

Katten's Zia Modabber Marks Victory When Quincy Jones' Jury Award Is Slashed in Michael Jackson Estate Appeal

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Zia F. Modabber, managing partner of Katten's California offices and leader of Katten's Entertainment and Media Litigation practice, along with Partner Tami Kameda Sims and Associate Leah E.A. Solomon, triumphed when the California Court of Appeal unanimously agreed that Quincy Jones' \$9.4 million jury verdict had to be reversed. Along with co-counsel at Kinsella Weitzman and Greines Martin, Katten represented Michael Jackson's Estate against the legendary producer's claim for \$30 million in additional royalties from Jackson's iconic albums *Off The Wall*, *Thriller*, and *Bad*.

In a ruling issued on May 5, the appellate court ordered that every dollar of the \$6.9 million challenged by the Estate be eliminated, stating in its 45-page opinion that that “[i]nterpretation of the Producer Agreements was solely a judicial function, yet the trial court allowed the jury to perform that function and ultimately misinterpret the relevant terms.”

“The Court's statement that Mr. Jones had 'grossly overreached in his demands for payment' echoes what we have been saying since the minute this lawsuit was filed seven years ago,” said Zia Modabber, who argued the appeal. “It took a long time and a lot of hard work by many of us, but we are grateful that the Court has finally set things straight.”

In 2017, a jury awarded Jones \$9.4 million, less than one third of what Jones sought in his \$30 million lawsuit in which he alleged that Jackson's estate failed to pay him royalties and allowed others to produce remixes of Jackson's recordings in violation of his producer agreements. John Branca, co-executor of Jackson's estate, testified at trial that a fair settlement would have been around \$3 million, but Jones would not accept that. Jones will now receive \$2.5 million.

[“Quincy Jones' \\$9.4M Win in Michael Jackson Royalty Suit Wiped Out by Appeals Court,”](#) The Hollywood Reporter and Billboard

[“Court Overturns Quincy Jones' Win in Michael Jackson Lawsuit,”](#) Associated Press

[“Quincy Jones Loses \\$6.9 Million on Michael Jackson Verdict Appeal,”](#) Variety

[“Quincy Jones' \\$9.4 Million Victory Against Michael Jackson Estate Reversed,”](#) Pitchfork

[“Quincy Jones Loses Majority of \\$9.4 Million Michael Jackson Verdict on Appeal,”](#) The Wrap

[“Quincy Jones' Win Against Michael Jackson Co. Cut By \\$6.9M,”](#) Law360

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