

# Earnhardt's widow wants autopsy photos private

By Mike Harris  
The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — The widow of racing great Dale Earnhardt pleaded for public support Sunday in helping the family keep the driver's autopsy private.

"This is the first time I've spoken in public since we've lost Dale," Teresa Earnhardt said, reading from a statement. "Honestly, I'm not very comfortable being here. It's too soon. But this issue is of vital importance — not just to my family — but to anyone ever faced with being exploited after losing a loved one."

Earnhardt died instantly of head injuries on Feb. 18 in a last-lap crash at the Daytona 500.

His wife sued Volusia County in

Florida on Feb. 22 to stop release of its medical examiner's autopsy photos taken after the fatal wreck. The next day, an Orlando Sentinel reporter made a public records request asking for "any and all photographs" of Earnhardt.

Judge Joseph Will issued a temporary injunction. He said the photos have no "bona fide newsworthiness" and could cause the family "additional anguish and grief."

Under Florida's public records law, autopsy reports and photographs are public record unless they are part of an active criminal investigation.

A hearing on whether to make the injunction permanent was originally set for last Thursday but

was postponed for one week because of a scheduling conflict.

Teresa Earnhardt pleaded at Las Vegas Motor Speedway for anyone "who feels strongly as we do, to let your voices be heard."

She requested that the public contact the speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, the president of the Florida Senate and Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, asking them to "protect the privacy of citizens by preventing publication of autopsy photos."

Mrs. Earnhardt sat alongside a solemn Dale Earnhardt Jr. while quietly reading her statement. She left without answering questions. Her only previous public appearance since her husband's death came on Feb. 22 in Charlotte, N.C.,

at an invitation-only memorial service.

Sentinel attorney David Bralow has said the newspaper has no desire to cause Teresa Earnhardt more pain. The Sentinel's editors have said they have no intention of publishing the photos.

However, "if these photos will help elucidate the nature of what exactly went wrong or what happened to Dale Earnhardt, then the public is served," Bralow said.

NASCAR has hired a consultant and is investigating the death. A broken left lap belt was found on the floor of the battered Chevrolet after the accident and could have been responsible for Earnhardt's death.

Teresa Earnhardt said the re-

quest by the Sentinel for the autopsy photos added to the family's trauma.

"In fact, I have not even had time to caringly unpack Dale's suitcase from Daytona, let alone have time to grieve for him," she said. "The main reason is because we have been caught up in an unexpected whirlwind as a result of efforts to gain access to the autopsy photographs of Dale."

"We can't believe and are saddened that anyone would invade our privacy during this time of grief. I want to let you know that if access to the photos is allowed, others will demand them, too. And make no mistake, sooner or later the photos will end up unprotected and published ... and most certainly on the Internet."

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**Pick up your application in the Football Office- 2nd floor of the Casanova Center (next to Autzen Stadium). Interviews will be held on March 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 2001. You may sign up for your interview time when you pick up your application.**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE IS MARCH 9th, 2001**

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## Horoscope by Linda C. Black

**TODAY'S BIRTHDAY** (March 5). Love gives you strength, and your love has the same effect on others. You start out feeling fine in March. The money doesn't go as far as you'd like in April, and prospects for advancement may dim. Keep studying and practicing, because May could be the month when you finally break through. Abundance is a surprise in June, since it comes from an unexpected source. Avoid a gold digger in July — you can do better. Play by the rules in September, and change your style in December. Heed your inner voices in February to find true love.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19) — Today is a 6 — An argument with a loved one and a delay in travel are both very likely to occur. The overall outcome is positive, you will undoubtedly find a way to get where you want to go, and you and your sweetheart will make up. So lighten up, OK?

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20) — Today is an 8 — Listen patiently as a neighbor shares her troubles. She'll feel much better once she has, and it won't take much hair off your hide. You may feel like the friendly local garbage collector, but don't complain. You're good at it, and that's why they come to you.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 21) — Today is a 6 — You're daydreaming about distant places, but try to keep your focus closer to home. Approach an important older person with respect, and you might get just what you want. Don't ask a friend to intervene for you. This time, you're better handling it yourself.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 22) — Today is a 7 — You want to get from here to there, but there's no easy way. Don't give up. A friend can help you find what you need, including a path around an obstacle. Ask somebody who's looking at things from a slightly different perspective.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22) — Today is a 5 — You should be able to have just about anything you want, but you can't, at least not yet. If you can just turn this sense of frustration into creative energy, you'll be amazed. You might actually achieve your goal, or something just as good, by tomorrow. Don't give up.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — Today is a 6 — You may feel like others are ganging up on you, but don't despair. They feel strongly, so you should hear them out. If you are right, it should be obvious to even those with low intelligence. Let them discover your wisdom on their own.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct 22) — Today is a 5 — Make service your top priority. If someone else needs something done, jump right in and do it. That's especially true of an older person who's in a rather nasty mood. Don't turn away; help out. You'll make the situation better for everyone.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) — Today is a 9 — You hold all the aces. Some of your friends are confused, muddled, stumbling about. But you can see what needs to be done, and maybe even how. Offer others the benefit of your wisdom, but don't let it get in the way of your fun.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) — Today is a 5 — A loved one may be trying to talk you out of your life savings. Resist. You want to stash a little more away before you spend any. The more you put down, the less you pay in interest. Pay cash, and you'll save a fortune. Explain that to the cutie who wants more toys.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — Today is a 7 — Somebody wants to talk your ear off about their great plans for the future. They may think they have it all figured out, but they need you. Offer your advice, but only when they're smart enough to ask for it. They'll value it more that way.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) — Today is a 5 — The work is coming in, and it's partially your own fault. Trouble is, you don't know how to do what you've promised. It's risky business, but you can make it pay. You can read the manual while you're doing the job, can't you? This probably isn't the first time.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20) — Today is a 7 — Travel could be more hassle than it's worth. Money is something of a problem, too. So how about a cozy night at home with your very favorite people and pets? Keep it low-key, and the worries of the day will go up in smoke.