

Sign In | Register Now

The Washington Post

TODAY'S NEWSPAPER
Subscribe | PostPoints



University of Phoenix

I Am A PHOENIX

Workforce demands have changed.
The right degree can help you prepare.

[HERE >](#)

NEWS | POLITICS | OPINIONS | BUSINESS | LOCAL | SPORTS | ARTS & LIVING | GOING OUT GUIDE | JOBS | CARS | REAL ESTATE | RENTALS | CLASSIFIEDS

SEARCH: washingtonpost.com Web : Results by Google® | Search Archives

washingtonpost.com > Arts & Living > Entertainment News

Judge puts 'Columbo' actor Falk in conservatorship

By ANTHONY McCARTNEY
The Associated Press
Monday, June 1, 2009; 11:11 PM

LOS ANGELES -- A judge placed former "Columbo" star's Peter Falk in a conservatorship Monday to ensure his daughter could occasionally visit the ailing 81-year-old actor.

Falk's wife of more than 30 years, Shera, will remain in control of his personal care and affairs. Falk has advanced dementia, likely from Alzheimer's disease, one of his doctors testified Monday.

Catherine Falk petitioned in December to take over her father's affairs despite a sometimes contentious relationship with Falk and his wife. By court order, she will be allowed a 30-minute visit with her father every other month.

Falk's condition virtually ensures he will not remember the meetings, his doctor said.

The Emmy-winning actor slipped rapidly into dementia since a series of dental operations in late 2007. Dr. Stephen Read testified Monday, the final day of a two-day conservatorship hearing.

Read said it was unclear whether Falk's condition worsened as a result of anesthesia or some other reaction to the operation.

Read first evaluated Falk in June 2008 before the actor was scheduled to undergo hip surgery. His dementia and apparent Alzheimer's disease worsened after that procedure, and Read said the actor no longer remembers his signature role in the series "Columbo."

Falk won four Emmys for his starring role in "Columbo." He also received Academy Award nominations for movies in 1959 and 1960.

For months, he has lived in a guesthouse at his Beverly Hills home that has been converted into an art studio and living quarters. He has around-the-clock care, and Shera Falk testified that she cooks dinner for her husband nightly.

Advertisement Falk in 2005 designated Shera Falk to be his caregiver and the keeper of his estate.

Catherine Falk, 38, withdrew a petition to take over control of the actor's finances, saying she was only concerned about visiting her father.

The hearing placed a spotlight on a series of slights within the family that led to the court action. Catherine Falk alleged Shera Falk ridiculed her father, slammed the door in her face and cut off contact with him when he grew ill.

Shera Falk testified that her husband thought his daughter was troublesome and that they were never close. Her attorney used the actor's personal diary to show how he regarded their relationship in the last decade.



FILE - In this Aug. 9, 2007 file photo, actor Peter Falk arrives for the Hollywood Foreign Press Association's annual installation luncheon at The Beverly Hills Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP Photo/Chris Pizzello, file) (Chris Pizzello - AP)

Enlarge Photo

TOOLBOX

Resize Print
E-mail

WHO'S BLOGGING powered by **sphere**
Links to this article

Advertisement - Your Ad Here

FROM NOW ON,
BING & DECIDE.

bing shoes

bing.com Microsoft

- Compliance Pharmacist
LOS ANGELES, CA - CEDARS-SINAI MEDICAL CENTER
 - Inpatient Oncology Pharmacist
LOS ANGELES, CA - CEDARS-SINAI MEDICAL CENTER
 - Drug Use Policy Specialist Pharmacist
LOS ANGELES, CA - CEDARS-SINAI MEDICAL CENTER
 - Emergency Department Pharmacist
LOS ANGELES, CA - CEDARS-SINAI MEDICAL CENTER
 - IV Room Pharmacist
LOS ANGELES, CA - CEDARS-SINAI MEDICAL CENTER
- [SEE ALL JOBS](#)

Find Your Dream Job Now!

keywords location

FIND JOBS

Jobs by SimplyHired

FEATURED ADVERTISER LINKS

Lawyer: Asbestos Lung Cancer, Hydroxycut, Raptiva
Mesothelioma Lawyer, Construction, Zimmer Durom Hip
Save Up To 75% On Cruises at Vacations To Go
Get your complete credit history from all three major credit agencies
3 Stocks to Help Rebuild Your Wealth-Click Here!

Ads by Google

Current Foreclosures
Foreclosure Listings Updated Daily \$1 for a 15-Day Pass
www.CurrentForeclosures.com

Racquetball Courts
New Construction & Renovation, Many Options,
Quality/Value/Experience
www.rtbproductsllc.com

Investigation
Litigation, cheating spouse, family insurance fraud & asset recovery
alicatesinvestigativeservices.com



Catherine Falk acknowledged during the hearing that a lawsuit she filed against her father drove a wedge between them, but that they had reconciled. She had sued her father to force him to pay her tuition and expenses while attending Syracuse University.

Her attorney used postcards and telegrams Falk sent to his daughter when she was a child to illustrate a closer relationship than the actor's wife was willing to admit.

As testimony bogged down Monday in a final series of accusations and rebuttals, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Aviva K. Bobb ordered attorneys for both sides into her chambers.

The attorneys then brokered a compromise in a courthouse hallway that would allow Catherine Falk visitations, but not entry into his inner sanctum. The visits will take place at the home of a friend who lives down the street from Peter and Shera Falk.

Shera Falk will not be allowed in the gatherings.

"We're thrilled with the result," said Troy Martin, Catherine Falk's attorney.

Shera Falk's attorney, Marshal Oldman, also claimed victory, saying the hearing proved that Falk's wife had provided top-notch care and should be allowed to continue that role. He said Falk's physical health is good.

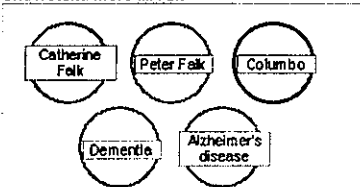
"Essentially, this is a family matter," Oldman said, noting that Falk was a private man. "It's important that families can figure out how to get along. It's a good outcome for everybody."



More ways to share this Article...

- Reddit Newsvine
- myspace del.icio.us
- NewsTrust Stumble It!

Understand more about:



Articles

- washingtonpost.com The web
- Peter Falk Family Battle**
...LA Times reports an ugly family feud between Peter Falk's wife and...
1 day ago | washingtonpost.com
- Peter Falk Says He Supplied Columbo Coat**
SAGINAW, Mich. -- Peter Falk, who played the rumpled, crime-solving...
October 4, 2006 | www.washingtonpost.com
- Attorney: Peter Falk's care is adequate**
The actor's daughter, Catherine Falk, petitioned to take over her father's ... Catherine Falk's attorney, Troy Martin, said his client had done so because she ...
- More about: Peter Falk | Columbo | Dementia | Alzheimer's disease

powered by

People who read this also read...

- Report: Thornton's daughter charged in kid's death
- Tom Shales - TV Review: Tom Shales on Conan O'Brien's 'Tonight Show' Debut
- Obese Ind. woman's body hauled away by wrecker
- Tom Sizemore arrested on drug warrant



Most Viewed Arts & Living Articles

- Use Me, Choose Me
- Dinner on Your Terms, and Theirs
- A Coffee Lover's Perfect Mate
- The Best, Hands Down
- Top 35 Arts & Living Articles
- Most Popular on washingtonpost.com

More in Entertainment News



Eye on Entertainment

A look at who is making headlines in movies, music and more.



Celebritology

Check in with Liz Kelly as she dishes on celebrities, Hollywood and pop culture.

© 2009 The Associated Press

Ads by Google

Small Claims Made Easy

Your Small Claims Department CA's leader in online submissions
www.smallclaimsdepartment.com

Online Traffic School

Los Angeles approved traffic school California as low as \$13.95
TicketNoMore.com

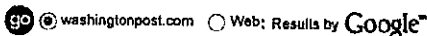
Judge Sotomayor

A conservative source. Get the latest confirmation news.
www.SupremeCourtWatchOnline.com

[NEWS](#) | [POLITICS](#) | [OPINIONS](#) | [BUSINESS](#) | [LOCAL](#) | [SPORTS](#) | [ARTS & LIVING](#) | [GOING OUT GUIDE](#)

[JOBS](#) | [CARS](#) | [REAL ESTATE](#) | [RENTALS](#) | [CLASSIFIEDS](#)

SEARCH:



[Search Archives](#)

washingtonpost.com: [About Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Advertisers](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Search Terms](#) | [Topics Index](#) | [Make us your homepage](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Mobile](#) | [RSS](#) | [Widgets](#)
The Washington Post: [Subscribe](#) | [Home Delivery Service](#) | [Advertisers](#) | [PostPoints](#) | [e-Replica](#) | [Online Photo Store](#) | [The Washington Post Store](#) | [About The Post](#) | [National Weekly](#)
The Washington Post Company: [Information and Other Post Co Websites](#)

© Copyright 1996-2009 The Washington Post Company | [User Agreement and Privacy Policy](#) | [Rights and Permissions](#)

[Help](#) | [Contact Us](#)