

Michael Jackson Image Exploitation Is a Go

A judge signed off Friday on several business deals proposed by the executors of Michael Jackson's heavily indebted estate, who had stated recently that they were working on various revenue opportunities to keep the cash coming.

First up, L.A. Superior Court Judge Mitchell Beckloff, who is overseeing the management of the artist's estate, allowed special administrators John Branca and John McClain leave to develop multiple Jackson-branded products that would require using the star's name and image, such as a 2010 calendar, sunglasses, commemorative coins, school supplies, buttons and wall art.

So, a lot of crap, basically. But there are some things people might actually be interested in...

Beckloff also approved the estate's request to partner with iTunes to sell audio and video recordings of Jermaine Jackson performing Charlie Chaplin's "Smile," which was reputedly one of Michael's favorite recordings, at his brother's star-studded memorial last month.

Branca and McClain have also been allowed to ink a deal to get reprints of Jackson's 1988 autobiography Moonwalk on the market in China, Korea, Poland, the Czech Republic and several other European countries.

This initial action will likely pave the way for more merchandise deals—Jackson tattoos for your Second Life avatar, perhaps—and other business opportunities as Branca and McClain continue to bet that there is a rejuvenated market out there for everything Jackson.

Only time will tell whether that's true, but on Monday Beckloff will review the estate and AEG Live's \$60 million deal with Columbia Pictures to produce a concert film using Jackson's most recent rehearsal footage.

Various other estate matters, including whether family matriarch Katherine Jackson has any issues with the movie deal, will be taken up at Monday's hearing as well. eonline.com