

To: Whom it may concern

From: Michael E. Byczek, Esq.  
Chicago, IL (U.S.A.)  
michael@byczek.pro  
<https://michaelbyczek.pro>

Date: February 17, 2026

Subject: Cease and Desist Notice for Online Genealogy and the Digital Afterlife

Michael E. Byczek, an Illinois attorney, launched an aggressive online campaign in August 2024 to safeguard his direct blood ancestors through accurate family history. He began genealogical research in the early 1990s and over the years applied professional software engineering experience (B.S. Computer and Information Science) combined with legal insight to advocate ethical and moral-based genealogy on the Internet. The new frontier in genealogy at the intersection of law and technology is called the “Digital Afterlife”. The dead are brought back to life on the Internet through a form of online immortality. However, this virtual world is driven by the antiquated view that the dead don’t have rights.

Michael E. Byczek’s solution is simple. If tech companies can create a virtual world where the Digital Afterlife exists, then he, as an attorney, has the conceptual right to appoint himself the legal representative (“administrator”) of each direct blood ancestor. The objective (i.e. scope of legal representation) is to protect how direct ancestors are portrayed on the Internet. This is the virtual equivalent of Michael E. Byczek, as an heir, initiating probate proceedings for a direct blood ancestor who passed away without a Will to administer his/her Digital Afterlife. In the absence of other genetic cousins who step forward to do the same, Michael E. Byczek is the sole administrator. If other blood relatives do come forward, they collectively serve as co-administrators (i.e. supervised probate administration). Third parties, especially anonymous users, should not have an unrestricted and unlimited right to dictate how the dead are portrayed in the Digital Afterlife. Direct blood descendants must always take precedence over third parties without exception when it comes to how their ancestors are portrayed online. It is unacceptable for those who died decades or centuries before the Internet existed to be the subject of third party cyber-squatters who block access and refuse to cooperate with descendants.

All genealogy and social media platforms pose a risk of fraud, cyber-bullying, intimidation, identity theft, scams, “bait”, fake images/documents (i.e. AI-generated), social engineering, trolling, slander/libel, and other inappropriate conduct against living descendants. Michael E. Byczek confronted numerous third parties who acted like they were the direct descendants. Far too many refused to mind their own business or stop when requested. Some even continued to interfere despite notice that a complaint was submitted with full activity logs. Third parties on familysearch.org, for example, have deleted entire profiles, manipulated several generations of a family, rewritten narratives with personal unsolicited opinions, changed family relationships, edited dates/names, and reposted content to boost their usernames to the top of the contribution list.

As a result of these endeavors, Michael E. Byczek proposed a direct descendant administration framework for shared responsibility that is specific to the familysearch.org platform (community-based that allows any anonymous user to unilaterally delete or rewrite entire profiles):

1. Direct blood descendants of a common ancestor serve as co-administrators of a profile. Each descendant fully identifies him/herself showing his/her relationship to the deceased. Only those who identify themselves, within privacy rules and concerns, may edit a profile. Otherwise, nobody knows if that user is real or fake.
2. The requirement of direct blood includes those whom a direct descendant authorizes to act on his/her behalf. This could include adopted children, step-children, or spouse (i.e. immediate family of a direct blood descendant).
3. There are realistic scenarios where a relative, but not direct descendant, may briefly comment on a profile. For example, a direct ancestor had other children and marriages that are part of the overall biography (i.e. crossover).
4. Each co-administrator has equal access to the profile and may promote their own research. The only expectation is for each contribution to be respectful in “agree to disagree” style.
5. This framework has too many special scenarios for enumeration, such as dead babies without living descendants.
6. Gratitude is expressed for volunteers who digitize, transcribe, and index records. They should not interpret the data.
7. Co-administrators need never directly communicate, provided all are respectful towards each other in common cause.

The efforts to stop third party abuse on genealogy websites took a turn for the worse on February 6, 2026. A third party on familysearch.org submitted text to multiple profiles that stated “My name is Michael E. Byczek”, which was accessible to any user with an account. Michael E. Byczek immediately announced on familysearch.org and ancestry.com that his identity had been used without his consent. Within hours, a different third party with a very long history of interference responded to this announcement by editing multiple profiles against Michael E. Byczek’s express written request, as if monitoring his online activity.

In response, Michael E. Byczek uploaded a cease and desist notice on February 11th directed at all third party interference without exception. Any further attempt to use his identity may result in a formal request to the legal department of the company for assistance to identify those responsible (i.e. IP addresses). He will not hesitate to seek immediate user account deletion. Michael E. Byczek reserves the right to file a complaint against any user, in cease and desist format, at his discretion after a case-by-case analysis. An omission or delay in doing so does not mean such content is approved.

Genetic cousins may defer to Michael E. Byczek’s legal judgment for how best to stop third party interference and promote accurate genealogy on the Internet. All blood relatives are encouraged to participate, contribute, and collaborate (i.e. co-administrators of the Digital Afterlife). This framework is a work in progress with refinement and revision taking place on a regular basis. Suggestions for improvement or counter-proposals are always welcome.

This time-stamped document is a public notice that Michael E. Byczek is a virtual legal representative of his direct blood ancestors in the Digital Afterlife. The objective is to deter interference. Third parties should not upload, create, edit, or manipulate official genealogy profiles on the Internet without discussing the content with Michael E. Byczek (on behalf of his parents) and other descendants named as co-administrators.

The primary focus has been on ancestry.com, familysearch.org, and findagrave.com as three of the largest user-uploaded genealogy websites. Michael E. Byczek reserves the right to retroactively seek accurate, direct descendant-approved narratives on any website, genealogy or otherwise, at the time and manner of his choice when an opportunity is available.

All comments in this document and proposed framework are subject to the Terms of Service of the respective platforms. Michael E. Byczek’s role as a virtual legal representative is a proposed framework and private claim of stewardship limited to genealogy rather than a court-sanctioned designation.

Refer to the following portions of Michael E. Byczek’s websites that explain the steps taken to protect his direct blood ancestors and risks of the Digital Afterlife.

<https://michaelbyczek.pro/genealogy/lineage.html>

[https://byczeklaw.com/digital\\_afterlife.html](https://byczeklaw.com/digital_afterlife.html)

Questions can be sent directly to michael@byczek.pro or through moderated communication with customer support.