

# Source says Jackson's mom to get custody of kids

By NEKESA MUMBI MOODY – 15 hours ago

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Michael Jackson's will gives custody of his children to the singer's mother and leaves all of his assets in a trust fund, a person with knowledge of the document told The Associated Press on Tuesday. The word came just a day after the family said in court documents it believed the entertainer had died without a valid will.

The will was created in July 2002 and named as executors Jackson's longtime lawyer John Branca and John McClain, a music executive and a family friend, said the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak on the topic.

That designation complicates a petition by Jackson's mother Katherine to become the administrator of his lucrative, but debt-encumbered estate.

In documents filed in Superior Court on Monday, Jackson's parents say they believe their 50-year-old son died "intestate," or without a valid will.

Judge Mitchell Beckloff granted 79-year-old Katherine Jackson temporary guardianship of the children, who range in age from 7 to 12.

He also gave her control over some of her son's personal property that is now in the hands of an unnamed third party. But the judge did not immediately rule on her requests to take charge of the children's and Jackson's estates.

Experts said the personal bankruptcy of Jackson's parents in 1999 could work against Katherine taking control of the estate.

Court documents show Katherine and Joe Jackson filed for Chapter 7 and listed nearly \$24 million in debts that included court judgments, auto loans and credit cards. The only valuable asset listed was a house in Las Vegas then valued at \$290,000. The bankruptcy was terminated in March 2007, but the documents gave no further details.

"I think it would be a negative factor but not necessarily a disqualifier," said Beth Kaufman, a Washington, D.C.-based attorney specializing in estate tax issues. "It could indicate that she is not capable of sound financial management."

Jackson was recently in shaky financial health. In the most detailed account yet of the singer's tangled financial empire, documents obtained by The Associated Press show Jackson claimed to have a net worth of \$236.6 million as of March 31, 2007.

Since that time both Jackson's debts and assets grew substantially — he refinanced loans later that year that increased his debt load by tens of millions of dollars, but the Sony/ATV Music Publishing joint venture also spent hundreds of millions acquiring new songs.

A nutritionist who was working with the singer as he prepared his comeback bid said Jackson was so distraught over persistent insomnia in recent months that he pleaded for a powerful sedative despite warnings it could be harmful.

Cherilyn Lee, a registered nurse whose specialty includes nutritional counseling, also said she got a frantic phone call from Jackson four days before his death made her fear that he somehow obtained Diprivan or another drug to induce sleep.

Meanwhile, Sheriff's Lt. Butch Arnoldi said authorities met Tuesday based on speculation over a possible memorial at Neverland, but Jackson's family had yet to reach out to them for assistance with any kind of memorial.

"We have not been contacted by any member of the family or any representative of the family, talking about or requesting any kind of event," he said.

Neverland is located in the rolling hills of central California's wine country, about 150 miles northwest of Los Angeles. A public funeral there on a busy holiday weekend could bring the rural area's roads to a standstill.

A statement from Santa Barbara County officials said the county "cannot confirm that any such funeral or memorial plans for Michael Jackson will occur here despite widespread reports today by the news media that a funeral or memorial event is planned for the area."

California Highway Patrol spokesman Rick Quintero said the CHP had not received a request for

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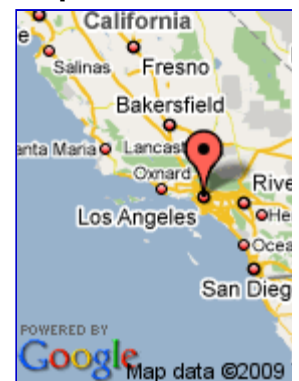
Photo 1 of 3



Katherine Jackson, Michael Jackson's mother, is driven to her home in Encino, California, Monday, June 29, 2009. Photo/Charles Dharapak



Map



a motorcade.

"They would definitely need to notify us because it's going to impact the motoring public," Quintero said.

It was unclear whether Jackson could be buried at the ranch. California Funeral Directors Association executive director Bob Achermann said state law would prohibit Jackson's uncremated remains from being interred at Neverland.

The state's health and safety code makes interring any uncremated remains outside of a cemetery a misdemeanor, he said. Cremated remains can be kept in a home or private mausoleum outside a cemetery, he said.

At once a symbol of Jackson's success and excesses, Neverland became the site of a makeshift memorial after his death Thursday. Scores of fans have streamed past the gated entrance to leave handwritten notes, photographs, balloons and flowers.

He was 29 and at the height of his popularity when he bought the ranch, naming it after the mythical land of Peter Pan, where boys never grow up. There, he surrounded himself with animals, rides and children.

Jackson fled the ranch — and the country — after his acquittal on charges that he molested a 13-year-old cancer survivor in 2003 at the estate after getting him drunk.

Meanwhile, Jackson fans converged on New York City's famed Apollo Theater Tuesday for a public tribute to the performer, clutching photographs, cheering and dancing to his music at the legendary venue that launched the one-time child star's career.

The Rev. Al Sharpton gave a rousing speech praising the pop star to hundreds of fans who crammed into the theater as others waited in line outside to pay their respects.

"Michael made young men and women all over the world imitate us," Sharpton said. "Before Michael, we were limited and ghettoized. But Michael put on a colorful military outfit, he pulled his pants up, he put on the one glove, and he smashed the barriers of segregated music."

*Associated Press writers Michael R. Blood, Lynn Elber, Noaki Schwartz, Jacob Adelman, Anthony McCartney, Thomas Watkins and AP Music Writer Nekesa Mumbi Moody in Los Angeles; Michelle Rindels in Santa Barbara; and Jennifer Peltz and Stevenson Jacobs in New York contributed to this report.*

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