

A Walk Down The Fairway

Emmy Award Winner *Carson Daly* reveals how life might have lead him down a very different career path.

By Mark Pazdur, Publisher

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK: I enjoyed my interview with Carson Daly. Growing up in Southern California, I grew accustomed to his buttery smooth voice and delivery during his stint as a DJ on our local KROQ radio station. Most will recognize Daly for his prominent role on Emmy Award winner *The Voice*, host of his late night talk show *Last Call with Carson Daly*, and social media correspondent for *Today* on NBC.



To label him a golf fanatic would be an understatement. Growing up in Santa Monica, California, Daly's skilled track record in junior golf tournaments earned him a partial scholarship to Loyola Marymount University. "I thought I had what it would take to compete on the PGA TOUR," said Daly. "In 1992, I dropped out of college to live my dream as a golf professional."

Clearly, Carson's mom and stepdad were not impressed. "It was made very clear to me, if I wasn't in school, they weren't going to pay my way," recalled Daly. "When I broke the news to my mom, she curtly responded, 'well then, GO GET A JOB!'"

"Having to find and pay for a \$250/month apartment teaches you a lot about yourself. I played in a couple of mini-tour events and tried to qualify for the U.S. Open without success," said a discouraged Daly. "I learned pretty quickly that I didn't have it. I possessed the swing to get the job done, but my mental game was weak."

As Carson's soul searched for his path in life, Jimmy Kimmel entered the picture. "Jimmy asked me become an intern. I was still hanging on to the fading possibility of earning a PGA TOUR card," explained Daly. "Jimmy said my work schedule would allow me to continue to practice and hone my game, so I accepted."

It didn't take long for Carson to establish a foothold in Hollywood.

"If I hadn't met Jimmy, I likely would have decided to become a head golf professional at a private

"HOLLYWOOD CERTAINLY has its share of narcissistic celebrities. I think our award-winning show *The Voice* is a rare example of wholesome, family friendly programming. I am proud of the work we have accomplished. We work hard and respect one another. All four of our judges—Christina Aguilera, Pharrell Williams, Adam Levine, and Blake Shelton—bring something different to the table. I consider Christina the greatest voice of my generation. She is so talented, it's ridiculous. She does however prefer to go barefooted on set and has a habit of kicking her shoes off, even when we are live on the air. Pharrell is Mr. Yoda. He is Mr. Philosopher and Zen Master wrapped into one. Adam is fiercely competitive and hates loosing. His frustration is real when his team is struggling. And finally, Blake is cowboy cool. Everybody, and I mean everybody, loves Blake." – CARSON DALY

THREE THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT CARSON DALY

- 1) He majored in theology and planned to join the priesthood.
- 2) The first time he was recognized in public was pumping gas. A fan shouted, "OMG, you're that guy from MTV!"
- 3) If he could play only one golf course the rest of his life, Riviera would be his choice.

"CARSON DALY IS THE CONSUMMATE GENTLEMAN! HE COMPORTS HIMSELF LIKE A MODERN DAY BOBBY JONES. WHETHER HE IS MAKING A BIRDIE OR BOGEY, HE ALWAYS ENJOYS HIMSELF ON THE COURSE! IT IS A PLEASURE HAVING CARSON AS A MEMBER OF THE RIVIERA COUNTRY CLUB." – MICHAEL YAMAKI, CORPORATE OFFICER, THE RIVIERA COUNTRY CLUB

club," confided Daly. "I love the people and culture of golf. Still to this day, I daydream of one day running a golf shop and giving lessons."

HIS THREE PRIORITIES IN LIFE

Carson has experienced his share of hardships. At the age of five, his biological father passed away from bladder cancer and his mom was diagnosed with breast cancer when he was a young adult.

"My mom is a cancer survivor going on more than 20 years," emotionally stated Daly. "The scourge of the disease took one parent and spared another. I am lucky to have a strong bond with my stepdad. He had a major influence on who I am today. I have three priorities in life: faith, family, and work. I have seen firsthand how fragile life can be. We must not take our blessings for granted."

During production of *Last Call*, Carson struck up a friendship with coworker Siri Pinter. "Our connection grew deeper and deeper," recalled Daly.

After dating for 10 years, Carson popped the question to Siri in a New York City hotel. "When I placed the ring on her finger, it was a moment of pure happiness for us. It brought a close connection that much closer," smiled Daly.

With three children under the age of seven and almost a dozen projects either active or in the planning stage, Carson's schedule is demanding. "My son Jackson [age 7] loves golf more than anything," said Daly. "I value our bonding time on the golf course and look forward to passing down life lessons my stepfather taught me. There is nothing more precious than a slow walk with your child down the fairway." ■



Siri Daly at Riviera Country Club



"CARSON IS THE REAL DEAL on and off the course. He is fun-loving, personable, and detail oriented. He is ultra-competitive and a joy to have as a golf partner. After we won the Bob Hope Classic Pro-Am together, a friendship formed. I look forward to 'getting the band back together' on the course soon." – ROGER CLEMENS