

Minelli, Gest End Lawsuits, to Divorce

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NEW YORK -- Liza Minnelli and husband David Gest have patched things up to the point that they can now get divorced.

Legal disputes between the two ended Thursday when their lawyers filed court papers saying they had settled their differences and agreed to get divorced without fault.

Gest's lawyer, Susan M. Moss, said the two will be divorced "within the next few weeks" in Memphis, Tenn., where Gest has a home. Moss said the couple chose Tennessee because the state, unlike New York, has no-fault divorce.

The agreement to file for a no-fault divorce in Tennessee means neither party has to accuse the other of wrongdoing.

Minnelli, 60, and Gest, 53, married March 16, 2002, in a celebrity-studded ceremony that featured Michael Jackson as best man carrying the bride's train and Elizabeth Taylor as maid of honor. They parted ways in July 2003, and both filed for divorce later that year.

Before filing for divorce, Gest sued Minnelli for \$10 million for assault, claiming that his wife had beaten him so badly during alcoholic rages that she caused him nerve damage and caused him to be hospitalized for five days.

Minnelli countersued, claiming that Gest had stolen at least \$2 million she earned while performing in shows he had produced.

Lorraine Nadel, Gest's lawyer in the assault lawsuit and in the Minnelli countersuit, confirmed that legal battle was over. She said the settlement terms were confidential and would not say whether either paid the other any money.

State Supreme Court Justice Jane Solomon threw out Gest's \$10 million assault case in September, but the settlement apparently means he won't try to appeal.

Moss said the divorce agreement was reached during the past week.

"Liza Minnelli and David Gest have resolved all disputes between them, and the parties will be divorced without fault on the part of either of them," Moss said. "The terms of the settlement are confidential."

Minnelli's lawyer, Dorothy Weber, confirmed that "an amicable resolution to all outstanding matters" had been achieved. She would not comment further.

Gest and Minnelli were introduced to each other by Jackson when Gest, a producer and promoter, produced the singer's 30th anniversary tribute concert for television.

Minnelli still has another lawsuit pending against her. Her former bodyguard, M'Hammed Soumayah, claims in a \$100 million lawsuit that she forced him to have sex with her to keep his job and that assaulted him.

Minnelli, daughter of Judy Garland and director Vincente Minnelli, has won an Academy Award, an Emmy, two Golden Globes and three Tony Awards. She also has battled substance abuse, weight gain and a near-fatal bout with encephalitis.

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