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Margaret St. John Meehan

A Compassionate Guide in a Complicated Process

It is no surprise that Margaret "Meg" St. John Meehan chose a career in law. She follows in the footsteps of her father, a defense attorney in Connecticut, and her older sister, who serves as in-house counsel for a biopharmaceutical company in New York City.

While in law school, Meg found herself drawn to the Quinnipiac Probate Law Journal, eventually becoming its editor-in-chief. She credits the influence of her trusts and estates professor for sparking her fascination with this area of law. "Although many of my classmates felt otherwise, I found probate and trust law anything but boring," Meg said.

That early interest in probate and trust law became the focus of Meg's career. At Day Pitney, she advises high net worth individuals and their families with estate planning, including structuring gifts and implementing sophisticated tax planning. Meg also assists in all aspects of estate and trust administration. She advises donors on planned giving, and assists private foundations and public charities with formation, qualification and governance matters.

One of the first estates Meg worked on when she joined Day Pitney was that of a wealthy individual with no immediate family. The case involved a host of tax and other technical issues—and an extraordinary number of collections and other possessions stacked up in massive barns around the client's properties.

"We had to inventory every single item of potential value, including over 400 pieces of artwork that were eventually delivered to beneficiaries in France," said Meg. "It was a daunting and intensive process, and we needed to figure out how to complete it as cost-effectively as possible. We distributed all of the assets to the intended beneficiaries, and closed out the administration to everyone's satisfaction."

Meg's clients note that her patience and responsiveness add value to the legal guidance she provides. According to Bertha Fortney, "Meg took the time to understand my personal situation and brought documentation that was both appropriate and creative to prepare my estate for the future. She explained all facets and potential outcomes of various scenarios, answered all of my questions promptly, and provided me with both time and information to make decisions that felt right for me."

In the process of estate planning work, Meg appreciates the opportunity to help people express their most important values through the structure of their estate plans. "What values does a family want to pass down to the next generation, and how do they want to do it? I can help them articulate those priorities and ensure they will be honored appropriately," she says.

On the estate administration side, Meg's reward comes when she see the relief on someone's face when they realize they have a compassionate guide who can help them navigate a complicated process. "People really need practical help when they are grieving the loss of a loved one. My goal is to be someone they know they can rely on to assist them through a really difficult time."

TRUSTS AND ESTATES

Quinnipiac University School of Law, magna cum laude, J.D.

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