



MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Thinking about your financial and personal affairs.

Some points to ponder before beginning the estate planning process.

I. Estate Planning:

1. Maintaining a valid and up-to-date Will.
2. Preparing a Letter of Instructions. What is it? Is one even necessary?
3. Familiarizing immediate family with both the location and contents of Will and Letter of Instructions. Is this advisable?
4. Appointing a financial or personal guardian for dependent children.
5. Establishing an adult guardianship arrangement in the event that either spouse becomes disabled or mentally incapacitated.
6. Establishing a trust as part of estate planning.
7. Exploring alternative methods of ownership of real estate to ascertain the most advantageous method of holding title.
8. Considering the implications of business or real estate interests in more than one state.
9. Evaluating the impact of possible uninsured illness (e.g., a nursing home stay) during retirement.
10. Business succession planning, what do you need to consider?
11. Ancillary documents, the Power of Attorney, the Health Care Proxy, Living Will.
12. Where to keep the Will?
13. Other:

II. Twenty Six Documents You Need (or at least should consider having)

- ___ 1. Will, family tree, or kinship affidavit
- ___ 2. Letter of instruction
- ___ 3. Trust documents
- ___ 4. Housing, land, and cemetery deeds
- ___ 5. Escrow mortgage accounts
- ___ 6. Proof of loans made and debts owed
- ___ 7. Vehicle titles
- ___ 8. Stock certificates, savings bonds, and brokerage accounts
- ___ 9. Partnership and corporate operating agreements
- ___ 10. Tax returns
- ___ 11. List of bank accounts
- ___ 12. List of all user names and passwords (who should have, where is information)
- ___ 13. List of safe-deposit boxes
- ___ 14. Durable health-care proxy or a power of attorney
- ___ 15. Authorization to release health care information
- ___ 16. Living will
- ___ 17. Do-not-resuscitate order
- ___ 18. Personal and family medical history
- ___ 19. Life insurance policies
- ___ 20. Individual retirement accounts
- ___ 21. 401(k) accounts
- ___ 22. Pension documents
- ___ 23. Annuity contracts
- ___ 24. Marriage license
- ___ 25. Divorce papers
- ___ 26. Digital assets, identity of accounts, emails, etc.

III. Goal Setting:

1. Establishing realistic short-term and long-term financial goals
2. Developing a satisfactory record-keeping system for home
3. Obtaining a safe-deposit box for storing valuable papers and possessions
4. Obtaining a comprehensive current inventory of household furnishings and possessions, riders to insurance policies for items of value
5. Preparing a household budget listing expected income and expenses
6. Succession planning for closely-held businesses, funding for any such plans
7. Defensive planning, what disputes can you anticipate? How to avoid post-mortem litigation.
8. Consider the implications of business or real estate interests in more than one state.
9. As to business succession planning, what do you need to consider?
10. Other:

IV. Credit Management:

1. Establishing credit
2. Reducing credit card debt
3. Reducing general debt
4. Preparing for a major purchase or expenditure that will require borrowing
5. Securing a home equity loan
6. Funding education for children or grandchildren, tax considerations
7. Other:

V. Insurance:

1. Establishing sufficient life insurance coverage for yourself and, if applicable, spouse or other dependents

2. Obtaining continuous health insurance coverage for family
3. Establishing adequate long-term disability insurance coverage
4. Ensuring adequate homeowners' or renters' insurance coverage
5. Obtaining additional insurance protection for valuables
6. Maintaining a personal liability (umbrella) insurance policy
7. Ensuring sufficient professional liability insurance
8. Other:

VI. Accumulating and Preserving Capital:

1. Establishing regular savings through payroll withholding or other savings programs
2. Establishing an emergency fund equal to at least three months' salary
3. Determining appropriate investment objectives
4. Establishing a proper balance between stocks and savings in the portfolio
5. Periodically reviewing the investment portfolio
6. Reducing risk in the investment portfolio, active management versus passive management of investments
7. Participating in an employer's stock-purchase or tax-deferred plan
8. Diversifying the investment portfolio
9. Participating in dividend reinvestment plans of stocks or mutual funds
10. Buying a first home or condominium
11. Making major home improvements
12. Purchasing a second home
13. Purchasing second residences
14. Directly investing in income-producing real estate
15. Owning real estate through a limited partnership, a limited liability company
16. Asset protection opportunities in the separate states.
17. Other:

VII. Tax Planning:

1. Understanding current tax laws and tax-saving techniques
2. Do you have any questions about the planning advantages of trusts, and the differences between an irrevocable trust, a revocable trust, and a testamentary trust?
3. Maintaining adequate tax records
4. Evaluating tax-advantaged investments, basis planning
5. Planning for significant increases in future income
6. Understanding the tax implications of full- or part-time self-employment
7. Do you have any questions about the differences between estate taxes, gift taxes, and income taxes
8. Charitable giving - what is it? Is it useful for your estate plan?
9. Other:

VIII. Retirement Planning:

1. Making individual retirement account contributions
2. If self-employed, participating in a Keogh plan or simplified employee pension plan
3. Participating in an employer-sponsored thrift plan, savings plan, or salary reduction (401(k)) plan
4. Retiring before age 65
5. Investing in tax-deferred annuities
6. Estimating income that will be available on retirement
7. Taking action to fund a comfortable retirement
8. Evaluating expected pension benefits
9. Choosing between a lump-sum pension payment and an annuity at retirement

10. Ensuring that the Social Security Administration has accurate records of earnings estimating what social security retirement benefits will be identifying fixed and variable incomes
11. Developing inflation protection plan
12. Other:

IX. End of life decision-making

1. What rights are available to you?
2. Have you thought about such decisions?
3. Who should make such decisions?
4. Evaluating the impact of possible uninsured illness (e.g., a nursing home stay) during retirement.
5. Ancillary documents, the Power of Attorney, the Health Care Proxy.
6. Other: