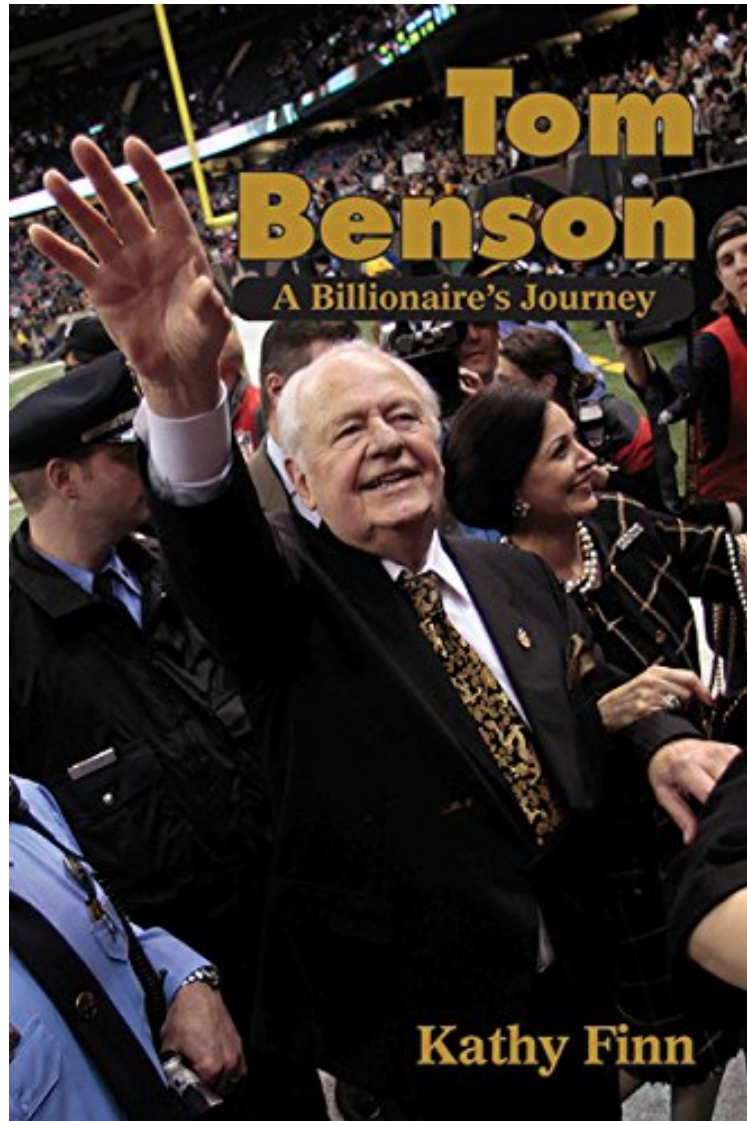


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Tom Benson: A Billionaire's Journey

Kathy Finn

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Kathy Finn : Tom Benson: A Billionaire's Journey before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tom Benson: A Billionaire's Journey:

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. Learned a lot of behind the scenes stuff from a bunch of different angles. Would recommend

From salesman to dealership owner, New Orleans-born billionaire Tom Benson started in business with cars, which paved the way for his other profitable enterprises that include banks, real estate, and the New Orleans Saints. Kathy Finn's biography of this self-made tycoon reveals some of the mystery behind the legend. Beginning with his working-class childhood in New Orleans, Finn delves into the contention surrounding Benson, from the controversial near-relocation of the Saints to the dramatic legal battle with his daughter. Including interviews with friends, family, and acquaintances, this extensive compilation sheds light on the man behind the empire—his successes and his tragedies.

From the Inside Flap: It has to be a terrible burden for [Benson] to know that his heirs, who are going to profit so much from his efforts through the years, are that ungrateful. It's ingratitude at its highest.—former Louisiana governor Edwin Edwards "I used to joke that San Antonio can't afford Tom Benson.—former Louisiana governor Kathleen Blanco In a story pieced together from extensive document research and personal interviews, journalist Kathy Finn explores the life of Tom Benson, a plainspoken, tough-minded car dealer who leveraged his ownership of an NFL team to become a billionaire and has led a life of extraordinary highs and tragic lows. In a dramatic telling of Benson's story, Finn shows how: a car dealer named Mike Persia launched Benson into a wildly successful career, and how Benson years later refused to give Persia's grandson a similar leg up; Benson used his extraordinary deal-making skills in negotiating rich lease terms for the state-owned Superdome, winning the NFL's admiration in the process; the billionaire's third wife, Gayle, engineered a makeover of his public image after much of New Orleans had turned against him; Benson's single-minded quest for wealth became his refuge from life's difficulties, but also may have rendered inevitable the late-life break with his family. A Midwesterner who sank roots in New Orleans some thirty years ago, Kathy Finn is a veteran journalist who has covered business and general news throughout southeastern Louisiana. As the editor of the weekly business newspaper *New Orleans CityBusiness* and, later, *Biz New Orleans* magazine, she wrote extensively about the local business community, including its impact on the growth of professional sports in the city. She is a longtime business columnist for *New Orleans Magazine*, has been a contributor to the daily newspaper the *New Orleans Advocate*, and has worked for some years as a freelance correspondent for Reuters America news service. A graduate of Grinnell College in Iowa, she lives in the Big Easy with her husband, Tom, and their beloved pets. She remains, as always, a devoted fan of the New Orleans Saints. From the Back Cover Tom Benson "created moments in NFL history that the city of New Orleans and football fans across the country will never forget.—Roger Goodell, NFL commissioner In 1985, when car-retailing mogul Tom Benson took a career turn to become an NFL team owner, he won praise for saving the New Orleans Saints, and again years later for leading the organization to its first Super Bowl. Along the way he drew rabid criticism, especially with his defection to San Antonio after Hurricane Katrina. Benson again made headlines in 2015 when he abruptly cut ties with heirs who stood to inherit his billions and, in response, they sought to have the eighty-seven-year-old declared mentally incompetent. Through research encompassing hundreds of court records and news articles, along with dozens of interviews with Benson family members, friends, and associates, business journalist Kathy Finn reveals the individual behind the drama. She shows Benson to be a family man devoted to his Catholic faith, and a shrewd businessman imbued with a streak of ruthlessness that an acquaintance says enabled him to be "astonishingly generous and then astonishingly hateful." Tom Benson: A Billionaire's Journey unearths the intricate details of Benson's personal life, including three marriages, the loss of two children, and a relentless pursuit of wealth that buoyed him through the heartbreaks. Through many years of covering business news in New Orleans, journalist Kathy Finn had a close view of the local growth of professional sports and Tom Benson's rising profile as the owner of the city's NFL team. A longtime Saints fan, she brings a unique insight into the public and private life of billionaire Benson. About the Author Journalist Kathy Finn has spent nearly 30 years covering general news, business, and political issues throughout Southern Louisiana. Finn currently works as a freelance correspondent for Reuters news agency and is a columnist and feature writer for several area publications. Finn has risen quickly to regional prominence as one of the area's leading business writers, with expertise covering banking, real estate, health care, and the energy industry. She is an incurable fan of the New Orleans Saints.