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Dan Daniel, AM Radio D.J. and One of the Good Guys, Dies at 81

By DANIEL E. SLOTNIK (Thursday) JUNE 23, 2016

Dan Daniel, an AM radio D.J. who became familiar to New York rock 'n' roll fans in the 1960s as Dandy Dan, died this week at his home in Larchmont, N.Y. He was 81.

His son Chris said Mr. Daniel died late Monday or early Tuesday. The cause was not immediately known, he said.

Working for WMCA, Mr. Daniel was one of the Good Guys, a team of D.J.s at the station that also included Jack Spector, Joe O'Brien and Harry Harrison. His signature line was a self-deprecating one: "America's most adequate swinging disc jockey."

Mr. Daniel joined WMCA in 1961, when AM stations in New York were embracing the Top 40 format. The station's main competitor was WABC-AM, a radio juggernaut whose best-known D.J. was Bruce Morrow, known as Cousin Brucie.

WMCA lacked WABC's broadcasting power, but it embraced a broader range of music. "You had this 50,000-watt giant, WABC, and this little 5,000-watt street fighter," Mr. Daniel told The Daily News in 2004. "And I think we came out ahead."

WMCA changed its format to talk radio in 1970 after rock music fans, eager for more than Top 40 singles, had begun flocking to FM stations to hear a wider range of artists and songs from albums. Mr. Daniel later worked as a D.J. for WHN and WYNY-FM and ended his career playing classic hits on WCBS-FM, joining contemporaries there including Mr. Morrow and Mr. Harrison.

Vergil Glynn Daniel was born to Roy Daniel and the former Vergie Fore on Dec. 18, 1934, in Buffalo, Tex., a small town about 135 miles north of Houston. Growing up, he moved frequently around the Houston area. He joined the Navy after high school and served in the Philippines, working for a time on military radio.

After leaving the Navy, he had radio jobs in Houston and Minneapolis, where he met Rosemary Bialon. They married in 1959, and she survives him.

Besides his son Chris, he is also survived by another son, Paul; a daughter, Jennifer Stinga; a brother, Phillip; and three grandsons.