

## **Lawyer says wealthy fathers should ‘fear’ McCartney divorce judgement**

A leading national family lawyer based in Birmingham said last night that wealthy fathers had grounds to fear the scale of future awards to children in divorce cases - following the decision in the McCartney-Mills High Court case.

Michael Vale, a partner at Else Solicitors specialising in family law, said the High Court award to four-year-old Beatrice McCartney of £35,000 a year, plus the cost of a nanny and school fees, would amount to a huge sum payable which could be payable until the end of her time at university.

He said: “Mr Justice Bennett's estimated Mr McCartney's assets to be worth about £400 million but other wealthy fathers, perhaps with assets a quarter of that size, can now expect to face settlements in the region of this one.”

He added that he considered the settlement to be a landmark one and, in his view, a just judgement.

“It should however be seen as a warning to wealthy fathers – both married and otherwise – that if they have children then costs in cases such as this are going to be extremely high for each child.”

It was a highly significant aspect of the McCartney-Mill divorce case said Mr Vale.

The full ruling was published a day after Ms Mills was awarded £24.3 million. The judge awarded her a lump sum of £16.5 million and assets of £7.8 million.

Following the ruling, Ms Mills will receive £14 million for herself and £2.5 million to buy a house in London. The settlement equated to £17,000 for every day of the couple's marriage.

Ms Mills, who wanted the judgement kept secret, said she thought it was "outrageous".

The judge determined the final figure after the couple failed to reach an agreement in court last month.

Ms Mills was not in court to hear two Court of Appeal judges rule that divorce hearing judge Mr Justice Bennett's decision to publish his entire ruling could not be challenged.

Ms Mills had sought £125 million. Sir Paul, aged 65, and Ms Mills, aged 40, got married in 2002, but they split four years later, blaming media intrusion into their private lives.

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