

## Writing a Will Won't Jinx You!

According to a recent survey done by Michigan State University for the Planned Giving Roundtable of Southeast Michigan, less than half of Michigan adults have written a Will or Revocable Living Trust. A 2016 Gallup poll showed 1/3 of people 65 or older don't have a Will or Trust. Are you included in the statistics? What is your reason for putting it off? Many people don't like facing their own mortality by planning for their future. Writing your Will doesn't mean you'll die . tomorrow!

If not for you, consider writing your Estate Plan, including a Will or Trust, for your family. Your written plan can help avoid arguments, reduce potential taxes and legal fees. A well thought out Will or Trust gives you control. Without a Will or Revocable Living Trust, the Probate Court will decide how your estate is handled. Probate Court will decide your Personal Rep, Guardians of Minor Children and how your Estate Assets will be distributed.

There are several things needed as you prepare to write your planning documents. The attorney may want proof of ownership of ~~Real Property~~, like your home. That could be a deed or bill of sale. Also bring a list of bank or investment accounts along with any debts owed to banks, insurance companies, the IRS or individuals.

Pray about who you want to be given authority for the various positions in your plan. Who do you want as Personal Representative or Successor Trustee? Who do you wish to be Guardians of your minor children if something happens to both of you? How will you decide who becomes Durable Power of Attorney or Healthcare Power of Attorney? For all of these positions of responsibility you may want to list a Successor in case the person isn't able to fulfill the duties if called upon.

Many people also include a Christian Preamble. The Preamble can be a source of comfort for the family but may also be some encouragement for them in their faith. Most attorneys won't have Christian Preamble language as part of their typical planning verbiage but are happy to include it if you ask and show them what you want included.

You may have specific personal property you want given to specific people. Instead of using ~~sticky notes~~, include a memo that states your wishes to give the ring or necklace to your daughter or the wood crafting tools to your son. Who do want to have that special keepsake? This Personal Property Memo may save the arguments from happening when you are gone.

The other important item to designate is any Estate Gift you wish to give to Ministry. Probate law doesn't allow any Charitable Gifts from your estate unless they are designated during your life. Take the time now to update the beneficiaries of your IRA or a Life Insurance Policy to include your most beloved ministries or designate a Charitable Gift to be made from your Estate as part of your Planning Documents.

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