

## **Q&A WITH DANIEL LEONHARDT**

## Wills, Trusts, Estate Planning

By Tribune Staff

ong-time Loudoun resident
Daniel Leonhardt has been
helping fellow Northern Virginians save money, avoid
probate court, and leave a simplified,
lasting legacy for their heirs. His educational seminars continue to be the first
stop for thousands of area residents
who are curious to learn more about
wills, trusts, and the importance of
early estate planning.

Loudoun Tribune (LT): How long have you been in the business of wills, trusts and estate planning?

Daniel Leonhardt (DL): For the past 17 years I've been assisting families get their estate plans in order. I have been doing trust and estate-planning workshops from coast to coast, covering California, Arizona, Nevada, Tennessee, Texas, North Carolina, Maryland, and Virginia. I now focus exclusively on Virginia and Maryland.

LT: Are there any common misconceptions with regards to estate planning?

DL: Yes, one common misconception is that a "last will" is all you need. Sadly, many people fail to realize that a will does not avoid probate court, but is a document to the probate court. A "last will" is a set of instructions, but it is not a "binding"

set of instructions, so wills can be and frequently are contested in court after one passes away.

Another misconception is that an estate plan is only for people who are married or have children. Estate planning is equally critical if you're single because there isn't a natural default person to handle your assets if you're incapacitated, or to distribute your estate to extended family members when you are gone.

LT: What is the difference between a "Last Will" and a Revocable Living Trust?

DL: Both wills and trusts are instructions related to distributing your estate when you pass away, however a "last will" does not avoid the probate process; it actually guarantees there will be a probate. Probate is generally a lengthy, costly, public court process. A Revocable Living Trust avoids probate, and because it is a binding document when you pass away, the living trust ensures that your distribution wishes will be honored when you pass and that your end-of-life choices will be respected. A Revocable Living Trust not only deals with the distribution of your assets when you are gone, but also the incapacity sections in the trust will ensure that the right people have the legal authority to manage your estate (pay bills, sell a house, etc.) in the event you are not gone, but are mentally incapacitated, i.e. Dementia, Alzheimer's, sustain a massive stroke, or are impaired from a bad car accident.

LT: Who needs a Revocable Living Trust?

DL: Anyone that owns any real estate and anyone that has a family they want to leave their estate to without the hassle, cost, and lengthy probate process.

LT: What attracted you to the business?

DL: I have a love for public speaking and I enjoy helping people understand their needs and the legal options they have to protect their assets. I am frequently told I make this complex topic easy to understand.

LT: Since your company name is American Family Estate Planners, tell us a bit about yourself and your family.

DL: I've been married for 33 years to Christy, I'm a father of four children, and a grandfather to five. I've been a Loudoun resident for the last 19 years.

LT: What can someone expect when they attend your Will & Trust seminars?

DL: A 90-minute, information-filled, motivational workshop that makes clear the legal options in estate planning, all without the legalese that can make this subject confusing. Clients leave our seminars not only with the knowledge of what to do, but with our experienced



Daniel Leonhardt AmericanFamilyEstatePlanners.com

attorney network, we can provide the estate-planning documents at a significantly reduced cost.

LT: How could someone find out more about Living Trusts and/or American Family Estate Planners?

DL: One option is to go to our website www.americanfamilyestateplanners.com where we have multiple articles, blog posts, and even a video of me doing a seminar. Another option is to attend an upcoming Will and Trust workshop (there's an ad in this paper inviting you to attend). And lastly is to call to make an appointment to have a one-on-one conversation about your needs and about the services we offer.