

A NOTE FROM PETER....

USEFUL LINKS

HIGHPOINT WEBSITE
SEE CONTACT US! BELOW

FRIEND US ON FACEBOOK!

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM
(SEARCH FOR PETER
GILBERT IN THE
PHILADELPHIA NETWORK)

HIGHPOINT LAW OFFICES MEET-UP PAGES

WWW.MEETUP.COM
(SEARCH "BUCKSMONT
RESPONSIBLE PARENTS"
WITH ZIP CODE 18914 OR
"WEALTH
PRESERVATION MEET
UP GROUP" WITH
ZIP CODE 18914)

HIGHPOINT LAW OFFICES UPCOMING EVENTS

GO TO OUR WEBSITE AND
CLICK ON THE
UPCOMING EVENTS TAB



Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a Happy New Year to All!

Here's my question of the month:

- Who are the people you appreciate?
OK, now that you have some people in mind,
- What 2 or 3 things do you especially appreciate about them?
Finally, how have you told them this?
- In a conversation? In writing?

Here's what I appreciate about you, our clients:

- Each person (and family's) uniqueness – because it challenges us to apply the "science" (law) to a new situation
- The experience of co-creating solutions for your problems with you – because it reminds me that you are the "other experts in the room."
- Your ideas to improve HighPoint Law Offices, and your contributions to that effort – because we don't have all the answers, and you are why we exist in the first place.
- The friends and family you introduce to us – because we enjoy meeting new friends and because we appreciate your thinking of us.
- Your stories about family, career, and yourselves – because stories are the natural "language" of human experience.
- Meeting your families – so they're more than words on a page for us.
- Your confidence in us – because we're humbled by the responsibility.

-Peter J. Gilbert

IN THIS ISSUE

- Page 1 - A Note From Peter
- Page 1 - Useful Links
- Page 1 - Contact Us!
- Page 2 - Recommended Reading
- Page 2 - Feature Article
- Page 2 - Upcoming Events
- Page 3 - Feature Article (Cont.)
- Page 3 - Recipe of the Month
- Page 4 - Upcoming Events (Cont.)

CONTACT US!

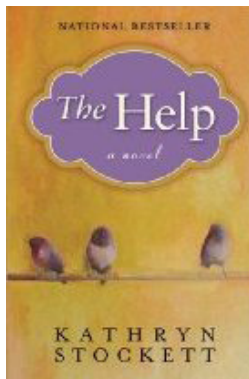
200 HighPoint Drive, Suite 209
Chalfont, PA 18914
Phone: 215-997-9773
Fax: 215-893-4726

Email: info@highpointlawoffices.com
Website: www.highpointlawoffices.com

RECOMMENDED READING

The Help by Kathryn Stockett

Review by Publishers Weekly, February 2009



What perfect timing for this optimistic, uplifting debut novel (and maiden publication of Amy Einhorn's new imprint) set during the nascent civil rights movement in Jackson, Miss., where black women were trusted to raise white children but not to polish the household silver. Eugenia Skeeter Phelan is just home from college in 1962, and, anxious to become a writer, is advised to hone her chops by writing about what disturbs you. The budding social activist begins to collect the stories of the black women on whom the country club sets relies and mistrusts enlisting the help of Aibileen, a maid who's raised 17 children, and Aibileen's best friend Minny, who's found herself unemployed more than a few times after mouthing off to her white employers. The book Skeeter

puts together based on their stories is scathing and shocking, bringing pride and hope to the black community, while giving Skeeter the courage to break down her personal boundaries and pursue her dreams. Assured and layered, full of heart and history, this one has bestseller written all over it.

FEATURE ARTICLE

UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE FEDERAL ESTATE TAX

by J. David Kerr

Kerr Law Firm, PLLC

How does one write something to alert those we care about concerning a risk that is not yet certain? They need to know about it but I don't want to sound like it is just hype. You can say nothing and leave those you care about at risk or say something and take the chance of being misunderstood. I hope starting this article like this will help. You cannot do anything about that which you know nothing about. Knowledge gives you a choice.

Currently, the asset value subject to federal estate tax is \$3.5 million and above per person at a rate of tax of 45%. The assets subject to tax include life insurance, retirement accounts, assets in one's own name, assets in one's revocable trust, joint assets -just about everything even if there is no probate.

Most observers believe Congress will extend the \$3.5 estate tax exemption amount and 45% top rate to 2010.

What of 2011 and afterward? Here is the problem. The 2001 legislation which placed the current federal estate tax rules in place, sunsets on January 1, 2011. If Congress does nothing, we return to the law as it was in 2001. That means imposition of estate tax on estates in excess of \$1 million per person and a top rate of 55%.

It is not simple for Congress to just extend the \$3.5 million exemption and 45% top rate for estate tax into 2011 and beyond. That is because of PAYGO. Congress has a budget rule called PAYGO "pay-as-you-go." The rule is designed to encourage Congress to offset the cost of any legislation that increases spending on entitlement programs or reduces revenues so it doesn't expand the deficit. Under PAYGO, Congress must pay for such legislation by reducing other entitlement spending or increasing other revenues.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming
Complimentary
Workshops at
HighPoint Law Offices:

"Estate Planning
Essentials"

Presented by
Peter J. Gilbert, Esq. and
Jaime L. Weinstein, Esq.

Tuesday,
January 5, 2010
at 7pm

Wednesday,
January 20, 2010 at
10:30am

200 Highpoint Drive
Suite 209
Chalfont, PA 18914

Please call
215-997-9773 to
reserve your seat
today!

***New for 2010!**

Estate Planning
Essentials
workshop dates in
the Lehigh Valley
to be announced!

If Congress extends the \$3.5 exemption amount and 45% top rate to 2011 and beyond, it has to make up the revenue under PAYGO. PAYGO doesn't force lawmakers to make the tough decisions needed to reduce the deficit, but it restrains them from making deficits worse or undercutting deficit-reduction efforts they have already enacted.

Congress has very significant budget problems. It would be easy for Congress to say next year, that "we did nothing." It was the law passed in 2001 which had an automatic Sunset (it does) and the law just returned to 2001 status as it was supposed to do. Then all the Clinton Tax increase go into effect with no legislative action. Pretty cool when you want to raise revenue without any tax increases. Why no tax increases? Because they already exist --that is why. They go into effect automatically.

For 2011, in the estate tax area, the problem will arise for anyone who becomes disabled before January 1, 2011 who has not planned for the federal estate tax and for those who have planned who if single, have estates over \$1 million and if married have estates over \$2 million. At a minimum, they need a DPOA allowing that planning now. In addition, if you are not certain that your plan addresses federal estate tax issues, you should have it reviewed.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH!

DOUBLE CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES - Courtesy of Truly Custom Cakery, LLC

www.TrulyCustomCakery.com

Preheat Oven to 350 degrees

3/4 cup Land O Lakes Light Butter (Softened)
1/4 cup Applesauce
1 pkg Chocolate Pudding
1/4 cup White Sugar
1/2 cup Splenda
3/4 cup Brown Sugar
2 tsp Vanilla

Combine the above ingredients and mix.

2 Eggs(room temperature) (or egg beater equivalent)

Add Eggs and mix:

1 cup White Flour
1 cup White Wheat Flour (King Arthur Brand)
2/3 cup Cocoa Powder
3/4 tsp Baking Soda
1/4 tsp Salt

Combine these ingredients in a separate bowl and whisk together lightly to incorporate. Then gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients just until they are thoroughly combined. Do Not Over Mix.

1 1/4 cups Mini Chocolate Morsels (Yes, it makes a difference!!!)

Add Morsels and stir. Spoon onto a greased cookie sheet and bake for 10 minutes. Do not over bake. Pull them from the oven before they look "done". When cooled they will firm up and you'll have a chewy and chocolaty treat. You can add nuts if you like and you can also add dried cherries.



Who Needs Estate Planning?

Estate planning isn't about how much money you have, it's about protecting what you have for you, during your life and for those you love, after you're gone. It ensures what you have gets to the people you love, the way you want, when you want.

If you were to die today, are you comfortable everything will be taken care of the way you wanted? Estate planning is legally ensuring things will be handled the way you want by providing sufficient instructions.

Estate Planning really is for everyone. It doesn't matter if you have \$40,000 or \$40,000,000. You still have to plan for the future. Whether it's to name a guardian for your minor children or ensure your children don't "blow through" your assets if you unexpectedly die or become disabled (remember the Terri Schiavo case).

Estate planning can only be done by attorneys, and it can be as simple as a Will, Health Care Proxy, Living Will and Power of Attorney. It can also include a revocable, probate-avoidance trust, asset protection trusts, multi-generational tax-saving trusts, tax-saving charitable trusts, private family foundations, and many other fact-specific strategies.

Call HighPoint Law Offices today and set up your complimentary consultation in 2010!