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ESTATE PLANNING DOCUMENTS EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

A Last Will and Testament sets forth your instructions for the distribution of your property after your death. A Will can also specify when you want your beneficiaries to receive their share of your property and can nominate individuals to act as guardians for your children.

DURABLE GENERAL POWER OF ATTORNEY

A power of attorney is a document in which you state that you give someone else (usually a relative or friend) the authority to make certain decisions and act on your behalf. A general power of attorney is usually used to allow your agent to handle all of your financial/business affairs during a period of time when you are unable to do so. For example, when you are traveling out of the state or country or when you are physically or mentally unable to handle your affairs. If you do not establish a durable power of attorney and you become mentally incapacitated, it may be necessary for a court to appoint a guardian or conservator for you.

HEALTH CARE PROXY

The Health Care Proxy is a simple legal document that allows you to name someone you know and trust to make health care decisions for you if, for any reason and at any time, you become unable to make or communicate those decisions. It is an important document, because it concerns not only the choices you make about your health care, but also the relationships you have with your physician, family, and others who may be involved with your care.

LIVING WILL

A Living Will documents your wishes concerning treatment when those wishes can no longer be personally communicated. For example, a Living Will can set forth your directive concerning artificial nutrition, hydration, respiration and other life-sustaining measures so that your health care agent is aware of your specific wishes in this regard.

DIRECTIVE REGARDING DISPOSITION OF REMAINS

A person should provide written directions for the disposition of his/her remains so that your family and friends can honor these expressed intentions. The directive should include information regarding whether cremation or burial is preferred, the desired resting place (i.e., cemetery plot, mausoleum, etc.), as well as any specific memorial service arrangements.