

Astor heir faces fraud charges

by UPI

NEW YORK -- The only son of philanthropist and socialite Brooke Astor faced an 18-count indictment charging he exploited her frailty to better his fortunes. Anthony D. Marshall, 83, stands accused of various crimes involving Astor, who suffered from Alzheimer's disease, including fraud and falsifying her signature on amendments to her will, The New York Times said Wednesday. Francis X. Morrissey Jr., a former lawyer for Astor, faces charges as well. Astor died in August at the age of 105. "Marshall and Morrissey took advantage of Mrs. Astor's diminished mental capacity in a scheme to defraud her and others out of millions of dollars," New York County District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau said at a news conference. Morgenthau said Astor's physicians warned Marshall in 2001 that "her ability to understand complex issues was limited and made it clear that his mother's mental condition would be degenerative." In 2004, Marshall and Morrissey convinced Astor to change her will to leave Marshall her residuary estate despite her reported long-time intentions to leave the money to charity. Marshall faces criminal possession of stolen property, fraud, falsifying business records and grand larceny. Morrissey is charged with conspiracy, forgery and fraud.

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