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New Jersey Elder Lawyer

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PROBATE IT YOURSELF

By James E. De Martino, NJ Lawyer

(An Alternative Format)

Under state law, there are a number of steps which must be taken into account when a decedent's estate is settled. This is true whether or not a person died with a Will.

These tasks must be performed by the Executor or Personal Representative of the loved one's estate. Such steps come into focus regardless of the size of the estate.

In short, these steps are as follows:

- Determine what the decedent owned.
- Determine what the decedent owed.
- Pay any just debts.
- Pay any death taxes or income taxes which may be owed.
- Distribute the estate pursuant to the Will or the laws of intestate succession.

Being a former high school teacher and football coach, I have developed an outline which can guide you through each step. This format will substantially reduce the costs of administering your loved one's estate.

If there are no contested issues, many estates can be settled without retaining an attorney who may charge either:

- A percentage of the gross estate
- An hourly fee

In such situations, our office acts as a "coaching staff" or mentor to guide you through the outline. If unforeseen complications develop, you can retain us, on an hourly basis, to address just that issue.

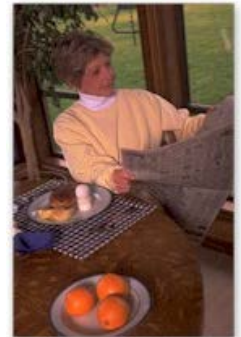
Our fee, for such a service, is \$1,400. If the decedent died without a Will, the fee will be higher.

At our meeting, we discuss this procedure further and determine if it will work well for your situation.

Sincerely,

James C. De Martino

Cathy G. De Martino



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Elder Law and NJ Estate Planning Strategies

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