

Spouses tangle over pets in divorce court

By Carri Geer Thevenot, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Family law attorney Mandy McKellar valued her cats so much that she included them in a prenuptial agreement with her husband – “just in case.”

By the time they divorced this summer, the couple also had acquired two dogs. Now all five pets live with McKellar in her Las Vegas home, although she has offered to let her ex-husband take the cat they adopted.

“He can come back and get her at any time,” McKellar said of the cat. “She hates the dogs.”

Although McKellar and her husband went through an uncontested divorce, lawyers and judges who handle Family Court cases know that breakups often turn bitter. Couples fight over their children, their houses, and yes, even their pets.

The American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers announced in February that 27 percent of the respondents in a recent survey had noticed an increase in the number of couples who fought over custody of a pet during the previous five years. Most of the time, those disputes involved a dog.

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