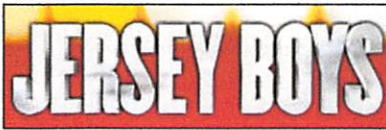


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Published Friday April 22, 2011

'Happy Days' actors not happy about lost revenue

The Los Angeles Times

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LOS ANGELES — Potsie, Joanie, Mrs. C and Ralph Malph mean business.

Four cast members of the iconic 1970s sitcom "Happy Days" this week filed a lawsuit in Los Angeles Superior Court against CBS Corp., alleging that the television giant has cheated them out of millions of dollars in merchandising revenue.

The plaintiffs include Anson Williams (Potsie Weber), Marion Ross (Marion Cunningham), Don Most (Ralph Malph) and Erin Moran (Joanie Cunningham), as well as Patricia Bosley, wife of the late Tom Bosley (Howard Cunningham), who died last fall.

Two notable cast members — Henry Winkler (Fonzie) and Ron Howard (Richie Cunningham) — are not party to the lawsuit.

Winkler's character, the Fonz, was more commercial than the others. He has received compensation from the studio, said Jon Pfeiffer, a Santa Monica attorney representing the five plaintiffs.

CBS seems to be paying attention to the lawsuit. Rather than the boilerplate "without merit" comment that companies typically issue in response to such lawsuits, the broadcaster said it intends to honor its obligation to the performers.

"We agree that funds are owed to the actors and have been working with them for quite some time to resolve the issue," the company's consumer products unit said in a statement.

The four actors and Bosley's wife are seeking \$10 million in lost revenue from the sale of products featuring their images, including lunchboxes, T-shirts, board games and greeting cards. And in the last few years, casino slot machines have popped up featuring the characters.

Contracts with the show's producer, Paramount Television, which has since been folded into CBS, said the actors would be paid when their "name, voice, likeness or endorsement was used in connection with merchandising rights," according to the suit.

Pfeiffer said the actors had no idea there had been a resurgence in merchandise based on the sitcom until a line of "Happy Days" slot machines rolled out two years ago. The "Happy Days" and "Arnold's Diner" gambling machines are produced by WMS Industries Inc., which until two years ago was controlled by billionaire Sumner Redstone, who also is chairman and controlling shareholder of CBS and sister company Viacom Inc.

Slot machine players, according to Pfeiffer, won the jackpot if they hit "five Marions."

"Friends were saying to Marion Ross, 'Hey I just saw your face on a slot machine, you must be cleaning up,'" Pfeiffer said. "And she said, 'I don't know anything about it.'"

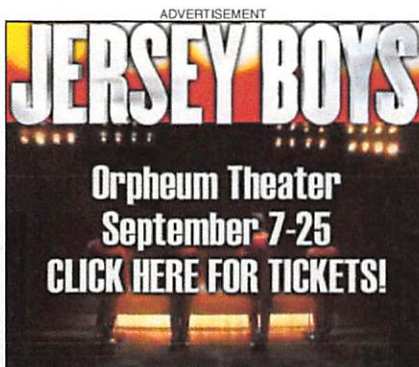
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