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## WRAPPING UP 2022

I don't know about you, but to me (Beth) 2022 seemed to go by quickly.

I fondly think of three different occasions this year where dinners out with friends ended only after by the restaurant's closing. It has been so nice to see friends in person again and catch up.

Of course, we do not know what 2023 will hold, but hope that it brings you good health, happiness, and laughter.

Please do not hesitate to let us know if you have questions about any estate planning you have done or think you may need to do. We wish you a wonderful holiday season and a happy New Year.

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

This month we feature our Office Manager, Melissa Nolan.



This month we feature office manager Melissa Nolan. Melissa has been with the firm for three years.

Melissa oversees human resources, all financial aspects of the firm and manages the staff and facility.

Prior to joining the firm, Melissa worked for twenty years in office management/accounting for dental practices.

Originally from Yakima, Melissa has resided in Newcastle – and recently Renton – for over twenty years.

Melissa has two teenage children and a little dog Bentley. In her free time, she is in the stands watching her children play sports like baseball, softball, football, and track.

Melissa can be directly reached via e-mail at [melissa@bethmcdaniel.com](mailto:melissa@bethmcdaniel.com).

## THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU DIE

By Beth A. McDaniel, JD, CELA

Over the years we have developed a few different resources that we provide to clients when informed of the death of a loved one. For example, there are so many entities which need to be contacted, like voters' registration and the credit bureaus.

Some time ago a client remarked that although such lists are great, what about a list of things to do before you die? I have never forgotten that request. Here are just a few of the many things that should– ideally – be done before you die:



1. Check your Beneficiary Designations. I advise that beneficiary designations be checked routinely for errors and accuracy, especially as situations change. For example, you don't want your late spouse to be the sole beneficiary of your life insurance policy. After being married to me for about five years, my husband looked up his 401K beneficiary online and discovered that one of his brothers was listed as the beneficiary. I was relieved when he immediately changed the beneficiary to me. About three years later, he checked it again and found his brother was STILL listed as his beneficiary! Clearly there was a glitch in the system, which thankfully is now fixed.

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Likewise, I recently checked the beneficiary designations of a few life insurance policies of mine and noticed that my husband's last name was misspelled. If you have a Will with provisions for minor or disabled children and wish to a minor or disabled child as a beneficiary, it is important that the beneficiary designation states the beneficiary is a testamentary trust (a trust created by your Will) versus directly to a minor or disabled child.

2. Consolidate Finances. Trust me, your spouse or children do not deserve the headache of spending hours and days contacting or visiting multiple financial institutions upon your death – I have one client who had to visit EIGHTEEN different banks upon her loved one's death. It is a gift for those you leave behind if your checking and savings accounts are at one financial institution and you consolidate all those 401Ks you still have from various jobs so that they are managed in one place.

3. Tackle Your Paper. A client recently commented that her loved one left paper behind in four different parts of the house. It hit me that I too had paper in four different parts of the house (kitchen, playroom, music room, and a filing cabinet in my son's closet – largely the result of our home office being used temporarily as a bedroom). I am happy to report that now I just have paper records two parts of the house – in our home office and in a few boxes in our playroom – quite the improvement.

If have questions or wish to make an appointment, please contact our client care coordinator, Margo Passeur, at (425) 296-3121.

I have heard many stories of deceased parents who 'kept every bank statement since 1965.' Stay vigilant and with keeping paper organized and in control. Keep all your important papers in one place. Take advantage of periodic free community shred events to get rid of outdated statements or statements for closed accounts. Go paperless when possible.

4. Consolidate Passwords. Consolidate passwords for your online accounts and applications. Yes, you can keep them all in a book, but there are also helpful password managers. During Covid, my husband and I moved our passwords to LastPass. It has been a gamechanger. Other password applications include 1Password and NordPass. I suggest researching them to determine which one is right for you. Of course, it is important that someone knows where to find the login information for the manager. Do not forget to document those secret questions as well as someone not being able to answer one may cause headaches. I read about a widow who was unable to remove her late husband's Comcast account as she did not know the name of his childhood best friend.

Yes, there are a lot of little things which can be done before we die to make life easier for those left behind. Stay tuned for more of the list.