

AL SCHALLAU'S EULOGY FOR WENDY SCHALLAU, April 5, 2010

My name is Al Schallau. I am Wendy's father, and I want to thank all of you for coming here today. It means so much to all of us and Wendy.

Wendy died in her sleep while taking an afternoon nap on March 24, 2010. She was 36 years old. She would have been 37 on June 12, 2010. We thank God for letting us have Wendy for every day of those 36 plus years.

Wendy was born on June 12, 1973. She was the fourth of our eight kids. She was our second daughter, and she was such a beautiful baby. I don't have to tell you because you've seen the pictures already.

I want to thank forever and forever, I want to thank my wife, Carol, for giving us Wendy. It all happened on that evening at Daniel Freeman Hospital in Inglewood at 8 o'clock in the evening, Wendy was born. And two weeks after Wendy was born, Carol already had her figure back -- completely. And she looked beautiful. She looked like a movie star. She looked beautiful then and she still does.

I thank Carol for all of the unconditional, tender loving care that she always gave to Wendy. And without fail, Wendy's love for her mother was always there. Wendy loved her mother completely and forever.

I thank Wendy's three brothers, Bob, Donnie and Rick and her four sisters, Deborah, Angela, Julie and Christie, and her two brothers-in-law, Kevin and Rasto for the unconditional love that all of them always gave to Wendy for all of her life.

And to all of her brothers, sisters, and brothers-in-law - when you leave here today, if any of you are asking yourselves, "What else could I have done for Wendy to make her life any better," -- I want to assure all of you, the answer is "Nothing."

All of you gave Wendy your complete love every day that she was with us, and she gave you the same love every day in return.

Wendy loved her father so much. I was the luckiest dad in the world. In March of 2005, I sent all of my kids emails telling them that I was terrified at the thought of ever living in a retirement home. And I told them that the loving care of my sons and daughters was all that I would ever need.

Within one hour, Wendy sent me back this email which will always be one of the treasures of my life.

"Dear Dad, I would never let you live in a retirement home. I would be sure to take care of my Daddy when he gets old. Don't you worry about a thing. Lots of love, Wendy."

Every phone conversation with Wendy ended with, "I love you Dad." "I love you Wendy."

And if you have kids of your own, and you don't say that to them when you end every phone conversation, please start doing it today.

Wendy is now in heaven with her four grandparents -- my mom and my dad, and Carol's mom and Carol's dad. And my mom is now teaching Wendy all of the card games that they play in Heaven.

At my mother's funeral, my sister Jean said in her eulogy, (my mother was a consummate card player) my sister asked, "Do they play cards in Heaven? Of course they play cards in Heaven. It wouldn't be Heaven if they didn't play cards."

So Wendy is now in Heaven with her four grandparents and with her uncle, Burt Carter and her cousin, Mike Burch, and Wendy is teaching them a new game called "Texas Hold 'Em."

I want to tell you about the Saturday night poker games at our house that Wendy loved so much. Rick would put his spiffy poker table out on the dining room table. He also had a state-of-the-art set of poker chips. They would play poker for three hours, usually Wendy, Rick, Donnie, Carol, and Angela. It was a Five Dollar buy-in, and after playing for three hours, Twelve Dollars might change hands. It was usually Rick who won. But Wendy loved those Saturday night poker games.

And for myself, it was the Saturday night auto races. Wendy and I would go to the auto races on Saturday nights at Irwindale Speedway. I want to show you a photograph of Wendy and myself when we were the auto races at Irwindale. Bret, please pass those photographs around.

Wendy and I had identical red, white and blue racing jackets with our first names on them. She was the only one of our eight kids who enjoyed the auto races.

Wendy and I went to the auto races quite regularly. And I'm not going to be able to do that anymore. So Greg Owen, Bret Carter, Brian Hendricks, and John Sutherland - I am going to be bugging you guys a lot this summer to go to the auto races with me on Saturday nights. Do you hear that Greg?'

And how do we know that Wendy loved her family so much? It's easy. She kept moving back home! (laughter)

After high school, Wendy lived in Berkeley for a while; and she lived in Long Beach for a while. And she moved back home. And then in 2002, Wendy moved to Palm Springs and she worked there as a hairdresser for a while. Then on Christmas Day of 2002, Wendy came to me and said, "Dad, would you have any big objections if I moved back home?" She said, "I really don't like living in Palm Springs."

I said, "Wendy, we are always thrilled to have you back home. You can live at our house for as long as you want to and forever."

So the next day, Donnie and I and Wendy drove Wendy's car down to Palm Springs and we got a U-haul truck and we moved all of her belongings back into our house in Palos Verdes. That was the last week of December in 2002. She never moved out again. She lived with us until she died.

Wendy was a peach. But Wendy would not sponge off her parents. She paid rent every month. The first day of every month she said to me, "Dad, I need to give you a rent check." And there was never one time that I had to ask her to give me a rent check. She gave it to me without fail.

And she gave her mother a check each month for her share of the groceries and the utilities. And after dinner, Wendy would clear off the tables and she would clean off the dishes and put all the dishes in the dishwasher. And nobody ever had to ask her to do that. She just did it. It was just the way she was.

From the 1990's when Wendy became a licensed cosmetologist - she worked as a hairdresser. And she would cut our hair - all of her brothers and sisters and both parents. And she would do it all for free.

I would give her a Twenty Dollar bill for cutting my hair and she objected. So she put a stop to that. Here's how she did it. On my birthday and on Father's Day, she would give me a bunch of coupons - hand-written coupons - and this is what it said:

"To Dad. Happy Birthday. This coupon good for one free haircut and beard trim.
I love you. Wendy."

And Wendy loved animals. Particularly Wendy loved the dog we had named Nicky. We had another dog named Patches. But I want to tell you the story of our dog Nicky. Some neighbors down the street, a couple of blocks away, moved away and they just abandoned that dog. They left the dog in the back yard with no food, no provisions, no anything.

Julie found that dog and brought her home to our house. Julie was only ten years old at the time. I told Julie that we will nurse the dog back to health and then we will find a good home for her.

Two months later - after we had taken her to the vet and had all of the things done to nurse the dog back to health - Julie comes to me and she says, "Dad, can't we keep her?" And I said, "I knew this was going to happen."

And then I said to Julie, "Does Patches seem to be happier having another dog in the back yard?" And Julie had the right answer. She said, "Oh yeah, Patches is a LOT happier now." But she was telling the truth. Patches was a lot happier.

And I loved that dog. Nicky was my buddy and pal. She lived to be fourteen years old, which is 98 years old in human years. Every time I went into the back yard carrying a leash, Nicky would see me coming and she would be all over me like green on grass. She would go bonkers.

Wendy loved our dogs even more than I did. I want to show you a photograph of Wendy with our dog Nicky. Bret, please hand those photographs around.

Wendy also had two cats - stray cats - that she befriended. And those two cats lived the Life of Riley after they befriended Wendy because they got fed every day without fail and they lived on our front porch.

They were outdoor cats. They did not get inside. When it got real cold and rainy, Wendy would try to capture those two cats and put them in the garage. But one of the two she could not catch. That cat did not want to be caught.

Wendy always took both of the dogs and the cats to the vet when they needed to be taken there. Wendy always paid the vet bills herself. I do not remember ever writing a check to a vet - not ever. Wendy and her sisters always paid the vet bills.

Wendy had a wonderful work ethic. I knew she was something real special in 1981. She was eight years old. I owned a publishing company, and I still own it. We would send out advertising mailers to six thousand lawyers in the California Trial Lawyers Association. I would pay my kids to fold and stuff and seal those envelopes. I would pay them nine cents an envelope to do that work for me. And they loved it.

If Wendy stuffed one thousand envelopes, she would make ninety dollars. For an eight year-old kid, that was great. Wendy was a whiz at doing that work. I would come home from the office and Wendy would say, "Daddy, do you have any more work?" She was always wanting me to give her more work. I always tried to accommodate her.

From 1997 onward, Wendy worked as a hairdresser. For most of that time she worked at Fantastic Sam's in the Peninsula Mall. Her employer there was Shahla. And Shahla, I want to thank you and all of us want to thank you for the love and respect that you always gave to Wendy.

Wendy quit working at Fantastic Sam's probably three or four times, but Shahla would always take her back. She would take her back any time and she loved Wendy like a daughter. Shahla, you were always wonderful to Wendy, and Wendy loved you in return.

Then about 2005, Wendy decided she wanted to take Accounting courses and work in the Accounting department of some company. So she went to Harbor College and she took Accounting courses. And in 2007, they gave Wendy a plaque, an award, for having the highest grade point in the Accounting Department at Los Angeles Harbor College. Wendy was very proud of that and we were very proud of her.

So then Wendy went to work in the Accounting Department at Hanjin USA

Trucking Company. Her immediate supervisor was her best friend, Joy Milne, and Wendy loved Joy like a sister.

Joy is one of our pallbearers today. We don't usually have women for pallbearers, but I asked Joy to be a pallbearer and she said she would be honored. And Joy, all of us in our family, we all thank you so much for all the love and respect you gave to Wendy all those years. You were always there for Wendy in times of need, and Wendy loved you very much.

To celebrate Wendy's memory, we have established a scholarship at Los Angeles Harbor College - the "Wendy Schallau Memorial Scholarship." It will be one scholarship per school year to be awarded to deserving students in the Accounting Department. And I intend to give one scholarship per year at Harbor College for the rest of my life.

Wendy was a great athlete. Excellent. Our last year that we lived in Westchester was 1982. I was managing Wendy's Little League baseball team. It was a bunch of eight and nine year old kids. We had twelve players. There were nine boys and three girls. Wendy was my center fielder. And she was very good. She could catch fly balls very well, and unlike Darryl Strawberry and Vladamir Guerrero, she knew which base to throw the ball to. (laughter) She did not overthrow the cut-off man like those two guys. Wendy was a very good player.

You saw one of the photographs of Wendy in her Little League baseball uniform. One weekend we only had nine players. So I played her at shortstop. And we won both games. On Saturday we won 2-1; and on Sunday we won 1-0. And Wendy was great at shortstop.

So the next week our regular shortstop came back and found out that he was now our regular left fielder. And he did not like it at all. But Wendy played shortstop the next six games and we won all of them. So she played shortstop for eight games and we won eight in a row. So that's all I needed to keep her at shortstop.

Even into her adult life, I would come home and I would say, "How's my shortstop?"

When you leave here today, I want you to remember the elegant, graceful beauty of Wendy as a figure skater. I have a video clip here of one of her performances at Ice Capades Chalet in Palos Verdes. Please roll it.

(Video of Wendy performing on March 10, 1985 was shown)

Wendy was only 11 years old when she did that figure skating performance. She had only been taking figure skating lessons for about fourteen months at that time. But her performance was elegant and flawless, and so beautiful.

Wendy was such a treasure in my life. I love you, Wendy. I love you so much. We all love you. And we will love you forever. And Wendy, we will meet again. Thank you.