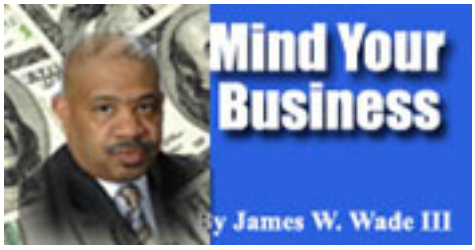


Ohio is currently not a common law state but Ohio only recognizes common law marriage if you were together before Oct. 10, 1991.

**The importance of a will**

After reading about the Jimmy Bivins incident last week, it makes you wonder why people are not making wills, living trust, or something to prevent these types of situations from happening.

Everyone has someone they can trust to put in charge in case something happens to them. No matter if it's a child or family member, someone has to be in charge after you die. Time and time again you see children fighting over money and who's going to be the boss. It seems like the person who passed has nothing to worry about because they are not here any longer to see the fighting.

A will is a legal document allowing a person or persons to manage everything after ones death.

A will is great for a large family who will be arguing over what clothes momma or daddy would have wanted to be buried in or what funeral home they wanted to handle their remains. I have even seen people argue over who they want to sing or speak at a funeral.

Hopefully, there is an insurance policy to pay for the funeral and maybe, just maybe,

arrangements have already been preplanned.

Parents write down what you want if you don't have a will.

No one ever wants to think about death, but it can come to anyone at any age. Most homes have computers now. Write out what you want, sign it, and give it to the people you want to know what's going on after you die.

There is no legal requirement that a will be drawn up by a lawyer, but I would strongly suggest you use a lawyer. Make sure you tell family members where you have insurance policies and bank accounts so they can quickly gather up all these items after the death.

If you really want my two cents, I suggest getting a will. Who wants the court telling you what to do with your people's stuff? Because, if you die without a will, the court decides who or how your property will be divided. The will also points out exactly what arrangements are made for your family or whomever you decided to execute how your property is divided after you die.

Remember what happen with the Godfather of Soul James Brown, who wasn't buried for weeks because of a contested will? Why should love ones be subjected to this during their time of sorrow?

I hate to see families fighting over money when someone dies. That should not be the main thing on their mind after losing a family member who meant a lot to them. The parent needs to spell out who will get what, so the kids won't be at the church mad and not speaking to one another.

Having a conversation with my co-worker, we talked about estate planning. This legal terminology is something I think have a lot of people fooled. Estate planning is just a simple way of making things easier for family members after you die.

This process should not be expensive if you do or use do-it-yourself kits. Just take a look over what you have, make a will, and review the beneficiary designations for your various accounts.

Having a conversation with Strawbridge Memorial Chapel Funeral Home, they shared that more seasoned people are starting to understand the plight of not having everything in order. More are starting to come in and pre-plan their arrangements to save the loved ones from fighting. You can contact them or any funeral home to help you with the process for your funeral.

I talked about using your computer to type out your plans and wishes. Make sure you include your personal information about your schools and other things that involved your life and family so whoever has to write the obituary can have some knowledge of your life.

Also, who do you want to do the eulogy if you are not a member of any church? Some funeral homes have preachers they work with to assist you. A lot of funeral homes now offer picture slide shows, so someone is going to have to provide them with a lot of images.

So no matter how you feel about dying, it is good to pre-plan your funeral.

None of us will live forever and, even if you are going to be cremated, someone has to know that. Hopefully, while you are reading this column, you will decide if you do not have a will to get everything in order for your funeral.

Cremation seems to be more popular for some people. Recently, I have attended memorial services where a loved one was cremated. The service was the same minus the casket lying in the front of the church. Most memorials normally have a picture of the person.

Last but certainly not least, make sure you tell them where you want to be buried. I use to have dreams of me being tossed over the hill at Potter's Field. For those who don't know Potter's Field is the burial place for the unknown or the unclaimed.

You have choices of city owned or private cemeteries, this is something also that your funeral home can help you determine. So take time and get your business in order.

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*Comments and questions are welcome but, because of the volume of mail, personal responses are not always possible. Please note that comments or questions may be used in a future column.*