



Cynthia McFadden sits with Glen Campbell and his wife, Kim. They've been more for more than 30 years.

The feud that's split Glen Campbell's loved ones amid his decline from Alzheimer's disease strikes a chord with other U.S. families as dementia diagnoses fuel similar money spats and jealousies, leaving lasting wounds, experts say.

Last week, two of the Rhinestone Cowboy's eight children from a previous marriage [took legal action](#) against his fourth wife, Kim Campbell. They assert she has "secluded" the singer and prevented them from "participating" in the 78-year-old's medical care.

A rift also arose inside the family of radio legend Casey Kasem. Last year, his children [fought his wife](#) and their daughter to take control of Kasem's medical decisions while he was in the throes of dementia, before his June death.

"What you are seeing in the news about Casey Kasem and, now, Glen Campbell is a problem with many families," said Diane Carbo, a nurse who works with the elderly.

"Nothing brings out the greed and conflict more than aging parents in need of care," says Carbo, who founded [Caregiver Relief](#). "In the present deflated economy, there are more and more clashes over parents' finances. If these siblings do not agree on what is necessary, things get very ugly."

Sometimes, a caregiver who is a family member is accused of taking advantage of mom or dad. "Some are told they lived in the house for free and shouldn't have any of the estate," she said. "Others are taken to court."

These emotional gaps can last a lifetime, experts say.

Mary Dye, whose mother struggled for a decade with Alzheimer's and died in 2000, said she and her sister still cannot talk about their mother's care due to arguments over finances and medical decisions.

"It's a taboo subject," said Dye, 56, of Georgia. "My sister and I love each other and still participate in each other's lives ... but it changed our relationship for a lifetime."

At one point, the sisters didn't speak for three months.



Mary Dye and her mother, Ann Richards Harris Wood, in the 1980s – before internal family fights over how to handle her mom's Alzheimer's disease "ruined all the relationships," Dye said.  Courtesy of Mary Dye

"Maybe I was too dictatorial, looking for frugality, trying to keep expenses at the lower end," Dye said. "My sister was offended by that. She said the money is there for [my mother], not to be saved for our inheritance."

Dye, who founded [CareZips](#), an adult briefs company, said family feuds are "incredibly common," particularly among those with dementia.

More than 5 million Americans suffer from dementia, the umbrella term for several diseases, including Alzheimer's. The majority of those diagnosed are over the age of 65, but an estimated 200,000 are younger, according to the [Alzheimer's Association](#).

The average patient will live six to eight years, but many live for 20 years. Costs can be astronomical and rise over time as the patient needs more care. In 2012, the [average annual cost](#) for a private room in a nursing home was \$92,977 a year.

"We encounter a lot of families in turmoil," said Ruth Drew, director of family and information services for the Alzheimer's Association. "With a disease like Alzheimer's, the strain of grieving happens along the way and the strain of caregiving and financial decisions exacerbate it."

"Everybody's heart's in the right place, but they really disagree about what right is."

Dysfunction happens equally in biological as well as blended families like the Campbells and Kasems.

"We see it all across the spectrum," said David N. Pessin, a wealth preservation attorney from Towson, Maryland, who works in elderly law.

"It's usually about the money...," he said. "When it's not about money directly, it's about power and control. I've seen 60-year-olds argue over who loves mom the most."

Children may fight spouses, feeling entitlement, even when there is a prenuptial agreement in place.

"There's always that one kid who feels unbridled resentment," he said. "And the ones who are not participating in the care, think he or she is stealing all mom's money."

Experts say good planning while the parent is still of sound mind can minimize the damage.

Ellen Goodman, co-founder of [The Conversation Project](#), leads a national effort to get families to "sit down at the kitchen table" and talk about their end-of-life wishes, while parents are still healthy.

"Glen Campbell is among [those] who can't speak for themselves in the end," she said. "It's an emotional story.

"Have the conversation as early as you can," she added. "You give a gift to your own children and tell them what you want when the times comes.

"Imagine if Glen Campbell's family had been able to sit down with their amazing father — early on — before there was a crisis."