

Corina wastes no time

Villaraigosa's wife files for divorce

BY TROY ANDERSON, Staff Writer

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Just four days after Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa publicly announced his separation after two decades of marriage, his wife promptly filed for divorce late Tuesday.

Wasting little time, Corina Villaraigosa filed a standard, 10-page petition in Los Angeles County Superior Court seeking dissolution of the marriage because of "irreconcilable differences."

The bare-bones filing had few details, noting assets and liabilities were yet to be determined. But the speed with which it was filed highlighted what some have said has been a longstanding and growing estrangement between the couple.

The filing came just one day after a somber mayor held a news conference in which he deflected inquiries about the reasons for the split but said he took responsibility for the breakup and felt "a personal sense of failure."

"When you've been married for 20 years, that's a big thing," he said at the time. "It's been a stable kind of anchor for the family, and so when you're not able to continue, it's difficult."

But the mayor also refused to say whether he'd been romantically involved with other women since he took office July 1, 2005.

"Those kinds of questions are inappropriate, and I won't answer them," he said. "My family and I have a right in this very difficult time to go through this process free of that kind of speculation."

Questions about the mayor's marriage were raised several months ago when he appeared at public events without his gold wedding band. Aides said it no longer fit because he'd lost weight, and he resumed wearing it soon



after. He was not wearing the ring Monday.

The couple previously separated in 1994 after Corina was treated for thyroid cancer. She filed for divorce, but the couple reconciled after two years.

Janelle Erickson, a spokesman for the mayor, said Tuesday after the filing that Corina believes now is the right time to file for divorce, and the mayor supports her in the decision.

"The mayor believes this is a time to focus on the future and their shared responsibility as parents," Erickson said.

Joint custody

Corina's attorney, Stacy D. Phillips, could not be reached for comment late Tuesday.

In the court filing, she requests joint custody of the couple's 14-year-old daughter, Natalia Fe. Corina also wants primary physical custody of their daughter and asks the judge to grant visitation rights to the mayor.

Corina also requests spousal and child support payments and asks the judge to divide their assets and require the mayor to pay her attorney's fees.

The documents noted the couple married Nov. 28, 1987, and separated June 3 - five days before the mayor issued a brief statement announcing the couple's plans to split.

At a press conference Monday, the mayor said he felt a personal sense of failure about the breakup.

He said he plans to move back to the family's home in Mount Washington while Corina and the couple's two children will continue to live at the Getty House, the official mayoral residence near Hancock Park.

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