

The Butler Bulletin

Butler Wills and Estates

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How do I get the most out of my meetings with my lawyer?

Nobody likes wasting money, especially when it's on something expensive.

Meeting with your lawyer can cost a lot of money, particularly if your lawyer charges by the hour. In these situations, wasted time equals wasted money.

Here are a few things you can do to make the most out of the time you have with your lawyer:

Be Prepared

Whether you like to make notes, write down your questions, or do some research, being prepared for the meeting is the easiest way to avoid wasting time. Know what you want to discuss, and expect that the lawyer will ask you questions.

If you're doing research, it's a good idea to print off what you find. This way you can show the results directly to the lawyer, instead of trying to remember all the details.

Remember that a Google search doesn't replace a law degree, though, so your research won't be all you need.

with these types of cases, and it's easy to lose track of details when everything is electronic.

Don't be afraid to ask questions during your appointment. If there is something confusing, it is much simpler to ask at the time, rather than wait and have to schedule another meeting.

Stay Organized

Devote a folder or binder to your issue. This creates a place where you can put all the important papers and correspondence regarding your situation. Some cases may require having additional folders. For example, one for notes, one for correspondence with the lawyer, one for correspondence with the other people involved, etc.

Update the folders every time you receive something new, or send something out.

When it comes to estate cases, consider keeping paper records. There is a lot of information involved

Talk Openly

Hiding information from your lawyer delays the process and limits the amount of help your lawyer can give you. Sometimes clients are hesitant to share all the details because the information reflects badly on them, or because they think if they don't say anything then nobody will know.

Remember that your lawyer isn't there to judge you, so it is a safe environment in which you can talk openly. All the facts will come out eventually - hiding them at the beginning simply drags out the process.

COMING SOON to our website

There are new and exciting additions coming to our website in 2017!

We've found that the best way to connect with our clients is to provide information in an accessible, easy to understand way. To make access to legal information about wills and estates more readily available, we're working on the following features:

1 – Live Webinars

Several people from outside Newfoundland have reached out to us and asked if we host webinars. The live feed allows for more interaction so attendees can ask questions.

2 – New Online Seminars

If you want to learn about wills and estates while going at your own pace, try an online seminar. Once you register you can access the info as many times as you like. We're developing more topics about Enduring Powers of Attorney, Advance Healthcare Directives, and other estate law topics. We're also trying different platforms to have the seminars available for download right from our site.

3 – Podcasts

With our new podcasts, you'll be able to tune in whenever you have time. We'll cover estate planning, business succession planning, elder financial abuse, mediation, executor duties, and much more.

We're looking for suggestions for topics. If you have an idea or a specific question you'd like to hear on a podcast, email chelsea@butlerwillsandestates.com or send us a message using the live chat app at www.butlerwillsandestates.com.

Estate Planning Failures of the Rich and Famous

Just about everyone has heard of the movie *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. This film was based on the novel by Stieg Larsson, and was the first installment of a series.

Larsson passed away in Stockholm in 2004 at the age of 50, leaving behind his father, brother, and long-time girlfriend. Unfortunately, Larsson did not have any sort of estate plan. As a result, his estate was set to be distributed between his father and brother.

This did not go over well with his girlfriend, Eva Gabrielsson. She had lived with Larsson for thirty years, and felt she was entitled to a share of his estate. The situation ended up in court, where Gabrielsson fought with Larsson's family for years.

Listen for us on YOCCM weekdays at 1:30!

We've expanded our services!

Starting January 1, 2017, we will be offering new services. In addition to the wills and estates options we already have, we can now help you with estate litigation.

Each situation will be assessed on a case by case basis. If you are in a situation with an estate that requires litigation, contact us to set up a consultation. If it something we are able to help you with, the fee for the consult will be rolled in to the final bill. In the event that it is not a case we can take, you will only be billed for a one-time consult.

Litigation is the only service we offer that is billed on an hourly rate.

Three Best Rated Voted Us #1

Three Best Rated is an independent company that aims to find the top three businesses in each city. They have tons of categories, and Butler Wills and Estates has been selected as the top estate planning law firm in St. John's.

The criteria for the vote include client satisfaction, price, and the overall experience. We're proud to be voted #1, and we'll keep working hard to stay there.

Question from a reader

"My mom left me her house in her will. Do I get to keep the stuff inside, too?"

This is a very common question. Unless the will specifically says that you get to keep the contents, the answer is no. When you are left a house, you're left the title. You have inherited the building, not what's inside it. The contents would fall into the estate, and be divided amongst the beneficiaries according to the instructions for the estate.

The only way you would be permitted to keep the contents of the house is if the will specifically mentions the contents. This can include furniture, personal belongings, and general housewares such as dishes and linens. It can also include any valuables kept in the home that have not otherwise been mentioned in the will or a Memorandum.

New Year's Resolution?



It's that time of year again – we make all sorts of promises to ourselves that we know full well we won't keep.

The premise of the New Year's resolution is to start the new year off right by improving your life over the year before. Somehow, we manage to come up with all sorts of things we'd like to do (e.g. exercise more or learn a new language) and yet very few of us ever achieve these goals.

We've heard from almost every client that they have been meaning to get started on their estate planning for years. It's something a lot of people think about, and then life intervenes and it gets put on the back burner.

This year, make your estate planning a priority. Once it's done you'll have one less thing to think about, and the peace of mind that comes with knowing it has been taken care of.

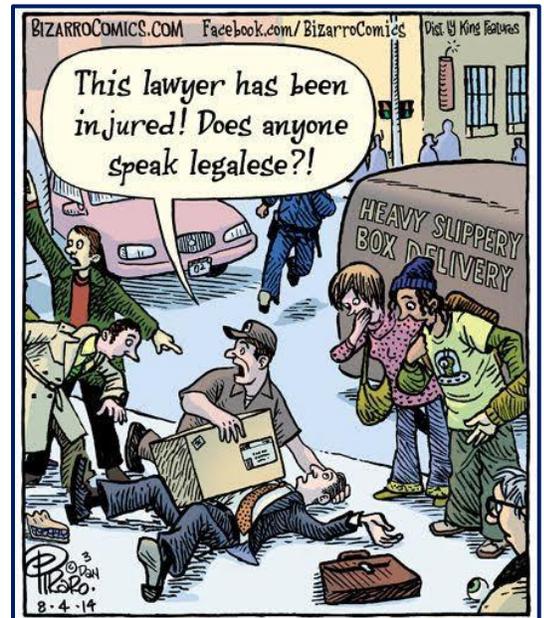
To book an appointment or to ask questions,

call us at 221 5511 or email chelsea@butlerwillsandestates.com

As always, our prices are listed at www.butlerwillsandestates.com

Did you know...?

“Legalese” is in the dictionary. Most often the term is used casually, as a kind of joke. However, Merriam-Webster defines legalese as “the specialized language of the legal profession”. Other definitions note that it is often difficult to understand.



CHANGING AN INVENTORY *AFTER ITS BEEN FILED*

An inventory is part of the probate application. It provides a snapshot of everything the deceased person owned at the time he or she passed away and is used to determine the value of the estate and what the probate fee will be.

It's not uncommon to have to make changes to an inventory. Quite often these changes occur while the application is being compiled - as more info is found, the more details can be added to the documents.

Sometimes, information comes to light after the executor has applied for probate. In these situations, executors tend to get nervous. Part of the probate application is an affidavit signed by the executor swearing that the information in the application is true. So what do you do if the amounts you've told the court turn out to be wrong?

When it's a small amount - for example, the difference between \$10 000 and \$10 150, you're ok. Nobody expects the executor to have the exact dollar amount.

For more significant differences, like an insurance policy that was thought to be \$60 000 turns out to be \$100 000, the executor (or the lawyer for the estate) can file an amended inventory. This document shows what is new, and provides the new total for the amount in the estate.

The new total will impact how much the probate fee is, so you will owe the court some more money. However, it's better to be honest and let them know that something has changed.

Please feel free to share this newsletter with others.

*If you have any questions, comments, would like to suggest a topic, or to **unsubscribe**, please email us at **chelsea@butlerwillsandestates.com***