

BASICS OF ESTATE MANAGEMENT

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I heard this question asked in a presentation not too long ago.....

What do Picasso, Jimi Hendrix and Abraham Lincoln have in common?

Nothing, you say? Well the answer is: all three died “intestate”, which means without having made a valid will.

Unfortunately, many people do not realize the stress and problems not having a will can cause their heirs! And this is a lot more common than you might think. One study reflected that over 60% of Americans do not have a will.

Most folks understand the primary purpose of a will is to communicate how they want their assets to be distributed upon their death. However, there are other purposes to having a will in place. For instance, in the event you have minor children, appointing someone as their guardian would be included in that document. Another important purpose can be to appoint someone as “executor” to oversee the orderly distribution of your assets and the adherence to other terms of your will.

A will is only the start of what you need in a well-constructed estate plan. Although wills are important, they may not help avoid the costs of probate court and attorney fees. They also do not include your wishes in the event of catastrophic illness or injury.

Too often wills and other important estate planning documents are thought of as being necessary for “older folks” who are perhaps nearing the end of their life. I would suggest that most people who have reached legal age, particularly those who are married and even more so,



those who have children, educate themselves or speak with their financial advisor about this important planning. Going into the new year is a good time to add it to your other “resolutions”!

If you have questions about this or any other business or tax issue, please contact your Account Manager or [John Martens, CPA](mailto:John.Martens@connerash.com), at (314) 205-2510 or via email at jmartens@connerash.com.