



WALT SHURDEN LAW

January/February 2017

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New Year Planning

By Walt Shurden

January is the benchmark month where we tally up how we did in the past year and tweak what we are doing. This casual type of planning assumes we are on a steady trajectory. This thought process works well for routine decisions like investing and spending. But what if 2017 brings bad health, nursing homes, or even death? Consider these difficult topics this January to protect yourself when you are at your weakest.

Bad Health in 2017

If you have not already signed a Health Care Surrogate Designation giving your family or friends control over your healthcare when you become incapacitated, then you should do this now. You should also sign a Living Will Declaration stating the conditions under which you would not want artificial life support.

A Nursing Home stay in 2017

If you have not already given your family members the Florida-specific legal powers they will need to protect your wealth from the cost of nursing home care, then you should do so now. The quality with which your Durable Power of Attorney is drafted could very well determine which asset protection techniques will be available to your family. Durable Powers of Attorney also allow your family to operate independent of the Guardianship Court system. These are very useful documents that save your family time and money.

Death in 2017

If you have not set up an estate plan that transfers your wealth directly from you to each of your ben-



eficiaries then you should put this high on your list of things to do. The plan should include effective provisions for the weaknesses or vulnerabilities of each beneficiary.

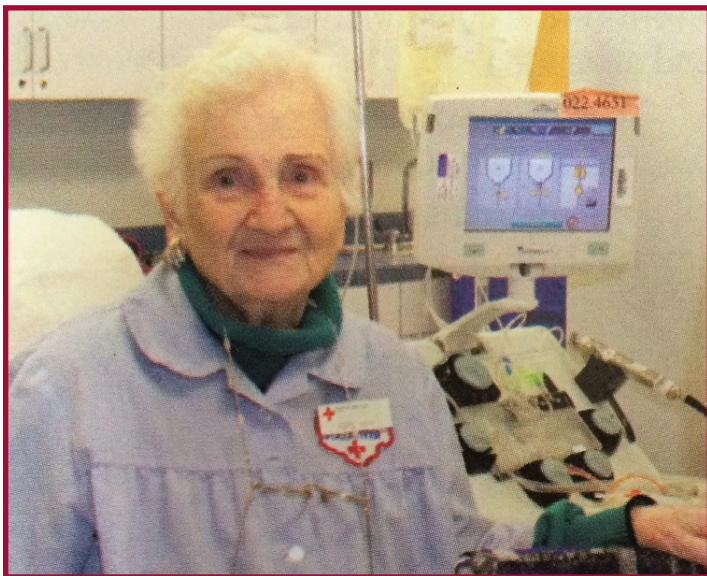
If you have done this before

If you have already implemented the documents above, then read them this month. For clarification, set an appointment with your attorney for a conversation about how your current planning would help you during an unusually difficult year.

Our Goal

*To provide exceptional
legal service to our clients.*

This Month's Spotlight



Evangelia Davis

Bette's Aunt Poppy, Evangelia Davis, has been a volunteer with the American Red Cross for 55 years. As a wife of a U.S. Army officer she began volunteering in the early 1950's at military hospitals in Germany, Japan, and the United States. The Red Cross has honored Poppy with their highest honor, the Clara Barton Award, and she has been awarded their 50 year pin for volunteerism. At age 94, Poppy still lives at home, unassisted. She continues to donate her time every Friday to the Red Cross at their blood collection Center in Camden County, NJ.

January Facts

Were you born in January? You probably know that the birthstone for January is garnet, but did you know?:

- The flower symbol of January is snowdrop and carnation;
- That January is named for the Roman God Janus;
- That there were only 30 days in January until 46 B.C. when Julius Ceasar added another day;
- That January is the coldest month in the northern half of the world; and
- The zodiac sign until the 19th is Capricorn and from the 20th through the end of the month is Aquarius.

Don't go without a special treat for Valentine's Day because you don't want left-over dessert around the house. Here is a recipe that will make one for you and one for your valentine.

Chocolate Cherry Cupcakes for Two



Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon cocoa powder
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 3 tablespoons reduced-fat chocolate milk
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1/2 teaspoon cherry extract
- 1 tablespoon semisweet chocolate chips, melted
- 2 cherries, for garnish

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and line two portions of a muffin tin with liners. Sift together flour, sugar, cocoa powder, and baking soda in a bowl.
2. Stir in chocolate milk, oil and cherry extract. Mix until the batter is well incorporated and divide batter into the two liners. Bake for 10-12 minutes, or until a tooth pick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes.
3. Spread half of the melted chocolate on each cupcake and garnish with a cherry.

From Rachel Johnson at CookingLight.

If you ever want to review an old article that you read in our newsletter, and cannot find it, you can look it up on our website, www.waltshurdenlaw.com.

All newsletters are saved under the "free info" tab, then "library."



Adopt A Mile

In an attempt to improve our community, the Law Office of Walter B. Shurden has “adopted a mile” of the Pinellas Trail. The Pinellas bike trail Adopt-A-Mile is part of the “Keep Pinellas Beautiful” program. Keep Pinellas Beautiful also manages the Marine Debris/Litter Removal program.

Our office will be picking up litter we find on the trail from Court Street south to Lakeview Road. The program calls for pick-up once each quarter, but we intend to keep it picked up on a monthly basis.

Next time you are biking, walking, running, rollerblading, or skateboarding on the trail you might notice the signs showing the name of a group or family who has adopted that section of the trail to keep it beautiful. You might even think of a group you belong to that would like to help “Keep Pinellas Beautiful.” You can reach their office at 727-533-0402.

February Trivia

February 14, 278 AD – Valentine, a Priest in Rome, was beheaded for performing illegal marriage ceremonies.

February 4, 1789 – George Washington was elected the first President of the United States.

February 26, 1829 – Levi Strauss was born. He never married, so, ironically, he didn’t pass his genes down to the next generation.

February 1865 is the only month in recorded history not to have a full moon.

February 15, 1950 – Disney’s *Cinderella* opened in theaters.

February 22, 1956 – Elvis Presley debuted on the music charts with *Heartbreak Hotel*.

February 5, 1958 – A hydrogen bomb, known as the Tybee Bomb, was lost by the US Airforce, off the coast of Savannah, Georgia, and has never been found.

IN OUR EAR

What is “Observation” Status?



A three night inpatient stay in a Hospital triggers a valuable 100 day rehabilitation benefit in a skilled nursing facility. But more and more patients leaving the hospital are learning that they were never formally admitted. After its too late, patients are learning that the days they spent in the hospital are being billed to Medicare on an outpatient basis. The result for the senior is that staying in the hospital under observation status does not trigger rehabilitation benefits and out of pocket costs may be higher.

To learn how the recently passed “Notice Act” effects observation status, go to www.waltshurdenlaw.com.

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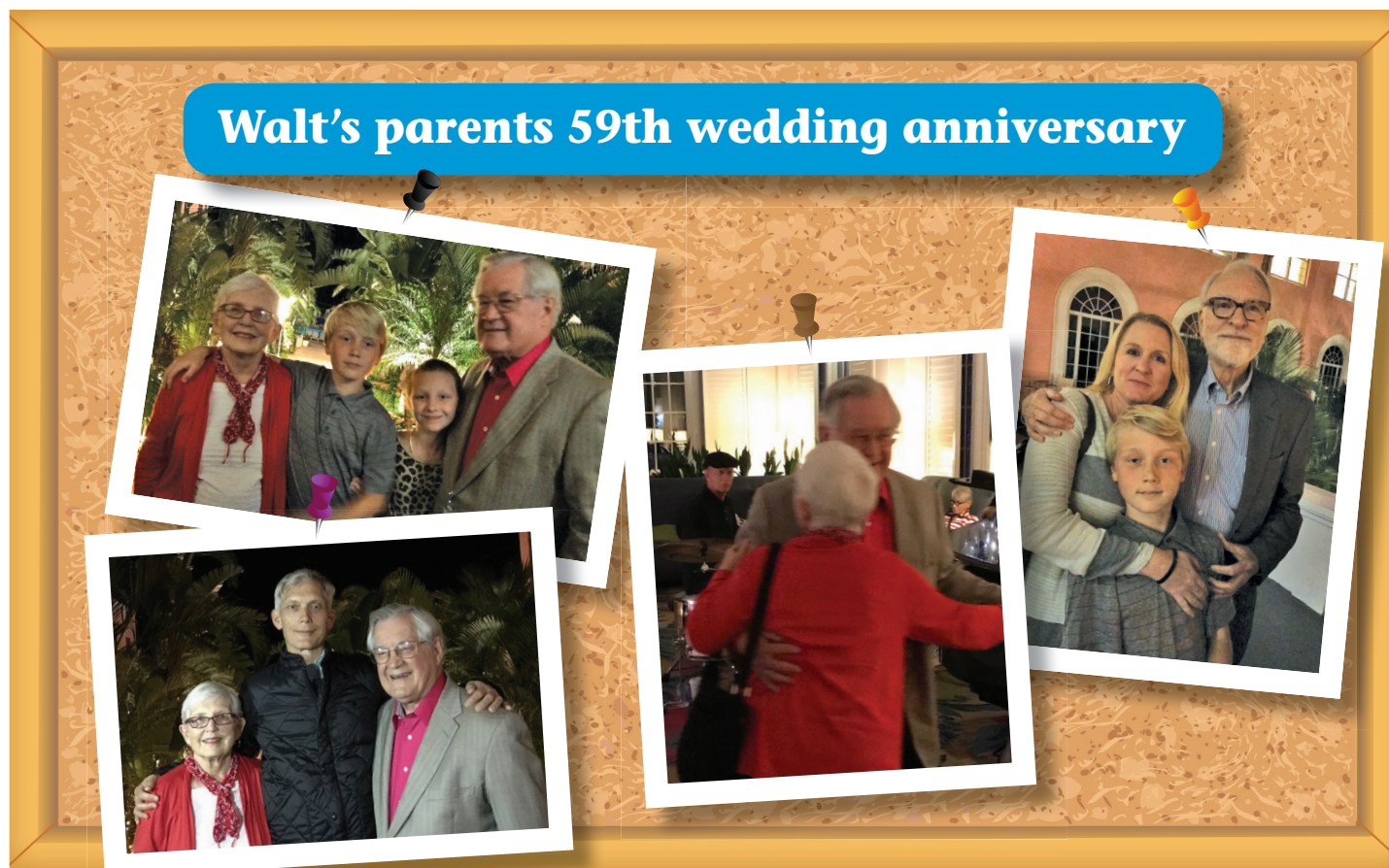
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Legal Term of the Month

Emolument – The returns from office or employment, usually in the form of compensation. The U.S. Constitution prohibits any person holding a federal “office of profit or trust” from accepting, without the consent of Congress, “any emolument from a king, prince, or foreign state.”

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