will mean that we will lose a number of the foreign-flag boats to [Langkawi]. I don't want to predict how many."

A yacht owner, speaking on condition of anonymity, described the tightening of the rules as "absolutely crazy".

"One thing they [Thai officials] don't seem to understand is how much money yachting, especially superyachts, bring into Thailand."

"I pay mooring and electricity fees of B250,000 a year and another B60,000 to B70,000 a month for repairs."

"The skipper of a superyacht told me he spends B250,000 a month on mooring fees, another B750,000 a month on incidentals and minor repairs, and about B1 million a year on major repairs."

These, he said, are the kind of sums the Thai economy stands to lose to Malaysia.

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