

§12-1448. Deceased personality's right of publicity -  
Unauthorized use - Claims - Exemptions.

A. Any person who uses a deceased personality's name, voice, signature, photograph, or likeness, in any manner, on or in products, merchandise, or goods, or for purposes of advertising or selling, or soliciting purchases of, products, merchandise, goods, or services, without prior consent from the person or persons specified in subsection C of this section, shall be liable for any damages sustained by the person or persons injured as a result thereof, and any profits from the unauthorized use that are attributable to the use shall be taken into account in computing the actual damages. In establishing these profits, the injured party or parties shall be required to present proof only of the gross revenue attributable to the use and the person who violated this section is required to prove his or her deductible expenses. Punitive damages may also be awarded to the injured party or parties. The prevailing party or parties in any action under this section shall also be entitled to attorney's fees and costs.

B. The rights recognized under this section are property rights, freely transferable, in whole or in part, by contract or by means of trust or testamentary documents, whether the transfer occurs before the death of the deceased personality, by the deceased personality or his or her transferees, or, after the death of the deceased personality, by the person or persons in whom such rights vest under this section or the transferees of that person or persons.

C. The consent required by this section shall be exercisable by the person or persons to whom such right of consent (or portion thereof) has been transferred in accordance with subsection B of this section, or if no such transfer has occurred, then by the person or persons to whom such right of consent (or portion thereof) has passed in accordance with subsection D of this section.

D. Subject to subsections B and C of this section, after the death of any person, the rights under this section shall belong to the decedents' spouse, issue, or parents in accordance with Section 213 of Title 84 of the Oklahoma Statutes. Said rights shall be exercised on behalf of and for the benefit of all those persons, by those persons who, in the aggregate, are entitled to more than a one-half (1/2) interest in such rights.

E. If any deceased personality does not transfer his or her rights under this section by contract, or by means of a trust or testamentary document, and there are no surviving persons as described in subsection D of this section, then the rights set forth in subsection A of this section shall terminate.

F. 1. A successor-in-interest to the rights of a deceased personality under this section or a licensee thereof may not recover damages for a use prohibited by this section that occurs before the successor-in-interest or licensee registers a claim of the rights under paragraph 2 of this subsection.

2. Any person claiming to be a successor-in-interest to the rights of a deceased personality under this section or a licensee thereof may register that claim with the Secretary of State on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State and upon payment of a fee of Ten Dollars (\$10.00). The form shall be verified and shall include the name and date of death of the deceased personality, the name and address of the claimant, the basis of the claim, and the rights claimed.

3. Upon receipt and after filing of any document under this section, the Secretary of State may microfilm or reproduce by other techniques any of the filings or documents and destroy the original filing or document. The microfilm or other reproduction of any document under the provision of this section shall be admissible in any court of law. The microfilm or other reproduction of any document may be destroyed by the Secretary of State fifty (50) years after the death of the personality named therein.

4. Claims registered under this subdivision shall be public records.

G. No action shall be brought under this section by reason of any use of a deceased personality's name, voice, signature, photograph, or likeness occurring after the expiration of one hundred (100) years from the death of the deceased personality.

H. As used in this section, "deceased personality" means any natural person whose name, voice, signature, photograph, or likeness has commercial value at the time of his or her death, whether or not during the lifetime of that natural person the person used his or her name, voice, signature, photograph, or likeness on or in products, merchandise or goods, or for purposes of advertising or selling, or solicitation of purchase of, products, merchandise, goods, or services. A "deceased personality" shall include, without limitation, any such natural person who has died within fifty (50) years prior to January 1, 1986.

I. As used in this section, "photograph" means any photograph or photographic reproduction, still or moving, or any videotape or live television transmission, of any person, such that the deceased personality is readily identifiable. A deceased personality shall be deemed to be readily identifiable from a photograph when one who views the photograph with the naked eye can reasonably determine who the person depicted in the photograph is.

J. For purposes of this section, a use of a name, voice, signature, photograph, or likeness in connection with any news, public affairs, or sports broadcast or account, or any political campaign, shall not constitute a use for which consent is required under subsection A of this section.

K. The use of a name, voice, signature, photograph, or likeness in a commercial medium shall not constitute a use for which consent is required under subsection A of this section solely because the material containing such use is commercially sponsored or contains paid advertising. Rather it shall be a question of fact whether or not the use of the deceased personality's name, voice, signature, photograph, or likeness was so directly connected with the commercial sponsorship or with the paid advertising as to constitute a use for which consent is required under subsection A of this section.

L. Nothing in this section shall apply to the owners or employees of any medium used for advertising, including, but not limited to, newspapers, magazines, radio and television networks and stations, cable television systems, billboards, and transit ads, by whom any advertisement or solicitation in violation of this section is published or disseminated, unless it is established that such owners or employees had knowledge of the unauthorized use of the deceased personality's name, voice, signature, photograph, or likeness as prohibited by this section.

M. The remedies provided for in this section are cumulative and shall be in addition to any others provided for by law.

N. This section shall not apply to the use of a deceased personality's name, voice, signature, photograph, or likeness, in any of the following instances:

1. A play, book, magazine, newspaper, musical composition, exhibit, display, film, radio or television program, other than an advertisement or commercial announcement not exempt under paragraph 4 of this subsection;

2. Material that is of political or newsworthy value;

3. Single and original works of fine art; and

4. An advertisement or commercial announcement for a use permitted by paragraph 1, 2 or 3 of this subsection.

Added by Laws 1985, c. 159, § 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.