

Florida Judge Approves Birth Certificate Listing 3 Parents

A Florida judge has approved the adoption of a 22-month-old baby girl that will list three people as parents on her birth certificate—a married lesbian couple and a gay man.

The decision ends a two-year paternity fight between the couple and a friend of the women who donated his sperm to father the child but later sought a larger role in the girl's life.

The ruling means the child's birth certificate will include a biological father and both women as parents in an unusual arrangement approved recently by a Miami-Dade Circuit Court judge.

The women, Maria Italiano, 43, and Cher Filippazzo, 38, had made several unsuccessful attempts to become parents using fertility clinics.

They then turned to Italiano's homosexual hair dresser, Massimiliano Gerina, and asked if he would provide his sperm for artificial insemination.

"When push came to shove, they figured he would understand the situation," said Kenneth Kaplan, an attorney for the women.

"The mistake they made, however, was there should have been a written document spelling out what his rights and responsibilities were going to be."

According to Filippazzo, the three reached a verbal agreement before Italiano became pregnant. Filipazzo said the agreement meant she would adopt the baby and the two women, a longtime couple, would raise the child together.

But shortly before the baby was born, Gerina decided he wanted

to be considered a parent and not a sperm donor. The women disagreed. Under Florida law, sperm donors have no legal rights to children.

Gerina hired a lawyer, setting off nearly two years of legal wrangling.

Under the judge's decision, the two women will have sole parental rights, although Gerina will be allowed to visit the child. He will not be expected to provide child support.

"We're trying to do the right thing for Emma," Filippazzo said. "We want Emma to have it all, and we believe by doing it this way, including him in a birthday or Thanksgiving, it'll be a nice addition for her."

"We believe the best interest for Emma is for him to have a role in her life, but not as a parent," she said. "The role is this is mommy's good friend who helped your moms have you because they wanted you so badly."

Editing by Leslie Adler

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