

DICK BIONDI INTRODUCED ME TO THE MUSIC

In *American Graffiti* Wolfman Jack played himself, a Southern California DJ and guru to a bunch of kids just graduating from high school in 1962. Growing up in South Bend Indiana, we had our own Wolfman, the fabulous Dick Biondi at WLS-AM in Chicago, 50,000 watts blasting out over the Midwest. Biondi and WLS laid down the soundtrack of my high school days. Early Beach Boys surfing music and fast cars (She's real fine my 409) were big favorites. One of my buddies swore Help Me Rhonda was the greatest song ever. Biondi played all that music, and whatever he played, I loved.

One Summer day a bunch of us fans "borrowed" the family car and took the Indiana Toll Road up to Chicago just to watch him. We wound up at the Tribune Tower, as I recall, where you could see the DJs and their boards as they sent the music across the Midwest. Then a big meal at Tod's Steak House (rib-eyes for \$4 with all the fixin's). Now that's summertime living.

We moved to Chicago 10 years ago, and one day I tuned to WLS-FM. I heard a familiar voice. It couldn't be Dick Biondi after all those years, must be some imitator. But it was Dick himself, playing the classic hits, even *Help Me Rhonda*, but also more well-known songs, even a bit of Bob Dylan. I added a preset for WLS, just like when I was a kid.

Dick Biondi passed away this week. Here's his obituary. Rest in peace, Dick, You made a difference in my life.

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Image by Yoshikazu Takada, Chiba Beach, Japan. It doesn't matter where you are, It's Summertime, Summertime, Sum-sum Summertime according to The Jamies, 1958.