

# Jackson, ex-wife settle child custody

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Michael Jackson and his ex-wife, Deborah Rowe, have settled their lengthy legal battle over custody and visitation rights for their two children, their lawyers said Friday.

"We're still dealing with the details but it addresses all of the disputes between the parties," said attorney Marta Almlí, who represents Rowe. "I can't say anything about the terms of the settlement, but I don't think it would have happened if both parties didn't agree it was appealing to both of them."

She declined to give details on whether the settlement involves monetary payments to Rowe and visitation rights with the children, Michael Joseph Jackson Jr., known as Prince Michael, and Paris Michael Katherine Jackson.

"It is the settlement of all the issues," Almlí said.

Jackson's lawyer, Michael L. Abrams, said the settlement was reached last week and is expected to win easy approval from the judge.

"I think both parties are satisfied," he said. "He (Jackson) seems to be satisfied with the result."

The lawsuit was a



Michael Jackson settled a custody case with his ex-wife.

byproduct of the 2003 charges filed against Jackson alleging child molestation. Rowe, who had relinquished all of her parental rights to the children, changed her mind after Jackson's arrest, according to court documents.

"Everything changed," Rowe said in a declaration, and she regretted having given up her rights to see the children.

Rowe and the pop star were married in 1996 and she

filed for divorce in 1999. The divorce became final in 2000. She filed to terminate her parental rights in 2001 and the court accepted her declaration in which she said, "Michael has been a wonderful father to the children, and I do not wish to share any parenting responsibilities with Michael because he is doing so well without me."

According to court documents, she said, "I want to forever give up any and all rights pertaining to the chil-

dren because I believe that by doing so, it is in the children's best interest."

Before that, she said in documents, Jackson had allowed her visitation rights only if she went to distant locations such as Geneva and South Africa.

After Jackson's arrest in 2003, she filed for temporary custody alleging that she became concerned that during the criminal case, Jackson would be too distracted to care for the children. She also said his association with the Nation of Islam, whose leader she believed was anti-Semitic, disturbed her.

"I am Jewish, as are — by definition — my children. I worried about how my children would be treated by these new advisers to Michael," she said.

Rowe testified for Jackson at his molestation trial, describing him as a loving and caring father.

She said in documents that she last saw the children in 2005 and had not seen them since Jackson left the United States shortly after his trial ended in acquittal on all charges. He has been living abroad since then but his lawyers continued to negotiate with Rowe.

On Sept. 6, a judge ruled that Jackson must pay Rowe \$60,000 in attorney fees from the custody battle.

Jackson also has a third child, Prince Michael II. The boy's mother has not been identified.

## Model no-show at court hearing

NEW YORK (AP) - Supermodel Naomi Campbell, accused of assaulting her maid with a cell phone, failed to show up in court last Wednesday, puzzling the judge who asked for but never got a reason for her absence.

Manhattan Criminal Court Judge James Gibbon responded by issuing a bench warrant for Campbell's arrest, but then decided not to put it into effect after Campbell's attorney explained that he and the prosecutor had an agreement.

Defense attorney David Breitbart told Gibbon the prosecutor knew Campbell was going to be absent and had agreed not to seek her arrest. Gibbon said he would stay the warrant — not put it into effect — until the next court date, Nov. 15.

Outside court, Breitbart said only that the British fashion model's absence was not related to work. He noted that she had not appeared in the New York and Italian fashion shows but declined to say why.

Breitbart also said he has been considering a plea offer from the Manhattan district attorney's office. He wouldn't say what the offer was.

The 35-year-old supermodel was arrested on March 31 for allegedly throwing a cell phone at one of her employees in a dispute over a missing pair of jeans.

Campbell has called the charges "completely untrue." But the housekeeper, Ana Scolavino, was treated for an injury to the back of her head after the incident.

Campbell has a history of expressing anger problems and taking it out on her employees.

## Crunk clown keen on culture

By Antonio R. Harvey  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (NNPA) - When the "Greatest Show on Earth" came to Arco Arena, it was imperative that the community of Sacramento paid special close attention to the clown dressed in hip-hop attire.

Jamarr Woodruff is a first-year clown with the 136th edition of the Ringling Bros. Barnum and Bailey Circus that performed here last month.

Reflecting on the urban culture of hip-hop music, Woodruff considers himself the "Clown of Crunk" — a high-energy style of music that started in Atlanta and has grown nationally through the hip-hop scene.

"It's more of a philosophy, a lifestyle, and just having fun," Woodruff said of the music genre. "It solidifies what Atlanta is, where I am from, and who I am. And, your clown is who you are ...exaggerated. So, with me being born and raised in Atlanta, I cannot see myself as being no other kind of clown but the 'Clown of Crunk'"

Woodruff said the audiences in previous shows have

warmed up to his type of character and flavor. Especially the youth who can identify themselves with hip-hop.

"Oh, they love it," Woodruff said. "It's always good for them, especially for the younger generation because hip-hop is such a heavy influence in their world, and it gives them something [to] grasp on to. So they always want to take pictures with the 'cool' clown."

Woodruff's costume is also a major feature that attracts everyone's attention. He wears a pair of specially made Timberlands boots that he calls "Clownberlands," baggy jeans with a striped shirt, a jacket with the words "Clown of Crunk" written on the back, and a bucket-Kangol style hat.

"My costume is more related to kids, which makes them less frightened... And then I can see through the African-American kids, 'Hey, there's the one that looks like us.'"

Behind the makeup, Woodruff is not just one of your ordinary clowns. He takes his profession seriously. When he was a senior in high

school he saw a poster to audition for Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's Clown College in 1997. The audition didn't "amount" to Woodruff getting hired, though he stuck with his dream.

Woodruff attended Alabama State University where he graduated cum laude in the school's Theatre Arts program, and then he went on to graduate from Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre in 2004 followed by the San Francisco Clown Conservatory in 2005. Woodruff saw on a website that one of the clowns for Barnum and Bailey went to Dell'Arte.

The work paid off and eventually got him a job with Ringling Bros.

"I saw that he had additional training that I felt would make me more desirable to Ringling Bros.," he said. "While at Dell'Arte I found out about the Clown Conservatory. So it's been like a eight year process to make myself prepared as possible. My sister said I'm the most educated clown she knows."

Antonio R. Harvey writes for the Sacramento Observer.

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