

FAMILY Wealth

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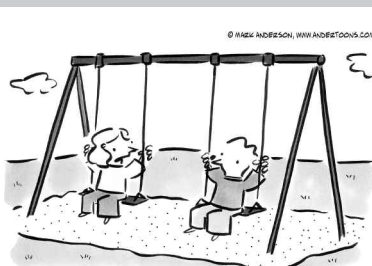
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"I want to be a lawyer - they still get recess."

Proper Estate Planning is No Joke

Heath Ledger may be appearing as the Joker in the upcoming Batman movie, but there was nothing funny about his recent death, or the fact that he passed away with an out-of-date Will—particularly for his daughter, Matilda, and Matilda's mother Michelle, since his three-year-old Will left everything to his parents and sister.

We saw the same thing recently when Anna Nicole Smith died and her Will left everything to her deceased son, made no mention of her baby daughter Danielynn, or, for that matter, her long-time partner Howard K. Stern who stuck by her through all of her ups and downs for years prior to her death. Heath's parents have made public assurances that Matilda will be well taken care of, and she's likely to be deemed a pretermitted or omitted heir anyway, which will mean she'll end up receiving an inheritance from Heath's estate. But that's only part of the story.

For starters, Michelle Williams, Matilda's mother, was not provided for and the law doesn't make any provision for unmarried partners. Would Heath really have wanted Michelle to get nothing? And while Matilda may ultimately inherit Heath's estate due to the pretermitted heir laws noted above, by not updating his Will or having an attorney create a comprehensive estate plan, he lost the chance to decide the terms under which Matilda would receive the money he left behind, and who would manage that money until she receives it.

This situation exemplifies a major problem in the way people plan for their financial futures in the U.S. today—even wealthy celebrities have fallen victim to the current misconception that estate planning is simply a matter of filling out basic forms and never looked at them again. Nothing could be further from the truth!

Consider this: standard estate planning forms can be purchased on the Internet for a couple of hundred dollars and completed with the help of a do-it-yourself kit for only \$13.50. Or you could spend \$2,750 to have the forms prepared by some lawyer in Arizona who calls himself the "Estate Planning Doctor." Either way, all you'll end up with are documents that in many cases will not work when your loved ones really need them.

What you want—what you need—is an in-depth, personal relationship with an experienced estate



Photo courtesy Warner Bros./Legendary Pictures

planning attorney who can guide you, help you make the best decisions throughout your lifetime, and be there for your family when you cannot be. Someone who will take the time to make sure your estate plan stays up to date so that when you get married, or have a new child or grandchild, or experience any other significant life-change, your trusted estate planning attorney will know about these changes and take the appropriate steps to ensure that everyone you care about are taken care of, and that your wishes are carried out.

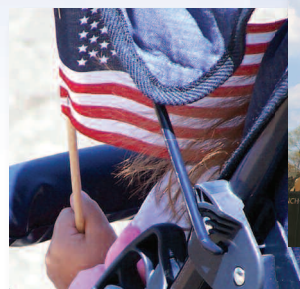
MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day is coming up this month and we thought you might like a little background on how this national holiday came about.

Formerly known as Decoration Day, Memorial Day commemorates U.S. men and women who have died in military service to their country. Decoration Day was initially intended to honor Union soldiers who died during the American Civil War. However, many Southern states refused to celebrate Decoration Day, in part due to lingering hostility toward the Union Army as well as the fact that few Union veterans lived in the South.

After World War I, Decoration Day was expanded to honor those who died in any war or military action. And while the alternative name of Memorial Day was first used in 1882, it did not become more common until after World War II, and was not declared the official name by Federal Law until 1967. In 1968, the U.S. Congress passed the Uniform Holidays Bill, moving three holidays, including Memorial Day, from their traditional dates to specified Mondays in order to create three-day weekends. The law took effect in 1971. Following some initial confusion and reluctance to comply, all 50 states adopted the measure within a few years.

To all of our friends and clients, and particularly those of you who have served in the military or who have family serving in the military, we wish you a healthy and happy Memorial Day.



Our Clients Speak...

"Against all legal odds,

I won my case. Willem is a perfectionist—no stone was left unturned, no detail was overlooked. He evaluated and pursued every possible legal option in the advocacy of my case. He was dedicated and tirelessly drove toward the goal."

P.B.

*Public relations, marketing,
and events executive
Pelham, N.Y.*

A Gift for Moms in Celebration of Mother's Day



deserve the recognition we give them on Mother's Day. Moms are super busy —with work or kids or, like most, with both! We know that you moms almost never have time for yourselves so... we want to do something about it.

If you're a mom, read on to find out how you can get a free facial, and a hot new book for parents written by a good friend of ours. But first...



One of the best ways for you moms to show your love for your family is to have all of your financial ducks in a row and to make sure your kids are taken care of by people you love, no matter what.

So, to celebrate Mother's Day, we will waive the regular \$750 Planning Session fee for any mom who makes an appointment this month for a Family Wealth Planning Session with us.

During the session you will:

- Learn how to choose the right guardians for your kids in the event that the unthinkable were to happen to you.
- Get your financial house in order and keep it that way.
- Learn the secret to protecting your kids' inheritance from lawsuits and future divorce.
- Discover how to leave your loved ones a gift far greater than all the money in the world.

The Session is absolutely FREE and there is NO OBLIGATION and NO PRESSURE. It is our way of saying, "Happy Mother's Day!" Plus, if you are one of the first 10 moms to schedule your Planning Session now, we will give you a gift certificate for an Amari rejuvenating facial at the Amari Medical Spa in Scarsdale and a copy of the great new book, *Wear Clean Underwear: A Fast, Fun, Friendly and Essential Guide to Legal Planning for Busy Parents, when you come to meet with us.*

To schedule your FREE Family Wealth Planning Session, call the office at 914-358-0036 and ask for the Mother's Day Package. Call Now: 914-358-0036

A MOTHER'S DAY POEM

"Happy Mother's Day"

"Happy Mother's Day" means more
Than have a happy day.
Within those words lie lots of things
We never get to say.
It means I love you first of all,
Then thanks for all you do.
It means you mean a lot to me,
And that I honor you.

But most of all, I guess it means
That I am thinking of
Your happiness on this, your day,
With pleasure and with love





A Personal Note

from Willem & Margaretha

Welcome to the first issue of our new monthly newsletter. As a part of a recent review we did of our practice, we concluded that the most important asset we possess is the relationships we have developed over the years—like the one we have with you. We also must admit that we have not been as proactive in our personal communications with you as we would have liked. So, we have taken steps to start communicating with you more frequently—this monthly newsletter is the first reflection of that commitment. We hope you will consider it tangible evidence of how much we value our relationship with you. But, we did not want to create just another boring, dry legal newsletter that you would not read. Rather, we wanted to produce a newsletter that has great content and is fun and valuable to you. We hope you find that we've done that. Of course, your constructive feedback is always welcome. This is only one of a number of exciting changes that we've made at the firm. We look forward to sharing some of the others with you in coming months.

Be Well,

Willem

Willem Gravett

Margaretha

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& GRAVETT**

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