

John, Jenny Paulson to Divorce in Latest Billionaire Split

by Pierre Paulden and Katherine Burton



John and Jenny Paulson Photographer: Rick Maiman/Bloomberg

John and Jenny Paulson are divorcing after more than 20 years of marriage, the latest split involving a billionaire family that’s set to reshape one of the world’s largest self-made fortunes.

The case has been filed in Suffolk County, New York, with John Paulson represented by William D. Zabel. The New York Post, which reported on the split earlier, said there’s no pre-nuptial agreement, citing an unidentified person it didn’t identify.

“John has deep respect for Jenny and will continue to support all that is best for the

health and happiness of the family,” Zabel said Tuesday in a statement.

John Paulson, 65, has a net worth of \$4.8 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, thanks largely to his successful bet against the U.S. housing market ahead of the 2008 financial crisis. The money manager also had about \$1.9 billion in the Paulson Family Foundation as of 2019.

He initially hired her as an assistant after she delivered lunch to him and his staff from the Bear Stearns cafeteria. She was a

recent immigrant from Romania and had been granted political asylum in the U.S. As he approached his mid-40s, Paulson decided he needed to get married and that Jenny had the cheerful personality he was looking for, according to “The Greatest Trade Ever,” a book by Gregory Zuckerman.

“Jenny didn’t drink, smoke or go out late at night; for me she was a breath of fresh air,” Paulson was quoted as saying in the book. He asked her out for a year, but she refused to date him unless he fired her and found her another job. She eventually agreed to go to lunch with him, and after more than 200 meals together he proposed.

Paulson made \$20 billion for himself and investors when U.S. subprime mortgage bonds collapsed and ignited the financial crisis. After pulling off one of the greatest trades in history, he had a series of

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less successful years. He turned his hedge fund firm into a family office last year after assets dropped to about \$9 billion in 2019 from a peak of \$38 billion in 2011, and he found himself managing mostly his own money.

The family has an extensive collection of real estate investments, including an Aspen ranch that previously belonged to a Saudi prince and an estate in the Hamptons purchased for \$41 million in 2008. John Paulson also made investments in Puerto Rico, buying majority stakes in the Condado Vanderbilt Hotel, La Concha Renaissance Resort and St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort.

While their divorce could be one of the largest in history in terms of assets at stake, it will be dwarfed by two recent breakups. Melinda French Gates ended up with billions of dollars of stock in a variety of companies after her

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divorce from Microsoft Corp. founder Bill Gates, while Mackenzie Scott, the former wife of Amazon.com Inc. Chairman Jeff Bezos, is the world's fourth-richest woman, with a net worth of \$56.4 billion. Scott has rapidly deployed part of that fortune into often overlooked philanthropic causes.

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