



The Fight Over Lisa Marie Presley’s Estate – What’s Happening and How Can You Avoid This

By Desiree F. Rivera, Esq.

It made headlines when Lisa Marie Presley, daughter of the great Elvis Presley, suddenly passed away on January 12, 2023. However, shortly after that, the headlines quickly shifted to the dispute over who will be handling Lisa Marie’s trust now that she has passed away.

In 1993, Lisa Marie established a trust with assets left to her from her father’s estate. Lisa Marie’s mother, Priscilla Presley, and the family’s business manager, Barry Siegel, served as trustees of this trust.

Unfortunately, after years of economic decline and alleged poor business decisions, Lisa Marie claimed her trust was left with very few assets and unsurmountable debt. In 2016, litigation between Lisa Marie and Barry Siegel surrounding the handling of the trust assets ensued. Barry’s legal team claimed that Lisa Marie was to blame for the financial situation.

On January 26, 2023, some two weeks after Lisa Marie’s passing, Priscilla filed court documents challenging a 2016 amendment to Lisa Marie’s trust, which purported to remove Priscilla and Barry as trustees. The amendment also designated Lisa Marie’s children Riley Keough and Benjamin Keough (who died in 2020) as co-trustees. Priscilla’s court filings challenged the validity of the 2016 amendment.

Although Barry acknowledged receiving notice of his removal as trustee during litigation with Lisa Marie, Priscilla argued that the 2016 amendment was invalid because it was never delivered to her during Lisa Marie’s lifetime, as she alleges was required by the trust’s

language to remove her as trustee effectively. Priscilla also argued the 2016 amendment may have been fraudulent because Lisa Marie's signature on the amendment was inconsistent with her usual signature. Ultimately, Priscilla requested the court hold the 2016 amendment invalid and requested the court recognize her as trustee of Lisa Marie's trust. Now, Priscilla and her granddaughter, Riley Keough, will await the court's decision as to who will act as trustee of Lisa Marie's trust.



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The above scenario is a prime example of why it is imperative that the language of the trust is thoroughly reviewed and followed, especially when making changes to the trust. Unfortunately, too often, we see trustors that wanted to amend their trust, but the trust amendment was not done so properly. After the trustor's death, this can lead to questions as to whether the trustor intended to make these changes and arguments about whether those changes are really effective, as is now the case with Lisa Marie's family.

Whether an amendment was not properly documented as required by the trust language or perhaps the correct people did not execute the document, numerous issues can arise when making changes to trusts. That is why it is critical that any trustor, when contemplating making changes to their trust, engage with competent counsel that can walk through the provisions of your trust and the requirements when amending same. Having competent counsel now that can thoroughly review the requirements and ensure all steps are properly followed when amending your trust can avoid costly litigation after your passing.

Whether you had another child or want to change successor trustee nominations dictating who will control your trust after you die, if you are interested in making any changes to your trust, we encourage you to seek competent counsel. Our firm offers a free initial consultation to discuss any amendments to your trust, wherein we can review current provisions and discuss your desired changes. Please feel free to reach out should you have any questions at all.

We Look Forward to Serving You



We are here to provide you with legal guidance you can trust while placing safety and health as a priority. We are happy to meet in person or to accommodate other needs, including Facetime, SKYPE and ZOOM for virtual, face-to-face connections. Contact us directly to speak with someone who can help answer your questions: **(949) 501-4800**

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Local News

Please be advised: The tax deadline has been extended to October 16 for disaster area taxpayers in California to file various federal individual and business tax returns and make tax payments.

Two of Orange County's long standing judges, Kim Hubbard and Gerald Johnston will be retiring this year.



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