

# Famous faces who left us in 2025, and the legacies they leave

As the end credits of 2025 start rolling, let's look at a few of the famous faces who left us and the legacies they leave.

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Some of the big names who disappeared from stage and screen this year include Robert Redford, Gene Hackman, Diane Keaton, Ozzy Osbourne, David Lynch, Brian Wilson, George Foreman, Val Kilmer, Michael Madsen, Malcolm-Jamal Warner, and our own Presley Chweneyagae.

While they were famous figures, they also did their personal planning away from public view, and it is this that will largely shape their legacies. There's a lesson from each of them that we can apply, even if we don't have Oscar statuettes, platinum-selling albums or world-title belts!

## **Robert Redford – larger than life**

Redford died aged 89 with an estimated net worth of \$200 million. His fortune was built on decades of acting, directing and producing films, and founding the Sundance Film Festival. He had sold the Sundance Mountain Resort in 2020, reducing the size and complexity of his estate. Redford is said to have left a detailed will that is believed to use his vast fortune to take care of his loved ones, as well as support the causes that he was passionate about. The work of his conservation and arts charities will outlive him and ensure that his legacy lives on, a great example of how your life's work can endure long after you're gone.

## **Diane Keaton – property and pets**

Keaton died aged 79, survived by her two adopted children, Dexter and Duke. Apart from an Oscar-winning acting career and her iconic dress sense, Keaton was known for restoring and reselling high-end homes. Famously private about her personal life, Keaton's well-structured estate plan is reported to make provision for her children, it places a portion of her property portfolio in living trust (similar to an inter vivos trust in South Africa), and makes provision for a pet trust for her dog. Just as detailed and precisely as she

presented herself in life, Keaton's estate plan is in keeping with her character, showing how our wills can be used to make sure our last wishes are carried out in line with how we lived our lives.

### **Ozzy Osbourne – blended family and cross-border income streams**

Osbourne died aged 76 after years of health challenges, leaving an estate estimated at \$220m, a blended family, income streams spread across international jurisdictions and ongoing music royalties streaming in. While most of his wealth is expected to pass to his second wife, Sharon, and their three children, Aimee, Kelly, and Jack, through structured inheritances and trusts, Osbourne's estate will be a complex affair and take time to wrap up. Between multiple marriages and children, plus a global music empire, it is fair to assume that his would need to be a bespoke estate plan to account for all interests and assets.

### **Michael Madsen – a legacy of debt**

When Madsen died, aged 67, he was reportedly under severe financial strain, and at risk of losing his home. However, he is also believed to have had several films in pre-production and production when he died, so royalties from these projects could potentially still flow into his deceased estate. These earnings could be used to settle his debts and outstanding tax obligations. Only then could his heirs and beneficiaries expect to inherit. It is clear that not a lot of planning went into making provision for debts, taxes and liquidity in his estate. As a result, his legacy could be one of debt, rather than value.

### **George Foreman, heavyweight of structured wealth**

Foreman died aged 76 and will be remembered as a two-time heavyweight boxing world champion and a hugely successful entrepreneur. His George Foreman Grill poured hundreds of millions of dollars into his estate, estimated at around \$300 million. Before his death, Foreman had sold his long-time Texas mansion so this property will not form part of his deceased estate. His wealth is expected to pass within a structured framework to his fifth and final wife, Mary Joan Martelly, and his large extended family. His estate is an example of personal and business interests, and investments being split into different legal vehicles. Even without such a large fortune or estate, regular people can do the same by way of wills, trusts and clear beneficiary nominations.

### **Presley Chweneyagae – a local legacy**

Chweneyagae's sudden death, aged just 40, shocked South Africa. Tributes poured in, honouring him as a landmark figure in South African storytelling, and for his role in the Oscar-winning *Tsotsi*. Fellow actors and industry leaders have publicly called for his family to continue earning royalties from his work, underscoring the importance of proper contract and estate planning. Rumours that he died without a will are unconfirmed but have reignited the conversation about how many South Africans – especially young ones – do not have valid wills in place.

### **What will your legacy be?**

“Not all of us can be rich and famous, but all of us can leave a legacy of care and love. Far from being just another piece of admin, your will is probably the most important document you'll ever sign,” says Grant Fietze, head of marketing at [Capital Legacy](#).

Take a moment before the holidays to make sure your affairs are in order and then enjoy your year-end break with peace of mind that your loved ones will be looked after.

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