

**Attorney Timothy P. Crawford, CPA, CELA\***  
wanted to share this information with you.

## **WHAT TO DO WHEN A LOVED ONE PASSES AWAY**

Offices near Milwaukee in Brookfield, Glendale and Racine

**Your Asset Protection Law Firm**

840 Lake Avenue, Suite 200

Racine, WI 53403

Toll Free: (888) 634-6675

(262) 634-6659

e-mail: [tpc@execpc.com](mailto:tpc@execpc.com)

Website: [www.TpcLaw.com](http://www.TpcLaw.com)

Whether your spouse has just passed away or you've lost your mom or dad, the emotional trauma of losing a loved one often comes with a bewildering array of financial and legal issues demanding attention.

"It's difficult enough for family members to handle the emotional trauma of a death, let alone taking the steps necessary to get these matters in order," says Harry S. Margolis, a Boston-based elder law attorney and president of ElderLawAnswers.

As the executor or representative of the will, you first should secure the tangible personal property, meaning anything you can touch such as silverware, dishes, furniture or artwork, he points out.

"Then, take your time; while bills need to be paid, they can wait a week or two without any real repercussions. It's more important that you and your family have time to grieve. Financial matters can wait," says Margolis.

When you are ready, but not a day sooner, Margolis advises meeting with an attorney to review the steps necessary to administer the will. While the exact rules of estate planning differ from state to state, the key actions include:

File the will and petition in probate court in order to be appointed executor.

Collect the assets. This means that you need to find out about everything the deceased owned and file a list or inventory with the court.

Pay the bills and taxes. If an estate tax return is due, it must be filed within nine months of the date of death.

Distribute property to the heirs. Generally, executors do not pay out all of the estate assets until the period for creditors to make claims runs out, which can be as long as a year.

Finally, you must file an account with the court listing any income to the estate since the date of death and all expenses and estate distributions. "While some of these steps can be avoided through trusts or joint ownership arrangements, whoever is left in charge still has to pay all debts, file tax returns and distribute the property to the rightful heirs." says Margolis.

**“Those Who Plan Ahead Win.  
Those Who Don’t Plan Ahead Lose.”**

This article is not intended as legal advice. It is basic information. I would recommend that you call Attorney Timothy P. Crawford for a free conference to discuss your situation in more detail. Attorney Timothy P. Crawford can be reached toll-free at 1-888-634-6675. When you call in, please mention the fact that you have read this article.

\*Attorney Timothy P. Crawford is a Nationally Board \*Certified Elder Law Attorney. He has been Board Certified by the National Elder Law Foundation which has been approved as the Sole Certifying Organization for Elder Law Attorneys by the American Bar Association.

\*\*Timothy P. Crawford was invited to join the Council of Advanced Practitioners of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA) in August of 2005. The \*\*Council of Advanced Practitioners (CAP) is a small group of premier elder law attorneys, all of whom have been members of NAELA for at least 10 years, are certified as elder law attorneys by the National Elder Law Foundation, and are AV rated the top in the nation by Martindale Hubbell. A Service that provides an independent rating of the quality of attorneys.

**OFFICES IN RACINE, BROOKFIELD AND GLENDALE**

**“Helping Families in Wisconsin for Over 40 Years to Protect Their Assets  
from Nursing Home Care Costs”**

“A majority of text has come from an article prepared for ElderLaw News, is used here with permission.”