

Tina Stewart remembers Pamela Dale

This is what I remember:

I first met Pam while she was working at Melody Music Shop in 1983. I had purchased a guitar case and she struck up a conversation about music. She then invited me to her house for a "jam-session" in the garage and practically pulled me along for a life on the road. She told me she had just graduated from Winthrop College and was trying to put together an all-girls band. This was late 1983 I guess. Anyway, we started a band called "Lifetime Fantasy" which later became "Traces". Pam set up a few gigs in and around Columbia, SC and that kicked off our few years of traveling up and down the East coast.

We played in dive bars where drunks would throw things at the stage. The stage was surrounded by chicken coop wire. We laughed about it and played for that bar a few times. I believe it was in Elgin, SC. Pam also got us a house gig for a fish camp and our popularity began to take shape. We had the average "groupies" that followed us around from town to town. We opened for Vern Godsins one year at a Moose Lodge in Savannah and Vern did nothing but complain the entire time about using our equipment. He was a butt! After that show we partied all night with his band in our hotel room. The hotel manager emptied the side of the hotel we were staying in because we were too loud.

Pam was a kind spirit and fun to be around. She and I were thick as thieves back in the day. She worked tirelessly to keep us in the spotlight and loved to front the band belting out the songs she loved such as "Mama Tried", "Turn The Page", "Dust In The Wind", and many more. Pam was a very talented musician and gave her life to pursuing it.

We eventually got on the military circuit and traveled to numerous military bases to perform. Parris Island called us many times to come and play for them. That's when Pam and I coined the phrase "It's paid for!" Shouting it from the stage because while we were setting up our gear to play that night, we got thirsty and wandered into the bar area to get a coke from the fountain. No one was there so we helped ourselves and left money by the machine. A military officer saw us leaving and yelled out "is that paid for?" ...of course...it's paid for!

You know now that I think of it, there was a bar called "Traxx" that we played at almost all the time. It's about the time Emily and Amy, (The Indigo Girls), started making it to the big time. We were friends with them and often watched each other's shows when we played. I think Pam was a little discouraged musically after they did make it big. However, we endured and kept playing. We played Colleges, High School Proms, Military Bases, Private parties, Wedding parties, Bars, Restaurants, you name it, and we did it!

We were approached mid 1980's by the USO tour group and they asked us to go with them overseas to play. We didn't go because the drummer didn't want to go. That could have been our break. We were also asked to sing backup for "Run DMC" when they came to Columbia...we didn't do that either.

Over the years there were many opportunities to pursue music on a more professional level but I guess it wasn't meant to be. Pam was a prolific lyricist with her original songs and I loved to hear her singing them. She was meant to be in the spotlight...to me she was already there.