



## Is Diana Ross Best Choice as Secondary Caregiver to Michael Jackson's Children?

Biographer Says Her Recent Erratic Behavior Makes Her Not a Great Choice

By LUCHINA FISHER

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When Michael Jackson wrote his will in 2002 and named Diana Ross as the secondary caregiver to his three children, he was likely thinking about their longstanding relationship and the way she raised her own five children, not her erratic behavior, including two arrests, in recent years.

In his will, which was filed in court Wednesday, Jackson specified that if his mother, Katherine Jackson, his first choice to become guardian for his three young children, died before he did, Ross was to take custody of the kids. Omitted from the will was Jackson's ex-wife, Debbie Rowe, the mother of his two older children.

Jackson's three children, Michael Joseph Jr., 12; Paris-Michael Katherine Jackson, 11; and Prince Michael Jackson II, 7, known as Blanket, have been staying with their grandmother Katherine at the family compound in Encino, Calif., since Jackson's death last Thursday.

"Raising children was the most important role Michael Jackson believed he had, and to put down that Diana Ross would replace his mom, you can't have any greater honor," said Stacy Phillips, a family attorney not working for the Jacksons.

But Jackson biographer Stacy Brown said he was surprised by Jackson's choice, in part because of Ross' arrests for DUI and allegedly assaulting an airport worker.

"She's not the best of choices," Brown told ABCNews.com. "But if one of Michael's criteria was to have someone who wouldn't do it for the money, I think it's safe to say he firmly knew there was no way she would exploit his children," he added.

"Plus, Diana Ross raised all her children, Katherine raised all of hers," Brown continued. "Michael didn't want anyone who had small children. He wanted his children to get all the attention. You can't fault him for that. Michael Jackson loved his children. He was their best friend, they were his best friend."

## Michael Jackson's Love for Diana Ross Continues Even in Death

Attorney Said Naming Ross Secondary Caregiver to His Three Children Was a Great Honor

By LUCHINA FISHER, SARAH NETTER and RUSSELL GOLDMAN

July 2, 2009—

It may have come as a surprise to some that Diana Ross was mentioned in Michael Jackson's will as a secondary caregiver to his three children, but her inclusion was not unexpected to those who had tracked their longstanding relationship, dating back to Jackson's early childhood.

In his will, Jackson specified that if his mother Katherine Jackson, his first choice to become guardian for his three young children, died before he did, then he named Ross to take custody of the kids.

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Jackson knew Ross from the time he was 9 years old, and their relationship was one of the most important in his life. He idolized Ross, and some have said he even tried to emulate her.

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### Ross Jackson's Idol

Over the years, Jackson has had his obsessions with "it girls," including Elizabeth Taylor, Brooke Shields and Princess Diana. But Ross was always his idol. The two became close after Jackson signed on with Motown as a child.

When Jackson made his solo debut in 1971, he did it on one of Ross' TV specials.

In a 1981 Diana Ross TV special, Ross brought out Jackson's shy demeanor, teasing him about being "very sexy."

"You are embarrassing me," he replied, laughing.

They were so close, in fact, that some have even speculated that Jackson's plastic surgeries were done to make him look like Ross.



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