

Legendary Jeopardy! Host Alex Trebek Dies at 80

Alex Trebek, the charismatic, quick-witted host of the hit game show Jeopardy! since 1984, died at home Sunday morning. He was 80.

He was surrounded by family and friends, according to Jeopardy!, which confirmed the news on Twitter.

Jeopardy! is saddened to share that Alex Trebek passed away peacefully at home early this morning, surrounded by family and friends. Thank you, Alex. pic.twitter.com/Yk2a90CHIM

– Jeopardy! (@Jeopardy) November 8, 2020

Trebek, who had been diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer in March 2019, hosted more than 8,200 Jeopardy episodes over nearly 37 seasons, and set a Guinness World Record for hosting the most episodes of a single game show. He also received seven Daytime Emmys.

Update: Sony Pictures Television said Sunday afternoon that Trebek's last day in the Jeopardy! studio was Oct. 29, and that episodes hosted by him will air through Dec. 25. The show "is not announcing plans for a new host at this time."

"This is an enormous loss for the Jeopardy! staff, crew and all of Alex's millions of fans. He was a legend of the industry and we were all lucky to watch night after night for 37 years. Working beside him for the past year and a half as he heroically continued to host Jeopardy! was an incredible honor. His belief in the importance of the show and his willingness to push himself to perform at the highest level

was the most inspiring demonstration of courage I have ever seen. His constant desire to learn, his kindness and his professionalism will be with all of us forever," said Jeopardy! executive producer Mike Richards in a statement.

Even after announcing his cancer diagnosis last year, Trebek kept working on the show. In January, he presided over ABC's Jeopardy! The Greatest of All Time tournament, which was a huge hit for the network: the four episodes averaged nearly 15 million viewers. The tournament brought together the three highest money winners in Jeopardy!'s history: Ken Jennings (who is seen as the likeliest candidate to take over for Trebek as Jeopardy! host), Brad Rutter and James Holzhauer.

The Ontario-born Trebek hosted his first game show in 1966, CBC's Reach for the Top. He made his U.S. game show emcee debut in 1973, with the short-lived The Wizard of Odds, followed later by High Rollers.

Then, in 1984, he presided over a rebooted, syndicated version of Jeopardy! and never looked back:

He appeared as himself in several TV shows, including Cheers, Seinfeld, The Golden Girls, and Beverly Hills, 90210, as well as the 2000 Charlie's Angels movie.

In 1991, Trebek became the first person to host three game shows—Jeopardy!, Classic Concentration and To Tell the Truth—that were on the air at the same time.

In January, Trebek appeared at the Television Critics Association's winter press tour and said that he didn't plan on retiring in "the near future," adding, "As long as I feel my skills have not diminished too much ... then I'll continue doing it."

Trebek admitted that he and the show had been operating under a brighter spotlight since he revealed his cancer diagnosis. "The pity factor ... is out there," Trebek said. "People have

been so kind.”

The host reflected on his legacy in January, saying, “I hope I’ve been an influence for good and an influence for the benefits of not minimizing the importance of knowledge in one’s life.”

In 2001, Trebek shaved his trademark mustache, and the press coverage “blew my mind,” he recalled in January. “There were wars going on in the Middle East and you guys were focusing on my mustache? Get a life, please.”

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