

NEWS

Disabled actor farewells mum

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ACTOR Jon Blake's devoted son yesterday vowed to become his carer and protector following the death of Blake's mother, who had spent 21 years by her disabled son's side.

Looking frail and gaunt Blake, who was tipped to be the next Mel Gibson before a horrific car crash, yesterday arrived at his mother Mascot's funeral on a stretcher.

Blake's only child Dustin, who calls his father by his first name Paul, said he would take over his father's care from his remarkable grandmother.

Dustin paid tribute to Mascot, saying she had lovingly cared for Blake even as bureaucrats tried to wrest guardianship off her after he won a payout.

Dustin – a quietly spoken 28-year-old – said he knew his father, who is almost totally paralysed and has severe brain damage, was "very upset".

Eight nurses were at yesterday's funeral service.

In the 21 years since 1986, when he was injured just hours after finishing filming *The Light Horsemen*, Ms Blake never left her son's side at her Castlecrag home.

"She never stopped worrying about Paul and always wanted the best for him. She was such a great person and I loved her so much," Dustin told *The Daily Telegraph* yesterday.

"I have got to step in and do what I can for him. She always had the best intentions for my father – she did all she could and then some. I offered to help as much as I could. Now I would like to do as much as I can."

Mourners were told of the valiant fight the 82-year-old put up against the bureaucrats who took interest in Blake after he won a \$10 million payout in 1995.

She had complained in that year of the Guardianship Board suddenly intervening in her son's care when the payout was near.

Ms Blake used the money to employ nurses at her Castlecrag home in her round-the-clock effort to care for Blake, who is expected to die within a decade.

"In 1986 Mascot rushed to be by his side. She's been by his side ever since," family friend Peter Kennedy told mourners.

"Mascot waged a battle against bureaucracy in which she showed enormous courage and dedication to succeed against all the odds."

Yesterday mourners waited outside a chapel at Macquarie Park, North Ryde, until Blake arrived and was wheeled inside first, flanked by nurses and his son.

His mother was an accomplished musician and was first violinist for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

Friends said her strength and determination had not diminished with age but she was recently slowed by a broken hip.

Dustin said he would like to hear stories about his grandmother's life from friends who might not have heard about her death.

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