

HELLO THERE!

We hope this letter finds you doing well and getting ready for another beautiful PNW summer! Everyone in our firm is ready for the sun-filled, long days and excitement of the season.

We know it's not always the most exciting thing to find mail from your estate planning attorney in your mailbox, but we assure you: this is not that type of mail. This is our first Trusts & Estates Newsletter, "Trust Talk," which – we also realize – may not be the most exciting thing you get in your mailbox this week. But we send it because our little firm has gone through a lot of fun changes in the last year, and we wanted to share those with you. And a newsletter with pictures seemed like a good way to do it.

As you probably recall from your time with us, we don't think estate planning or talking about death or incapacity should be depressing or heavy; it should be a time to acknowledge your relationships, prioritize your legacy, rejoice in the amazing life you have created, and, in fact, reflect on how you want to live your life before you need the documents we prepare as part of your estate plan.

We have spent much of the last year working on how to better serve our clients in a changing world. Traditionally, estate planning has been a transactional practice – you sign documents, and we don't see you again until something changes or something bad happens. We have found our clients want more than that ... they want an ongoing relationship with our firm and our engaging team. We would like that too! The more connected we are, the more successful your plan is for your family. The enclosed Newsletter is a first step toward that ideal. In this Newsletter, you'll read about The Bridge Club, an exciting new program that we are offering exclusively to our estate planning clients. The Bridge Club has been a labor of love for our team, and we are excited to offer it to you today. We also have big news about a new office, some wonderful new team members, and even some info on important legal updates.

At the very least, we just wanted to say "hello" and wish you a happy summer. Please pop by one of our offices if you are nearby and let us know how you and your family are doing. (We also love seeing dogs if you are out on a walk!) And, of course, if you have any questions for us along the way or questions about what is in our fancy new Newsletter, give us a call or email!

-Annie, Hannah and Lindsay









HAPPY SUMMER!



Have you looked at your estate plan since you signed the documents? Do you remember who was in the important roles? Are they still the right people? Do you want to call our office to check in on things but are anxious about the cost? Do your kids know that they should call our firm when something bad happens? Do you want to get legal updates and know whether that affects your plan?

If you've asked yourself these questions, or similar questions about the maintenance of your estate plan, we have a solution for you! Starting in January 2024, we began a service exclusively for the benefit of our estate planning clients: THE BRIDGE CLUB!

The Bridge Club is basically a subscription service...but this isn't every month or year. For one payment of \$500, you get the following benefits for the **NEXT FIVE YEARS:**



- 1. Free paralegal-led changes to your estate planning documents
- 2. Discount on attorney-led changes to your estate planning documents
 - 3. Discount on administration of your estate



4. Five-year check-in to see if your estate plan continues to reflect your desires and/or the correct people in important roles



5. A dedicated phone number and email address to prioritize your communications with our Trusts & Estates team

Over the years, we have found our clients do not want their relationship with our firm to be transactional ("one and done") - neither do we! We have also found that staying connected with our clients over the years and updating their estate plan periodically is the best way to make sure an estate plan works as it is intended. The Bridge Club is a big step toward this goal of connecting your family to our firm. The program is evolving as it grows, and we plan to include periodic updates, webinars, events, a Facebook group, and other fun benefits along the way!

GET IN EARLY!

This opportunity is available exclusively to our estate planning clients. You can join in minutes by clicking above or visiting www.thenarrowslawgroup.com/the-bridge-club





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OFFICE UPDATES

NEW GIG HARBOR OFFICE!

In January 2024, we opened our new Gig Harbor office on Harborview Drive, across the street from Tides Tavern. For those of you who came to see us after we first moved in – we now have walls and furniture! It's a gorgeous space, with

beautiful views of Harborview from every office. We really feel like we are a part of Gig Harbor now, which makes sense because several of our team members live in/around Gig Harbor.

The new space was designed by Parker Roland, attorney Hannah Roland's husband, who is an industrial designer. Please stop by if you are in the area - we'd love to see you and show off our new space! Our Gig Harbor office is currently open Tuesday-Thursday 8:30-4:30 and by appointments on Fridays. (The Gig Harbor office only provides Trusts & Estates services - family law services with one of our family law attorneys are only provided in our Tacoma office).

UPDATED TACOMA OFFICE!

Speaking of our Tacoma office, we are still loving our beautiful Old Town office, and it remains our headquarters. The Tacoma office recently got a face-lift to accommodate our growing firm. In fact, in the 10 years we have been in that space, we have doubled in size and taken over the entire floor. Old Town is such a beautiful destination to get your estate plan done or updated! Come on by to say hello and see what we've done with the place!





OUR PODCAST

For the last few years, Annie Arbenz and Hannah Roland, who are sisters (if you didn't know), have teamed up with their mom, Lonna, to host a podcast called You Can't Take It With You. It's a light and fun podcast about heavy topics. They tackle different topics every couple weeks, ranging from Why You Need a Will to Why You Need a Death Doula!

It turns out Lonna has done a great job drowning out her two daughters' constant chatter and laughing over the years because she really doesn't know a lot about estate planning. In other words, she's the perfect co-host because she ask's all of the questions that people ask when they come in to get their planning done! And it is an interesting way to learn funny details about their family!





Check out YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU on iTunes, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts. Visit www.thenarrowslawgroup.com/podcast for more information (or click to the left).



ESTATE PLANNING

WHAT'S UP WITH THE ESTATE TAX?

As most of you know, Washington residents get to worry about not one BUT TWO estate taxes! What a pleasure to live in this soggy part of the country. A quick breakdown of these two taxes:

TAX	CURRENT EXEMPTION PER PERSON	AUTO. DOUBLE EXEMPTION FOR A MARRIED COUPLE	TAX RATE *depends on value of estate
Washington Estate Tax	\$2,193,000	No	10%-20% of everything over exemption
Federal Estate Tax	\$13,610,000	YES (27K/couple)	40% of everything over exemption

As you can guess, Washington makes a lot of money on the estate tax, and it is likely not going anywhere any time soon. Our exemption hasn't changed since 2017 ... seems pretty inconsistent with inflation, right?

On the flipside, the federal estate tax exemption changes often. The current, high exemption levels are a reflection of the Trump administration and are set to sunset in 2026, when the exemption will revert back to \$7M per person (and \$14M per couple). TBD on what will happen to this... one more reason to keep an eye on the election this fall. As if you could avoid it! **Estate tax is a big part of our world. Please give us a call if you have questions.**

HOW ARE YOUR BENEFICIARY DESIGNATIONS LOOKING THESE DAYS?

We have seen more and more complications arise lately because of mistakes in beneficiary designations. Remember, your beneficiary designations supersede all the lovely words and intent in your will or living trust, so please-please make sure they are updated to mesh with the plan we put in place!

HAVE A LIVING TRUST? DOES IT OWN EVERYTHING?

Lots of our clients have living trusts, which are excellent tools for avoiding probate, if probate seems like it would be complicated for your estate. Problem is: if your living trust doesn't own everything or isn't somehow connected to each of your financial assets, you might have a probate anyway. Call us if you want to dive into your assets to confirm they're all titled correctly. Banks and title companies are becoming pickier every year and we are doing a lot of work with our clients to accommodate these increasing requirements in the living trust world.

MAKING GIFTS? MAKE SURE YOU'RE REPORTING THEM!

Generally speaking, if you make a gift to someone, you (the giver!) have to pay tax on it! Thanks, Uncle Sam! BUT as you likely know, there are a lot of exceptions to that rule. Here are a few important ones for our clients:

- 1. The annual exclusion allows you to give up to \$18,000 in 2024 without either side paying tax or even reporting the gift. Note that you can give \$18,000 to anyone e.g., each of you and your spouse can give your daughter \$18,000 without having to report.
- 2. The lifetime gift tax exemption allows you to give up to \$13,610,000 from your estate without paying tax, but you do have to report it to the IRS. The IRS tracks it because a large gift (over \$18K/yr.) decreases your federal estate tax exemption. If you get to this level of giving, you'll want to talk to us or your CPA.

TEAM UPDATES

We are so grateful to our community for supporting us and helping us grow our firm and bring more wonderful people onto our team. We'd like to take a few minutes to introduce/re-introduce you to our new team members!



Founding attorney **Annie Arbenz** is so proud to have recently celebrated 10 years with TNLG and, even better, is also celebrating her son's 10-year-old birthday (her daughter is a short 16 months behind him!). She and her husband, Casey, took their family to a month-long sabbatical in Tuscany last year. The good news? They actually came back to the US! The bad news? They had to come home! Annie and her family recently welcomed a new Golden Retriever puppy, Josie, to the family. Puppy tips welcome!

Attorney **Hannah Roland** just got back from her honeymoon in the islands of Greece. Hannah and her husband, Parker, were married in Chelan in October of last year. So, if you were wondering why Hannah Calas isn't here, that's because her name changed! Hannah is currently in the "all of my friends are getting married" stage of life, so most of her travels are related to supporting her best friends' nuptials this coming year. If you're wondering, Rooney, Hannah's four-year-old Golden Retriever, is loving life in Gig Harbor.





Attorney **Lindsay Appleton** joined the firm in January 2023 to help build up the probate side of the business, and she has been the happiest addition to our team! Lindsay previously worked and lived in Seattle, but she has since moved to the South Sound and calls Tacoma her home. Though she is now a South Sounder, Lindsay is our one team member who actually makes it to Seattle on a regular basis, which may be mostly to visit her family Golden-doodle, Zoey, who lives with Lindsay's mom.

Madison James (formerly Madison Goertz) has been with the firm since it started, just over 10 years ago. Madison started as our part-time receptionist, was then Annie's long-time paralegal, and is now the Director of Operations of the Trusts & Estates group, where she manages the logistics and processes of our growing team. If that's not enough, in the last few years, Madison was married to Jesse, bought two houses (and moved twice), and had two baby boys (in addition to raising two big dogs)! Life is not boring for Madison!





Depending on when you met **Logan Lauenstein**, he might have been at the front of our Tacoma office, but he is now our lead estate planning paralegal and is based in our Gig Harbor office. Logan recently moved back to Gig Harbor after a brief stint in Tacoma, but he is still raising his sweet Violet, a French bulldog, who is now 2 years old. In other exciting news, Logan's favorite woman in the world, his mom, finally moved to Gig Harbor from his hometown of Golden, Colorado.

We are so lucky to have welcomed **Jennifer Watkins**, our legal probate paralegal, to our team this year! Jennifer has years of experience in trusts & estates work and has really helped build our probate practice in a matter of months. Before becoming a paralegal, Jennifer went to culinary school, and she just finished, as of May 2024, her bachelor's in science at Boise State University. Jennifer lives with her husband, Doug, and their pup, Delta, in downtown Sumner.





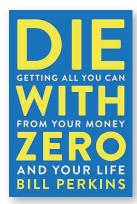
Our newest paralegal is **Kristen Tayet**, who was previously a litigation paralegal. Now, she is the Director of The Bridge Club, helping make sure that our newest service for our clients goes off without a hitch. Kristen and her husband, Brent, live in Gig Harbor with their three kiddos and their Golden Retriever, Bjorn. Kristen and Annie met on the basketball court, where they coach their daughters together!

The newest member of our team is **Theresa Kelly**, who is our receptionist and legal assistant in the Gig Harbor office. Theresa comes from an entrepreneurial background, which translates well to our firm as it grows. Theresa is a woman of many skills and a multi-tasking hero, which likely comes from her raising three kiddos!



THE BOOK CLUB



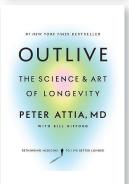


Our team loves to read things other than legal documents, and we have come across some great books lately. We wanted to share two of them, which have sparked conversations with our clients over the last few months . . . enjoy!

DIE WITH ZERO

Many of our clients joke about dying with nothing and planning to spend every penny... It might be a joke, but it's a trend gaining attention (for good

reason). This book dives into the theory of investing in experiences instead of things and how you can actually plan to die with zero. Our favorite part: making a bucket list for every decade of life.



OUTLIVE

Almost every client tells us they don't want to be a burden to their families if they are diagnosed with dementia or Alzheimer's. Cue: Outlive! Dr. Peter Attia contends that it's not about "lifespan" but about "health span" – living a

healthy life for as long as you can, not just living as long as you can. Outlive is a dense but fascinating read and will empower you to take your health and future into your own hands instead of hoping for the best.

Have a good book suggestion for us? Thoughts on our suggestions? Email us at bookclub@thenarrowslawgroup.com