

Advertiser Profile: Attorney Norman Blakey, Brown & Hobkirk, PLLC

Norman Blakey specializes in helping people to prepare their final paperwork.... Wills, Trusts, and the like. Who needs a Will or Trust, you might ask? Isn't that sort of stuff just for people with lots of money & property? In conversing with Norman, it became apparent that there is so much more to consider, and that people from all walks of life have circumstances that will be affected by the decisions they make ... Or don't make.

So Who should have a Will or Trust? Basically, anyone over the age of 18 years should at least be thinking about one. The idea is to have important decisions made and recorded beforehand, so that they are already in place to protect you if they are ever needed.

Our sport of motorcycling is inherently risky. While no one likes to think about it.... We all realize that something bad can happen. That breakfast ride goes horribly wrong and now everything changes in a heartbeat... For yourself and for your loved ones. If we haven't been through this scenario ourselves... chances are that we know someone who has.

If you've survived that wreck... who is the person making decisions for you while you are incapacitated? That's right.... estate planning isn't only about what happens AFTER you die. Norman can help you address those 'front end' issues and prepare Advance Directive documents such as Medical and Financial Powers of Attorney and Living Wills. Who would you trust to keep your bills paid? Or entrust to make medical decisions on your behalf?

If the worst happens and some situation claims your life, what is your family facing? Your loved ones are already grieving your passing. It is a mind-numbing sensation. Giving them clear-cut instructions as to your final wishes answers some of those tough questions. What would she have wanted? How would he have handled this?

I recall a horrible hospital waiting room scenario with a dear friend who had just received the news that her husband was dead. Here come the administrators pressuring her about organ donations, as time is of the essence in that situation. She was in no condition to respond ~ but she had to choose.... Because he had not. A loved one can be protected from that... with a piece of paper.

It was astonishing to hear examples of the types of legal issues that can come up when someone dies or is incapacitated. There are needs & considerations special to blended families, young families with minor children, estranged family members, and more. If your closest living relation is someone you can't stand... Do you want them in charge of making your choices... simply due to lineage? Wouldn't you rather have a say-so? You CAN with a piece of paper!

Norman explained what a person's Estate Plan is, in an interesting way. He called it your arrangements on behalf of your Future Self. Estate Planning is an umbrella of sorts. The term encompasses that variety of paperwork designed to protect your wishes and your loved ones... including avoiding probate and



any potential tax consequences to beneficiaries.

Either YOU choose how your Estate is handled or the state will ...aka Probate. There likely isn't one among us who hasn't heard nightmare stories about THAT. Do you really want to do that to your loved ones? By choosing NOT to choose, you sentence your Dear Ones to Probate Court and likely some frustrating, time-consuming, & expensive months if not years of ... to put it bluntly... cleaning up after you.

Having observed the legal difficulties of friends who have lost a loved one gave Norman the inspiration to pursue & focus on this area of the law. He enjoys working with people and giving them some peace of mind. Paired with that is a desire is to help lessen the legal strain on already stressed and bereaved families. To that end, he added more than 2 years to his law schooling, in classes specific to this field; gaining specialized credentials that include Master of Laws in Taxation with an Estate Planning Certificate.

I've heard some people comment that, once they are gone, they don't much care how their stuff is distributed. Do you have no kin you like? Are you the last of your family? Do you own a business? Think about the various motorcycle charity rides you've participated in over the years. Any one of them would appreciate being your beneficiary, whether it be in a modest or large amount. Norman can help you set that up too.

SO ... Now you've decided you want to create an Estate Plan. What are the steps? It all starts with a conversation. That conversation can take place in person or via Zoom. If you prefer an in-person meeting, there are four offices of the Brown & Hobkirk, PLLC Law Firm to choose from; located in Scottsdale, Phoenix, Chandler, and Peoria. You can also plan a meeting at your home if you are in the Phoenix-Metro area or at a centrally convenient location.

In this way, Norman can help you to define what you see as your Legacy. He explains... There are two components to your Legacy: Personal and Financial. What do you want people to remember about you? Do you hope to leave a positive impact on the world and/or those around you? Then, there is the dissolution &/or distribution of any financial or personal assets you may have. These can be large... such as a home,

business, or vehicle, or making sure that certain family heirlooms reach the right person.

Of course... there are websites with cookie-cutter forms that you can try to DIY all this stuff. If you want to read through all the legalese, then hopefully figure out which forms are right for you based on the state you live in & your circumstances. But when your time comes, who will be there for your Family? Who will be the one to guide them through those most difficult days? The online Chatbot? No thank you!

Norman helps you to design exactly what you need for your wishes. He will be the one to interact with your Executor once you pass. One visit with him will set most anyone at ease to know that these meetings will be in caring hands.

These are very sensitive, emotional, & potentially uncomfortable topics. It can be intimidating to discuss these things. Norman Blakey strikes me as a person with whom you could have such a conversation. In the time I have spoken & worked with him; the person I've met seems easygoing, personable, compassionate, easy to talk to, and genuine in his hope to help guide individuals to prepare for what is undoubtedly one of the most difficult and vulnerable times in their lives.... impending Death.

Realizing the range of readership that these pages enjoy; some of you are outside of Norman's particular territory. That being said, there is no doubt that wherever you are, this is a highly important task to undertake.

Having decisions like these documented before you pass is like a final gift that you are leaving for your survivors. You are telling them that you care enough about them to have these things settled & organized on their behalf. Yet, statistics say that only about 33% of Americans have some sort of Estate Plan in place.

There can be much to consider... But it doesn't have to be overwhelming. Norman can help you review the 'what if' questions that a knowledgeable, caring professional can bring to this conversation - some of which you may never have thought of. Recognizing that each person's needs are different, much of his work is billed on a 'flat fee' basis; charging only for services that you need and use.

Only YOU know exactly what you have and how you truly feel about what happens after you pass. From tangible, physical assets to more intangible topics such as your funeral arrangements ... Shouldn't YOU be in charge of these decisions?

Even once you embark on your Long Ride, you can be assured that your wishes will be fulfilled IF you plan ahead of time. Let Norman Blakey help you to determine what those wishes are and how best to protect them.

Norman can be reached at the Brown & Hobkirk PLLC Law Firm. Call 480-685-4036 or email norman@brownhobkirk.com

He is also available to present a seminar on this subject to your organization.