

Feature

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH **SISTER SLEDGE** ABOUT THE LOSS OF THEIR **SISTER JONI** IN MARCH 2017

On 15th march 2017 this official statement was released:

“The medical examiner and Joni's personal physician determined on 10th March 2017, that her death was due to natural causes which arose from complications from a pre-existing condition. Please continue to respect the family's request for peaceful privacy during this very difficult time. Thank you & God Bless You!”







This was the moment the world lost another iconic artist and individual. Formed in 1971, Sister Sledge consisted of sisters Debbie, Joni, Kim and Kathy Sledge. Symbolizing strong family values, the siblings achieved international success at the height of the disco era. With Kathy embarking on a solo career in 1989, that left Debbie, Kim and Joni, the second eldest of the group, who were famed for hits such as “We are Family,” “Lost in Music” and “He’s the greatest dancer.”

I caught up with Kim and Debbie in August 2017 to talk about their loss. The interview became a cosy conversation. Were the sisters ready to share this part of themselves with the world? How did such an iconic group still capture the essence of who Sister Sledge had been for over 30 years? (Their other sister Kathy who

they wanted to honor, had branched out on a solo career in 1989.) How did they cope when they stood in front of their fans and had to hold it together?

Both sisters admitted this was the first time they felt ready to be interviewed. As Kim stated “We feel that the best interview and type of communication is to be real because it’s needed today. We’ve now lost our sister and there’s just no time not to be real. We need to adjust and take life to the fullest.” Debbie spoke measured yet calmly about her experience. Taking her time to meander through her thoughts she explained “For me it was a place of pain where you’re missing someone very precious and important.” Debbie described how close she and Joni had been and spoke of the richness Joni had brought into her life and how that had kept her going, describing Joni as an articulate, intelligent, talented character who had enriched

everyone’s life and as much as she felt the loss she also knew she had gained much. “There is something missing, there’s a place of just that little pain that you know you’re missing someone very precious, someone very important in your life. You know we were so close and we did everything together, so its very difficult to not have her with us, but there’s also another aspect where we have such richness that she brought to our lives and we have that with us and that is what really keeps us going, we feel so blessed to have known this remarkable person who was very close to us.”

Kim expressed how much she missed Joni adding nostalgically how Joni had always been one to live life in the present moment. “I can honestly say and this is the first.

I’ve been interviewed about Joni’s death and I thank you for asking these questions because they’re deeper and more personal and they’re more real. I miss her so much and I have my moments because Joni and I we didn’t

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