THE AD LITEM MANUAL FOR 2016

FOR
GUARDIANSHIP & HEIRSHIP PROCEEDINGS
IN
TEXAS PROBATE COURTS

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GUARDIANSHIP (From the Ad Litem's Perspective)

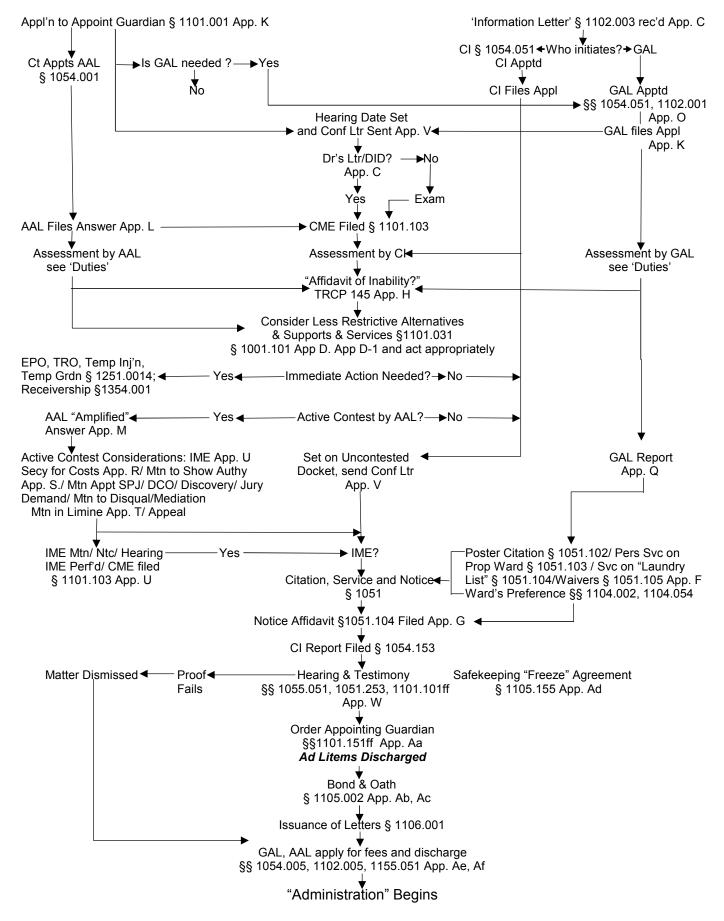


TABLE OF CONTENTS

GUARDIANSHIP (From the Ad Litem's Perspective)	Frontispiece
LINTRODUCTION	7
I. INTRODUCTION	
B. Certification Requirements	
C. Liability and Immunity	
D. Ineffective Assistance of Counsel	
II. AREAS IN WHICH AD LITEMS ARE APPOINTED	
A. Appointment of a Guardian	
B. Restoration/Modification of Guardianship- Attorney Ad Litem	
C. Removal of Community Administrator – Attorney Ad Litem	
D. Heirship Determinations – Attorney Ad Litem	
E. Disclaimers – Guardian Ad Litem	
F. Probate of Will After Four Years – Attorney Ad Litem	
G. Partition Actions – Guardian Ad Litem	
H. Trust Construction or Modification Actions – Guardian Ad Litem	
I. Mental Health Commitments – Attorney Ad Litem	
J. Purchase of Estate Property by Guardian – Attorney Ad Litem	
K. Sale of Minor's Interest in Property	
L. Sports and Entertainment Contracts Entered Into by Minors- Guardian Ad Litem	
M. Inspection by Guardian of Ward's Estate Planning Documents – Guardian Ad Litem	10
N. Show Cause and Compliance Actions – Guardian Ad Litem and Attorney Ad Litem	
O. Proper Investment by Guardian – Guardian Ad Litem	
P. Establishment of Pooled Trust Subaccount – Attorney Ad Litem	
Q. Final Settlement of Guardianship Estate - Attorney Ad Litem	
R. Judicial Bypass Proceedings- Guardian Ad Litem and Attorney Ad Litem	
S. Family Code Appointments - Guardian Ad Litem and Attorney Ad Litem	
T. "Utility Outfielder" Appointments - Attorney Ad Litem	
U. "Utility Outfielder" Appointments - Guardian Ad Litem	
III. ELECTRONIC RESOURCES - Learn the Law/Embrace the Technology	10
A. Electronic Resources	10
B. E-Filing & E-Notice	
IV. A to Z FOR AD LITEMS IN GUARDIANSHIP PROCEEDINGS	11
A. Study this Manual	11
B. Guardianship Summary	
C. Can You Get There From Here?	
D. Mechanics of Appointment: The Ad Litem Wheel	11
E. The Language of Guardianship: Less Restrictive Alternatives & Supports and Services	11
F. Local Rules	12
G. Standing Orders	12
H. What Documents to Expect	12
I. Fundamentally Understand Your Role	12
MAJOR CAVEAT: Scope of Appointment	12
1. The Role of the Attorney Ad Litem	
a. Legal Counsel	
b. The Prime Directive	
c. "But I don't want a guardian"	12
d. Duties	
Notes on Medical Records	
2. The Role of the Guardian Ad Litem	
a. Defined	
b. Personal Representative	
-	

	c. Assess & Recommend	13
	d. Basic Scenarios: Jiminy Cricket or Quarterback?	14
	e. Duties	14
J.	Is Immediate Action Required?	14
K.	Temporary Guardianships	
L.	· · ·	
M	Investigate: Finding the Black Box	
	Assess Capacity	
	Independent Medical Exam	
р.	The Ad Litem's Dilemma	
0	Is the Application Timely Filed?	
	Who Picks Up the Tab? – Affidavit of Inability to Pay	
	DICAL RECORDS	
	Federal and State Confidentiality Laws	
	The Physician's Certificate of Medical Examination	
D.	Basics: Incapacitated Proposed Ward	
	2. Modification and /or Restoration: CME to consider Supports and Services	
	3. Basics: Intellectually Disabled Potential Ward	
	4. Independent Medical Exam	
	5. Evidentiary Considerations.	
	6. Maintenance of Guardianship Orders by Care Facilities	
1.III D	7. Defensive Considerations: The Answer May Depend on Who You Ask	22
	EALING WITH THE COURT AND COURT PERSONNEL/ PREPARING FOR HEARING	
_	Your Best Allies	
В.	<i>S</i>	
	Working the File	
	Ad Litem Reports	
	Citation and Notice: A Jurisdictional Foundation and the Laundry List	23
F.	Paperwork to Have on Hand	
	The Proposed Order: Powers of the Guardian. Limitations of the Ward	
Н.	Appointment of Resident Agent	
I.	Copies	28
	EARING DAY: SOME GENERAL AND PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS	
A.	Generally	28
B.	Decorum	28
C.	The Hearing at the Bench	28
D.	Burden(s) of Proof	29
E.	Bench Instructions and Training.	29
F.	Contested Hearings (with a Court Reporter)	29
G.	Trainwrecks	30
H.	Clerk's Follow-Up Duties	30
I.	Say the Words, Take the Money, Go Home	30
J.	Selling the Follow-Through.	
IX. AC	TIVE CONTEST OF THE APPLICATION	31
	Threshold Consideration.	
\mathbf{A}_{\cdot}	File an Answer!	
	Determine If Immediate Action is Necessary	
C.	Set the Hearing on the Contested Docket	
D.	Calling for Backup	
	Retained Counsel	
F.	Request a Statutory Probate Judge	
G.	Intervention	
Э. Н	Consider Seeking Security for Costs	
I.	Ask for a Jury Trial	35

J.	Pursue Adequate Discovery	35
K.	Advocate for Mediation	35
L.	Shutting the Gate: TROs, Temporary Guardianships and Notice of Lis Pendens	35
M.	"Interesting Challenge" – Interest for Standing vs. Adverse Interest	36
	Challenging the Applicant – Disqualification.	
	Criminal Back ground Checks	
O.	If Advantageous – Try to Have Your Client Appear at the Hearing	
P.		
	The Order: Negotiate a Tactical Retreat	
ζ.	Note on Disclosure Requirement: Right to Physical Possession of Ward	
R.	An Appealing Thought?	
	Potential Ancillary Litigation	
T.	More Practice Pointers.	
X FEE	E CONSIDERATIONS	
	Introduction	
	Basic Premise	
	Burden of Proof	
D.	0 1 07	
E.	Reasonableness	
F.	Guidelines, Not Elements	
	Evidence Required	
	Expert Testimony	
11. J	No "Bonus" Factors	
1. J.	No Prior Objections Required	
J. K.	Limited Duties	
L.	Non-Compensable Activities	
	Going It Alone	
	Fee Applications.	
	County-Pay Cases	
	Private Pay Cases	
	Expenses	
	Do Not Bill For:	
S.		
T.	What to Do with the Foo Ambiention	
	What to Do with the Fee Application	
	Separate Order Always Required	
	Specific Areas of Concern on Fee Applications	
	OSING THOUGHTS	
	Removal of an Ad Litem	
	Re-Activation of the Ad Litem	
	EIRSHIP PROCEEDINGS	
_	Introduction	
В.		
C.	Scope of "Heirship Determination"	
D.	Duty and Standing of the Attorney Ad Litem	
E.	Pointers on Different Types of Cases: "Plain Jane" or "Mystery"	
F.	Due Diligence	
G.	Time Records and Fee Applications	
H.	Areas of Particular Concern	
	1. Shares of the Estate – Fractions, Not Decimals	
	2. How Did We Get Here? Show Your Work!	
	3. Imbedded Heirships	
	4. Per Stirpes and Per Capita Distributions.	
	5. Half-Blood and Whole-Blood Distributions	49

	6. Heirship and Disclaimers	49
	7. Adult Adoptees	49
	8. Deadbeat Dads	49
	9. The Slayer's Rule	49
1	0. DNA Evidence and Heirship	49
1	1. Surviving Spouse's Interest	49
	ob Skills	
XIII. EPI	LOGUE: TAKING OVER THE REINS	50
	APPENDICES:	
٨		52
A. B.	Guardianship Summary Policy for Court-Initiated Guardianships	
Б. С.	Information Letter & Physician's Certificate of Medical Exam (with DID)	
C. D.	Less Restrictive Alternatives to Guardianship	
D. D-1.	Supports & Services	
D-1. Е.	Investigator's Checklist	
F.	Waiver of Citation, Consent to Appointment & Request for Notification.	
г. G.	Affidavit Regarding Notice under § 1051.104(b)	
О. Н.	Affidavit of Inability to Pay Costs	
II. I.	Application for Temporary Guardianship/ Fiat for Hearing	
J.	Order Appointing Temporary Guardian	
J. К.	Application for Appointment of a Guardian of the Person (and Estate)	
L.	Original Answer (Attorney Ad Litem)	
M.	Original Answer ("Contest")	
N.	Application & Order for Authority to Utilize Attorneys and Staff of Appointee's Law Firm	
O.	Motion for Appointment of Guardian Ad Litem and Order	
О. Р.	Entry of Appearance of Guardian Ad Litem	
Q.	Report of Guardian Ad Litem	
R.	Motion for Security for Costs & Order	
S.	Motion to Show Authority, Show Cause Citation & Order	
т.	Motion in Limine and to Dismiss Application	
U.	Motion for Independent Medical Examination, Fiat & Order	
V.	Setting Confirmation	
W.	Proof of Facts (Guardianship)	
X.	Exhibit: Evidence in Support of Requested Bond	
Υ.	Exhibit: Evidence in Support of Requested Monthly Allowance	
Z.	Suggested Cross-Examination Questions for the Ad Litem	
Aa.	Order Appointing Guardian of the Person (and Estate)	
Ab.	Personal Surety Bond	
Ac.	Oath of Guardian	
Ad.	Safekeeping ("Freeze") Agreement (Pre-Appointment)	
Ae.	Fee Application & Order - County Pay ("Set Fee")	
Af.	Fee Application & Order – Private or County Pay in Excess of Set Fee	
Ag.	Practice Tips from the Probate Court One Investigators	
Ah.	Roster: Texas Court Investigators	
Ai.	Court Instructions: Guardian of the Person/ Guardian of the Estate (English/Spanish)	
Aj.	Ward's Bill of Rights (English/Spanish) & Information to Be Furnished	
Ak.	Initial Report of the Guardian of the Person	
Al.	Affidavit/Certificate regarding Citation in Heirship	
Am.	Answer by Attorney Ad Litem in Heirship Proceeding	
An.	Report by Attorney Ad Litem in Heirship Proceeding and Distribution Chart	
Ao.	Sworn Statement of Services & Expenses by Atty Ad Litem In Heirship Proceeding & Order	142
Ap.	Intestacy Chart	143
Aq.	Estates Code Index 2015	144

The Ad Litem Manual 2016

I. INTRODUCTION:

To help the reader to become familiar with:

- 1. the types of proceedings in which ad litems may be appointed;
- 2. the varying roles of the ad litem in different proceedings;
- 3. fulfilling the responsibilities of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem in the different proceedings;
- 4. how to before the bench and in dealing with court personnel; and
- 5. some specifics on fee applications.

This manual deal primarily with the uncontested aspects of a guardianship and only briefly with contests. For more information on guardianship litigation, see:

- 1. State Bar of Texas Seminars on:
 - Advanced Estate Planning and Probate (Litigation Breakout Section)
 - Advanced Guardianship Course
 - Fiduciary Litigation Course
- 2. Tarrant County Probate Bar Association Probate Litigation Seminar in Fort Worth (every other fall).

For a very insightful commentary on dealing with ad litems, see Hopper, Craig, *Call in the Sheriff: Handling Overzealous Ad Litems and Other Outlaws*, State Bar of Texas Advanced Guardianship Course 2010.

A. Initial Query: Why Should the Judge Care?

TEX. EST. CODE § 1201.003 provides that "A judge is liable on the judge's bond to those damaged if damage or loss results to a guardianship or ward because of the gross neglect of the judge to use reasonable diligence in the performance of the judge's duty under this subchapter."

While this is not the same as personal liability (See *Twilligear v. Carrell*, 148 S.W.3d 502 (2004 Tex. App. Houston 14th District 2004) (pet. denied)), judges with probate jurisdiction, especially statutory probate judges, do not relish having a target on the back of their robes.

Active judicial oversight, requiring guardians to timely account, and employing ad litems to assist the court in enforcing the probate code, are the best defenses the courts have in minimizing loss to the wards and eventual distributees in probate.

B. Certification Requirements:

An Attorney Ad Litem must be certified to obtain appointments in guardianship proceedings. A Guardian

Ad Litem need not be so certified. Additionally, the attorney for the Applicant must be so certified. Tex. Est. Code §1054.201.

Certification requires completion of a State Bar of Texas-sponsored four three hour CLE course on guardianship law and procedure, including one hour on alternatives to guardianship and supports and services available to proposed wards. TEX. EST. CODE § 1054.201(b). These courses are available on videotape, in live presentations and via internet.

Once certification is obtained, a copy of the certificate should be forwarded to the appropriate courts. Re-certification is required every two (2) years until the attorney has been certified for four years, and then the certification is effective for a four (4) year period. TEX. EST. CODE § 1054.202.

When a certificate has expired, a new certificate must be obtained for the attorney to be eligible for appointment as an Attorney Ad Litem. TEX. EST. CODE § 1054.203.

The certification requirement applies during administration of the guardianship as well. In *Guardianship of Marburger*, 2010 Tex. App. LEXIS 10255 (Tex. App. Corpus Christi, December 30, 2010, no pet.).

An uncertified attorney has no authority to represent the Ward and lacks standing to bring an appeal. *Guardianship of Wehe*, 2012 Tex. App. LEXIS 8931 (Tex. App. Corpus Christi, October 25, 2012, no pet.)

A complaint about an attorney ad litem who is not properly certified is not a basis for a writ of mandamus, but could be raised by direct appeal or a statutory bill of review. *In Re: Cunningham*, 2014 Tex. App. LEXIS 13682 (Tex. App. Texarkana December 19, 2014)

No certification is required for Attorneys Ad Litem in other proceedings, such as heirship or trust matters.

C. Liability and Immunity:

TEX. EST. CODE § 1054.056 provides for immunity from civil damages for a Guardian Ad Litem (appointed under §§ 1054.051, 1102.001, or 1202.054) from recommendations made or opinions given as a Guardian Ad Litem. (Except for willfully wrongful, reckless, bad faith, malicious and grossly negligent statements.) Cf: *Kabbani v. Papadopolous* 2009 Tex. App. LEXIS 1320 (Tex. App. Houston 1st Dist, February 26, 2009, pet. denied) where the court upheld similar statutory immunity for a Guardian Ad Litem under the Texas Family Code.

In addition, TEX. RULES CIV. PROC. 173 governs ad litem appointments of Guardians Ad Litem

other than pursuant to a specific statute, such as the Family Code and the Estates Code, or by other rules, such as the Parental Notification Rules.

The responsibility of the Guardian Ad Litem under these circumstances is very limited, and the Guardian Ad Litem is specifically <u>not</u> to participate in the underlying litigation (even reviewing the discovery or litigation files) except to the limited extent of the division of settlement proceeds. *Jocson v. Crabb*, 133 S. W. 3d 268 (Tex. 2004) (per curiam), *on remand*, 196 S.W.3d 302 (Tex. App. Houston 1st Dist. 2006, no pet.). A Guardian Ad Litem may, of course, choose to actively participate in the litigation and discovery, but compensation is not to be awarded for such activity.

Only in extraordinary circumstances does the rule contemplate that a Guardian Ad Litem will have a broader role. Even then, the role is limited to determining whether a party's next friend or guardian has an interest adverse to the party that should be considered by the court under TEX. RULE CIV. PROC. 44.

D. Ineffective Assistance of Counsel

In Ex Parte Parker, 2014 Tex. App. LEXIS 36 (Tex. App. Amarillo, January 3, 2014, no pet.), the appeals court noted that allegations of ineffective assistance of an appointed attorney ad litem would be reviewed under the same standard as in cases regarding termination of parental rights.

The standard (applied by both the Texas Supreme Court and the U. S. Supreme Court) requires a complainant to demonstrate 1) the counsel's assistance fell below an objective standard of reasonableness and 2) that the ad litem's deficient assistance prejudiced the Ward's case. Such allegations must be firmly founded in, and affirmatively demonstrated by, the court's record.

II. AREAS IN WHICH AD LITEMS ARE APPOINTED

A. Appointment of a Guardian

1. ATTORNEY AD LITEM

A. <u>Defined § 1002.002</u> - "an attorney appointed by a court to represent and advocate on behalf of a proposed ward, an incapacitated person or an unborn person in a guardianship proceeding."

- B. <u>Mandatory</u> The appointment of an Attorney Ad Litem is <u>mandatory</u> in every application for the appointment of a guardian. §1054.001.
- C. <u>Guardianship Management Trust</u> Also, if a guardianship management trust is to be created, with or without the creation of a guardianship, an Attorney Ad Litem must be appointed. §1301.051(2).

D. <u>Term of Appointment</u> - Unless the court determines that the continued appointment of the attorney ad litem appointed is in the ward's best interests, the attorney ad litem's term of appointment expires, without a court order, upon the appointment of a guardian, the appointment of a successor guardian, or upon the court's denial of an application for appointment of a guardian. §1054.002.

The term of appointment of an attorney ad litem appointed in a temporary guardianship continues after the court appoints a temporary guardian unless an order of the court provides otherwise. § 1054.002(b).

2. GUARDIAN AD LITEM

- A. <u>Defined § 1002.013</u> "a person appointed by a court to represent the best interests of an incapacitated person in a guardianship proceeding."
- B. <u>Discretionary</u> The appointment of a Guardian Litem is within the discretion of the trial court. \$1054.051.
- C. <u>Dual Appointment Possible</u> In the interest of judicial economy, the court may appoint the person who has been appointed attorney ad litem (either under in the guardianship proceeding or who is serving as an ad litem for the ward's benefit in any other proceeding) as guardian ad litem. §1054.052
- D. <u>Term of Appointment</u> Unless the court determines that the continued appointment of the guardian ad litem appointed is in the ward's best interests, the guardian ad litem's term of appointment expires, without a court order, upon the appointment of a guardian or upon the court's denial of an application for appointment of a guardian. §1054.053.

B. Restoration/Modification of Guardianship - Attorney Ad Litem TEX. EST. CODE § 1202ff. If the ward or any person interested in the ward's welfare seeks a complete restoration or modification of the guardianship, a Guardian Ad Litem can be appointed under TPC § 1202.054(b) to investigate the possible restoration or modification. The Guardian Ad Litem can later be appointed as Attorney Ad Litem if an

C. Removal of Community Administrator - Attorney Ad Litem TEX. EST. CODE § 1353.151

application for restoration or modification is filed.

In a proceeding to remove a community administrator serving under § 1353, the court shall appoint an Attorney Ad Litem for the incapacitated spouse. The Attorney Ad Litem may demand an inventory or accounting from the community administrator. The community administrator must comply within 60 days of receiving the demand.

D. Heirship Determinations - Attorney Ad Litem The appointment of an Attorney Ad Litem and citation by publication is <u>mandatory</u> in all heirship determinations. TEX. EST. CODE §§ 53.104, 202.009. Additionally, the court is given the discretion to appoint either an Attorney Ad Litem or a Guardian Ad Litem to represent the interests of an heir that is incapacitated. TEX. EST. CODE §202.009.

A detailed discussion of the responsibilities of the Attorney Ad Litem in heirship determinations follows *infra* at XII. HEIRSHIP PROCEEDINGS.

- **E. Disclaimers Guardian Ad Litem** TEX. EST. CODE § 122.001ff The court may appoint a Guardian Ad Litem to represent a beneficiary who is unborn or unascertained.
- **F. Probate of Will After Four Years Attorney Ad Litem** TEX. EST. CODE § 258.052 The court shall appoint an Attorney Ad Litem to represent the interests of any heirs whose addresses are unknown in a proceeding to probate a will as a muniment of title after four years under TEX. EST. CODE § 256.003(a).
- **G. Partition Actions Guardian Ad Litem** TEX. EST. CODE § 360ff TEX. EST. CODE § 360.102(1)(B)&(C) references the Guardian Ad Litem for a minor beneficiary and the "attorney appointed to represent those persons who are unknown or who are not residents of this state."

H. Trust Construction or Modification Actions - Guardian Ad Litem TEX. PROP. CODE §115.014

The court may appoint a Guardian Ad Litem to represent the interests of a minor, an incapacitated, unborn or unascertained person, or person whose identity or address is unknown in a proceeding to construe, alter or amend a trust instrument. The Guardian Ad Litem is to seek to protect such person or persons in a manner that will enable the Court to determine what action will be in the best interests of such person or persons.

TEX. PROP. CODE §115.014(b) as amended in 2009 however, provides for the *mandatory* appointment of an Attorney Ad Litem to "defend" (represent) the interests of a trust beneficiary who is a minor or "incompetent" (incapacitated) regarding tort claims against a trustee under TEX. PROP. CODE (Trust Code) §114.083.

<u>VIRTUAL REPRESENTATION</u>: If a guardian of the estate or a Guardian Ad Litem has been appointed in a trust modification proceeding for minors, the doctrine of virtual representation (that a parent (beneficiary of one generation) may virtually represent beneficiaries of subsequent generations) does <u>not</u> apply. Trust Code §115.013(c)(3).

- **I. Mental Health Commitments Attorney Ad Litem** Pursuant to §574.004 of the Mental Health Code (Subchapter G, Texas Health & Safety Code) the court must, within 24 hours of the filing of the application for court-ordered services, appoint an attorney for each proposed patient who does not have an attorney.
- J. Purchase of Estate Property by Guardian Attorney Ad Litem TEX. EST. CODE § 1158.653 The court may allow a guardian to purchase property of the estate if it is found to be in the ward's best interests and an Attorney Ad Litem has been appointed to represent the ward.
- K. Sale of Minor's Interest in Property TEX. EST. CODE § 1351.001(b) If a minor who is not a ward does not have a parent or managing conservator willing or able to file an application for a court order to sell the minor's interest in property (under \$100,000), the court may appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to act on the minor's behalf for the limited purpose of applying for an order to sell the minor's interest in property.
- L. Sports and Entertainment Contracts Entered Into by Minors Guardian Ad Litem TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1356ff. A Guardian Ad Litem must be appointed to represent the promising minor sports, music or entertainment prodigy for purposes of negotiating a valid sports and entertainment contract.
- M. Inspection by Guardian of Ward's Estate Planning Documents Guardian Ad Litem TEX. EST. CODE § 1162.008 A Guardian Ad Litem may be appointed for the ward "or an interested party" when the guardian of the estate applies for an *in camera* inspection of estate planning documents of a ward in order for the guardian to apply for the power to establish an estate plan under TEX. EST. CODE § 1162ff.
- N. Show Cause and Compliance Actions Guardian Ad Litem and Attorney Ad Litem. When it appears the personal representative may have mismanaged estate funds, it is common to call upon a Guardian Ad Litem to help "backstop" the PR (or investigate what is *really* happening). Not infrequently, the ad litem may end up being appointed the successor PR upon the removal of the errant PR. See generally, §§ 1203ff; Smith, *Show Cause, Contempt, Surcharge*, Advanced Estate

Planning and Probate Course 2002, State Bar of Texas; and King, *Compliance Issues: Damage Control*, 43rd Annual Program on Wills, Trusts and Estate Planning (2004), Center for American and International Law and, generally, the State Bar of Texas Fiduciary Litigation seminars over the past several years.

- O. Proper Investment by Guardian Guardian Ad Litem TEX. EST. CODE § 1161.007 The court may appoint a Guardian Ad Litem for the limited purpose of representing the ward's best interests with respect to the investment of the ward's property at a show cause hearing under this section.
- P. Establishment of Pooled Trust Subaccount Attorney Ad Litem TEX. EST. CODE § 1302.003 The court shall appoint an Attorney Ad Litem for a person who is a minor or has a mental disability and who is the subject of an application under TEX. EST. CODE § 1302.002.
- Q. Final Settlement of Guardianship Estate Attorney Ad Litem TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1204.001(e) & 1204.002 The court may appoint an Attorney Ad Litem to represent the ward's interest in the final settlement with the guardian.
- R. Judicial Bypass Proceedings Guardian Ad Litem and Attorney Ad Litem TEX. FAMILY CODE §33.003(e) In proceedings involving the right of a minor to an abortion without parental notification ("Judicial Bypass Proceedings") the appointment of a Guardian Ad Litem and (if the minor is not otherwise represented) an Attorney Ad Litem, is mandatory.
- S. Family Code Appointments Guardian Ad Litem and Attorney Ad Litem TEX. FAMILY CODE §§107.001 to 107.016 govern the appointment and certification for both guardians ad litem and attorneys ad litem under the Family Code.
- T. "Utility Outfielder" Appointments Attorney Ad Litem TEX. EST. CODE § 53.104 permits the judge to appoint an Attorney Ad Litem to represent the interests of a person having a legal disability, a nonresident, an unborn or unascertained person or an unknown heir in the proceeding. This section is most frequently used in dependent administrations, sales of property or declaratory judgment actions, but is sometimes utilized where the court just needs a higher comfort level that all parties and viewpoints are represented. It does not, however, authorize the judge to appoint an ad litem who is not certified pursuant to TEX. EST. CODE §

1054.201 in a guardianship proceeding where the guardian seeks to resign. *Guardianship of Marburger, supra*.

In *Estate of Isaacs*, 2012 Tex. App. LEXIS 1173 (Tex. App. Tyler 2012, pet. denied), guardians ad litem were allowed to file disclaimers on behalf of minor heirs.

U. "Utility Outfielder" Appointments - Guardian Ad Litem TEX. EST. CODE § 1162.008 authorizes the court to appoint a Guardian Ad Litem for the ward or an interested party at any stage of a guardianship proceeding if it is considered advisable for the protection of the ward or the interested party.

III. EMBRACE THE TECHNOLOGY

- **A.** <u>Electronic Resources</u>: readily available electronic resources (free or very inexpensive):
- 1. <u>THE AD LITEM MANUAL</u>: The most current digital version of this manual may be found at: http://access.tarrantcounty.com/en/probate-courts/probate-court-1.html
- 2. <u>SEARCHABLE/DOWNLOADABLE ESTATES</u> <u>CODE</u>: courtesy of Richardson attorney Michael Koenecke (includes the Thumb-tab Index included in this paper (Appendix Aq)) and Professor Beyer's conversion tables: http://koeneckelaw.com/public
- 3. <u>TEXAS ESTATES CODE</u> (html/pdf/Word) (and all other Texas statutes and legislative histories): http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/
- 4. <u>Professor Beyer's Website</u> Prof. Gerry Beyer's website has pdf versions of both the Texas Probate Code and the Texas Estates Code, updated through November 3, 2013, as well as a *conversion table* from the Probate Code to the Estates Code. http://www.professorbeyer.com/Estates Code/Texas Estates Code.html
- 5. TEXAS RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE: http://www.txcourts.gov/media/514725/TRCP_2014_01_01.pdf
- 6. Glenn Karisch's TEXAS PROBATE WEBSITE: The Best Probate Site Ever. Period. If you are not one of the members of this listserve, you are not serious about probate law. http://www.texasprobate.com/
- 7. <u>CLERK'S PUBLIC WEB ACCESS</u>: Check the websites of the probate clerks of the larger counties (Dallas, Harris, Travis, Fort Bend, etc.) for lot of basic information about probate filings.
- 9. <u>PROBATE COURT WEBSITES</u>: Specific information about the policies of the probate courts can be found on the specific court websites. Judge Guy Herman (Travis County) has an astonishing amount of available information. Dallas, Denton and Harris

Counties all have excellent websites with detailed information about their staff and court policies.

B. E-Filing & E-Notice

1. <u>E-Filing</u> – If your county does not have mandatory effling, it soon will. E-Filing is governed by Tex. R. Civ. Proc. 21, 21a, 21c, 57 and 502.1.

In addition, technical standards are periodically updated by the Supreme Court's Judicial Committee on Information Technology and adopted by the court. http://www.txcourts.gov/media/875330/technology-standards_v2.pdf

2. <u>E-Notices</u> — Courts and clerks are expressly authorized to send any notice or document permitted or required by statute using mail or electronic mail. Tex. Gov't. Code §80.001. E-notices must be sent to the e-mail address in use with the e-filing system. Tex. Gov't. Code §80.003.

The courts and clerks cannot be required to use any method of mail other than ordinary first-class mail. Tex. Gov't. Code §80.004

Faxes, text messages, videconferencing, webcams, voice mail, telegraphs and social media are not authorized methods of delivering a notice or document by electronic mail Tex. Gov't. Code §80.005.

IV. A to Z FOR AD LITEMS IN GUARDIANSHIP PROCEEDINGS

- **A.** Study This Manual: Most of the procedural questions you can come up with are covered somewhere here. Literally hundreds of hours of work have gone into distilling the information found here. This Manual has the answers.
- **B.** Guardianship Summary: Appendix A is a short summary, intended for the lay public, explaining the basic process of guardianship. This should help provide an overview of the process. You might also want to consider having a copy handy for the people you deal with to help them understand what a guardianship is and is not.
- C. Can You Get There From Where You Are?: The flowchart on <u>page 2</u> is designed to be a map a visual guide to the application and appointment process. Study it often to get your bearings.

D. Mechanics of Appointment: The Ad Litem Wheel

- Appointments by the court of Attorneys Ad Litem, Guardians Ad Litem, mediators and attorneys who are private professional guardians shall, with certain exceptions, be made using a 'next-up' rotation system. Each local administrative judge is authorized to promulgate administrative rules for the establishment and maintenance of the various lists. The lists are to be posted annually at the courthouse and available on the county's website.

Exceptions: persons off-list by agreement of the parties and approval of the court; persons with specialized education, training, certification, skill, language proficiency, or persons with knowledge of the subject matter; or relevant prior involvement; or persons in a relevant geographic location. Tex. Govt Code §§ 25.0022(d)(10), 37.001-37.005, 74.092(11), 74.0893.

E. The Language of Guardianship: Less Restrictive Alternatives & Supports and Services - The entire guardianship process is based on the concept that the court and the officers of the court (that would include you) must seek any less restrictive alternatives to a full guardianship if they exist and are applicable. Tex. Est. Code § 1001.001.

These twin concepts are integrated into every step of the guardianship process: they are required to be considered and addressed in: the application for guardianship (§ 1101.001(b)(3-a & 3-b); the findings of the court's order grating either a full or limited guardianship (§ 1101.101) including specifically finding whether the proposed ward lacks the capacity, or lacks sufficient capacity with supports and services.

As an adjunct to the concept of a Less Restrictive Alternative, the idea of "Supports and Services" is now a part of the mechanism by which we analyze how a protective framework is to be constructed for a proposed ward. As referenced in Tex. Est. Code § 1002.031, Supports and Services are additional types of less restrictive alternatives to a full guardianship, used either to avoid or delay the necessity for a guardianship or, when employed after the appointment of a guardian, to lessen the impact or extent of a full guardianship.

These formal or informal resources serve to supplement the functional deficits of the individual and to enhance areas where capacity is limited.

Choices of particular supports or services will, of course, depend on the residual level of capacity of the individual to be benefitted.

§ 1002.0015 provides a non-exclusive listing of some of the most commonly-used alternatives (with dozens more discussed at Appendix D).

Appendix D-1 is a listing of examples of supports and services and the types of agencies or entities which provide them.

In a proceeding for modification or restoration (full or partial), the issue of supports and services must be specifically addressed in the application (§1202.051), the physician's certificate of medical examination

(§1201.152(b)), the evidence to be heard (§ 1202.151(a)), the findings of the court (§1202.153(c) and, if modification or partial restoration is granted, the specific supports and services must be enumerated (§ 1202.154(a)(4)).

Events necessitating the settlement and closing of a guardianship now include: "... when the ward... is found by the court to have full capacity, or sufficient capacity with supports and services, to care for himself or herself and to manage the ward's property..." (§ 1202.001(b)(2)).

These alternatives and Supports and Services are the basic language of guardianship. Without a thorough understanding of these concepts, it will be virtually impossible to comply with the Estate Code requirements.

- **F.** <u>Local Rules</u>: All the statutory probate courts (Bexar, Collin, Dallas, Denton, El Paso, Galveston, Harris, Hidalgo, Tarrant and Travis counties), have local rules, approved by the supreme court, that may differ from the local rules for the District Courts in your county. The judges didn't go through all the trouble necessary to get these adopted for nothing. A word to the warned should be sufficient.
- **G. Standing Orders** Also, because the statutory probate courts handle 90%+ of the guardianships in Texas, the statutory probate courts have had to create policies and approaches to fill in the procedural gaps left by the Estates Code to deal with the high volume of work and to ensure uniform results. These standing orders will be available from the court with which you will be dealing.
- **H.** What Documents To Expect: When you first review the file, there may be no application for guardianship. Depending on where the case has progressed, you may find one or more of the following:
- A. <u>AN INFORMATION LETTER</u>: ("Suggestion of Need for Guardian or Need for Investigation of Circumstances under TEX. EST. CODE § 1102.003.") (Appendix C)
- B. <u>A "DOCTOR'S LETTER</u>" ("CME" or Certificate of Medical Examination). (Appendix C) See *infra*.
- C. AN ORDER APPOINTING GUARDIAN AD LITEM or ORDER APPOINTING ATTORNEY AD LITEM: Study these carefully. Each will set the factual and legal bases of the guardianship. They are not all exactly alike.
- I. Fundamentally Understand Your Role: The

biggest problems for an Ad Litem arise from not understanding the job description and acting outside the scope of the appointment. This invariably causes problems at the end of the proceeding when the ad litem is trying to get paid. (*infra*).

MAJOR CAVEAT: Scope of Appointment - If you act outside the scope of your appointment, it is error for the court to award you any fees for such activity. See discussion below under "fees." The burden is on the ad litem to ensure that the services performed do not exceed the scope of the role assigned. Ford Motor Co v. Garcia, 363 S.W.3d 573 (Tex. March 30, 2012); Ford Motor Co v. Chacon, 2012 Tex. LEXIS 557 (Tex. 2012); Ford Motor Company v. Stewart, Cox, and Hatcher, 2013 Tex. LEXIS 69 (Tex. 2013); Guardianship of Vavra, 365 S.W.3d 476 (Tex. App. Eastland 2012, no pet.).

1. THE ROLE OF THE ATTORNEY AD LITEM

- a. <u>Legal Counsel</u> The Attorney Ad Litem functions as legal counsel of record and provides the same services as an attorney giving advice, doing research, and conducting litigation. *Eugene du Pont, III v. Southern Natl Bank of Houston*, 771 F.2d 874 (5th Cir. 1985); *Cahill v. Lyda*, 826 S.W.2d 932 (Tex. 1992); *Madero v. Calzado*, 281 S.W.2d 328 (Tex. Civ. App. San Antonio, 1926, writ dism'd). Ad litem appointments bear no less professional responsibility than representing a client as retained counsel. *Estate of Tartt v. Harpold*, 531 S.W. 2d 696 (Tex. App. Houston-14th 1975, wr. ref'd n.r.e.)
- b. <u>The Prime Directive</u> Your principal charge is to *advocate* for your client. However, this does not mean you are required to march over a cliff if your client demands it. Consideration of less restrictive alternatives and supports and services, as reflected in § 1001.001, is mandatory.
- c. "<u>But I don't want a guardian</u>" (Who does?) Many AALs anguish over their responsibility when the client adamantly opposes a guardianship even when the anecdotal, medical and factual evidence all indicate clear functional deficits and the need for protection of the person or property of the proposed ward.

Imagine you were appointed as criminal defense counsel in a bank robbery case. At your first interview, your "hero" still has purple stains on his face and hands. (hint: exploding dye packet in bank money bag).

When he says: "I didn't do it," is it then your job to use every possible procedural avenue in the Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, Rules of Evidence and Rules of Appellate Procedure to prevent a conviction? Manifestly not.

Your job, either in the criminal arena or in the probate court, is to require the party with the burden of proof to <u>carry that burden</u> as required by the Estates Code. To do otherwise is an abuse of the process.

If, in the ethical exercise of your duties, you feel the court cannot get a full picture of the situation (absent your breach of the duty of confidentiality), consider asking the court to appoint a GAL to act in the best interests of the proposed ward. (See Appendix O)

- d. <u>Duties</u> TEX. EST. CODE § 1054.004 and other relevant sections:
- a. Review all materials in the court's file, including (as applicable) the order of appointment, the Application for Letters of Guardianship, the Information Letter, the certificates of physical, medical and intellectual examination and all the relevant financial, medical, psychological and intellectual testing records of the Proposed Ward.

Notes on Medical Records:

- 1) Protected Health Information: The order appointing you as Attorney Ad Litem should specifically authorize access to all of the relevant financial, medical, psychological and intellectual testing records of the proposed incapacitated person. These are otherwise confidential records and protected by one or more privacy laws (See notes on HIPAA *infra*).
- 2) Underlying Medical Records: In your review, verify there are actually medical records of the physician's examination underlying the Certificate of Medical Exam (CME). It is not unheard of for doctors with a busy nursing home practice to simply sign CMEs filled in by social workers or nurses.
- b. Attempt to determine: 1) whether alternatives to guardianship (Appendix D) are appropriate and available which would meet the needs of the proposed ward and avoid the need for the appointment of a guardian, 2) whether there are supports or services (Appendix D-1) appropriate and available to the proposed ward to avoid or delay the necessity for a guardianship or, after the appointment of a guardian, to lessen the impact or extent of a full guardianship;
- c. Personally interview the Proposed Ward within a reasonable time before the hearing and discuss: 1) the laws and facts of the case, 2) the Proposed Ward's legal options regarding disposition of the case, 3) the grounds on which a guardianship is sought, 4) whether in the opinion of the attorney ad litem, a guardianship is necessary and, 5) if a guardianship is necessary, the

specific powers or duties of the guardian that should be limited if the proposed ward receives supports and services:

- d. Ascertain whether the Proposed Ward wishes to oppose the proceedings (if the Proposed Ward is unable to communicate, the Attorney Ad Litem is to act in best interests of the Proposed Ward);
- e. File an Answer (Appendices L, M) (for a fuller discussion, see infra);
- f. Visit with the Applicant's attorney, the Guardian Ad Litem and/or the Court Investigator concerning the Application;
- g. Review the report of the Court Investigator (if there is one):
- h. Consider mediation or other appropriate alternate dispute resolution techniques;
- i. Represent and advocate on behalf of the Proposed Ward at the hearing, bearing in mind the requirements of the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 1.14 and *Franks v. Roades*, 310 S.W.3d 615 (Tex. App. Corpus Christi, April 15, 2010, no pet.) (A lawyer may take reasonably necessary protective action when the lawyer believes the client has diminished capacity, is at risk of substantial physical, financial, or other harm, and cannot adequately act in the client's own interest); and
- j. File an Application for Payment of Fees and an Order (Appendices Ae, Af).

2. THE ROLE OF THE GUARDIAN AD LITEM a. Defined TEX. EST. CODE § 1002.013: "a person who is appointed by the court to represent the best interests of an incapacitated person in a guardianship proceeding."

The Guardian Ad Litem (who need not be an attorney) may end up being the applicant in the proceeding and must be able to be in a position to act directly against the expressed wishes of the Proposed Ward, if the Guardian Ad Litem determines that course to be in the Proposed Ward's best interest.

- the appointment is discretionary
- Attorney Ad Litem may also be appointed as Guardian Ad Litem (§ 1054.051)
- b. <u>Personal Representative</u> In representing the best interests of the Proposed Ward, the appellate courts have made it clear the role of a Guardian Ad Litem is actually that of a personal representative for the Proposed Ward, rather than as an attorney. *Goodyear Dunlop Tires N. Am., Ltd. v. Gamez*, 151 S.W.3d 574 at 582-585 (Tex. App.—San Antonio 2004, no pet.).
- c. <u>Assess & Recommend</u> The classic function of the Guardian Ad Litem is to analyze the situation and make a recommendation to the court on what action is in the best interests of the client of the Guardian Ad Litem.

Tex. Rules Civ. Proc. 173.4.

- d. Basic Scenarios: Jiminy Cricket or Quarterback?
- 1) "Jiminy Cricket" (§ 1101.001) If your scenario includes an applicant with their own attorney, your role is more that of the traditional Guardian Ad Litem: assess the situation and give an opinion. But it might also be because the Attorney Ad Litem is trying to send a message to the court that all is not what it appears to be and that more investigation is necessary.
- 2) "Quarterback" (§ 1102.001) If there is no other applicant on the scene, you will most likely have to take the ball and run with it: act as the applicant (if that is in the proposed ward's best interest) and consider all the possibilities available.
- e. <u>Duties</u> §§ 1054.054, 1102 and various other sections relating to the role of the Applicant in a guardianship proceeding:
- 1) Review all materials in the court's file, including (as applicable) the order of appointment, the Information Letter, the Application for Letters of Guardianship, pertinent certificates of physical, medical and intellectual examination and all the relevant financial, medical, psychological and intellectual testing records of the Proposed Ward (see Note *supra* re: Underlying Medical Records);

Access to Medical Records: The order appointing the Guardian Ad Litem should specifically authorize the Guardian Ad Litem to be given access to all of the relevant financial, medical, psychological and intellectual testing records of the proposed incapacitated person. (See note on HIPAA *infra*)

- 2) File an Entry of Appearance (Appendix P);
- 3) Interview the concerned party who filed the 'Information Letter' concerning the Proposed Ward as well as known relatives and friends of the Proposed Ward;
- 4) Personally interview the Proposed Ward as soon as possible and begin a personal assessment of capacity (see the discussion of capacity assessment, *infra*);
- 5) Consider the necessity of temporary guardianship or other extraordinary relief (i.e.: EPO, Receivership, etc.);
 - 6) Attempt to determine:
- a) whether alternatives to guardianship (Appendix D) are appropriate and available which would meet the needs of the Proposed Ward and avoid the need for the appointment of a guardian,
- b) whether there are supports or services (Appendix D-1) appropriate and available to the Proposed Ward to avoid or delay the necessity for a guardianship or, after the appointment of a guardian, to lessen the impact or extent of a full guardianship, and whether a guardianship is necessary;

- 7) As soon as possible, file an application for appointment of a guardian (if necessary) and prepare an order to appoint an Attorney Ad Litem (as applicable) (see "Covering Your Bases: *infra*);
- 8) If appropriate, complete and file an Affidavit of Inability to Pay Costs (as applicable) (see Appendix H);
- 9) Ensure all citations are served and that the return of citation has been on file for a sufficient period to 'ripen;'
- 10) Send all necessary notices or obtain waivers, per TEX. EST. CODE § 1051.104 and file the required affidavit. (Appendix G);
- 11) Set the case for a hearing and confirm the setting by e-mail to all parties (Appendix V);
- 12) Consider mediation or other appropriate alternate dispute resolution technique;
- 13) Locate and/or recruit a person to serve as guardian or contact your local guardianship program (amend the Application, if necessary);
- 14) File a Report of Guardian Ad Litem (Appendix Q) with the Court at least a week prior to the hearing date (if the guardianship will *not* be established, file a final report by way of explanation) (*see below regarding e-Filing*);
- 15) Determine if a representative payee for Social Security funds or any other government benefits has been designated and relay this information to the Court;
- 16) Visit with the Attorney Ad Litem concerning the Application (as applicable);
- 17) Review the report of the Court Investigator (if there is one);
- 18) Prepare Proof of Facts, Order, Personal Surety Bond & Oath (see Appendices W, Y, Z & Aa);
- 19) Tender Exhibits to the Judge regarding property, income and expenses of the Ward to allow the court to set bond and an allowance (Appendices X, Y);
- 20) Attend the hearing on the application and ensure the guardian attends training, or, if the judge uses handouts regarding the duties and responsibilities of the Guardian (Appendix Ai), go over the handouts with the guardian;
- 21) Assist the guardian in obtaining his or her bond and letters; and
- 22) File an Application for Payment of Fees and Order (Appendices Ae, Af).
- **J.** <u>Is Immediate Action Required?</u> If there is an indication of imminent harm to the Proposed Ward, the following actions/procedures should be among your first considerations, all of which are described in more detail in Less Restrictive Alternatives (Appendix D):
- 1. <u>INJUNCTIVE RELIEF</u> (TRO, Temporary Injunction, TEX. R. CIV. P. 680, 681).
 - 2. EMERGENCY PROTECTIVE ORDER TEX.

- HUM. RES. CODE § 48.208.
- 3. <u>TEMPORARY GUARDIANSHIP</u> TEX. EST. CODE § 1251.001 (see *infra*).
- 4. <u>RECEIVERSHIP</u> TEX. EST. CODE § 885, TEX. CIV. PRAC. & REM. CODE § 64.001ff
- 5. <u>COURT-ORDERED MENTAL HEALTH</u>
 <u>SERVICES</u> TEX. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE.
 §462.001, §571.001, §574.001.
- 6. <u>EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT</u>
 <u>ACT</u> TEX. HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE §773.008.
- 7. <u>SURROGATE DECISION-MAKING</u> ("SDM") –TEX. HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE §313.001-.007.
- 8. <u>MEDICAL POWER OF ATTORNEY</u> TEX. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE §166.151.
- 9. <u>OUT-OF HOSPITAL DNR</u> ("EMT-DNR")-TEX. HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE §166.081.
- 10. <u>DIRECTIVE TO PHYSICIANS AND FAMILY OR SURROGATES</u> ("Living Will") –TEX. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE §166.031.

K. Temporary Guardianships -

1. A Strong Smell of Gas and the Potential for a Spark: A temporary guardianship may only be granted where it is *immediately* necessary to safeguard either the person or property of the Proposed Ward. TEX. EST. CODE § 1251.001.

The scenarios for a temporary guardianship can vary widely, but the common thread is an element of extreme urgency:

- inability to get life-saving treatment for a recalcitrant nursing home resident.
- financial exploitation of an elderly or developmentally disabled person.
- casualty loss to property belonging to a person for whom a guardianship has not been opened due to the existence of a less restrictive alternative.

If it's not really an emergency (or if the applicant really needs to come clean with the judge about their true motivations), perhaps the Applicants should apply for a regular guardianship, seek a less restrictive alternative and consider available supports and services.

Also, consider a TRO and Temporary Injunction before coming in to ask for a temporary guardian. *Guardianship of Stokley*, 2011 Tex. App. LEXIS 8000 (Tex. App. Dallas 2011, no pet.).

- 2. <u>Prerequisites:</u> Several things must happen before a temporary guardianship hearing may take place:
 - a. A sworn, written application must be filed (Appendix I).
 - b. An Attorney Ad Litem must be appointed;
 - c. The clerk must issue notice;
 - d. An order setting the hearing ("fiat") must be

- signed. (Appendix I).
- e. Service of citation must be perfected on the Proposed Ward, the Attorney Ad Litem and the proposed temporary guardian. *In Re Cantu*, 2009 Tex. App. LEXIS 2241 (Tex. App. Corpus Christi, April 2, 2009, pet. filed) In extreme circumstances, substituted service may be warranted. *Guardianship of Bays*, 355 S. W. 3d 715 (Tex. App. Fort Worth 2011 no pet. h.).
- 3. <u>Hearing Date</u>: This is your one shot. Unlike earlier versions of the law, there is no 'confirmation' hearing. The hearing must be held within 10 days of the filing of the application unless extended by agreement for not more than 30 days.
 - 4. Proof: Substantial evidence of:
 - a. incapacity or minority, or
- b. imminent danger of serious impairment of physical health or safety or serious damage or dissipation to property. *Bosworth v. Bosworth*, 2013 Tex. App. LEXIS 565, (Tex. App. Austin, January 16, 2013, no pet.)

CME not mandatory in temporary guardianship

- § 1101.103, requiring a Certificate of Medical Exam, specifically <u>does not apply</u> in a temporary guardianship. *In Re Moreno*, 2010 Tex. App. LEXIS 9799 (Tex. App. Eastland, December 10, 2010, no pet. h.). *Get the doctor's letter if you can, but you don't have to wait on it.*
- 5. <u>Duration</u>: If the temporary guardianship is within the context of a contested matter, the term of the temporary guardian expires on the earliest of:
- a. the conclusion of the hearing challenging or contesting the application;
- b. the date of qualification of a permanent guardian; or
- c. the 12-month anniversary of qualification of the temporary guardian, unless the term is extended after, motion, hearing and court order. § 1251.052(b). In *Guardianship of Gibbs*, 253 S.W.3d 866 (Tex. App. Fort Worth, April 17, 2008, pet. dism'd), where a temporary guardianship was allowed to expire, the court lost subject matter jurisdiction for any subsequent proceedings and all subsequent actions of the court were void. *See also Bauer v. State*, 2003 U.S. App. LEXIS 15202 (5th Cir. 2003).
- 6. Order: Because TEX. EST. CODE § 1251.010 does not set forth any "standard powers" for a temporary guardian, the order appointing the temporary guardian must be very specific as to what authority the temporary guardian shall have. (Appendix J) In *Bennett v. Miller*, 137 S.W.3d 894, 897 (Tex. App. Texarkana, 2004, pet. filed), the

appeals court held an order granting the Temporary Guardian *all the powers and duties as stated in the Texas Probate Code* conferred <u>no</u> authority upon the temporary guardian.

L. <u>AAL: FILE AN ANSWER</u>: It's generally difficult to convince the court to order payment for a lawyer if no one ever appeared on behalf of the client.

File at least a general denial to the application to properly join issues. (Appendix L) However, if you are actively contesting the application, it would be even better to file an answer that states whether the Proposed Ward objects to the guardianship, the proposed guardian, or both, and send a copy to the court investigator. (Appendix M)

Note: If e-filing, you should set up a "waiver" account with your Electronic Filing Service Provider (EFSP) so that you will not be charged a filing fee. TEX. EST. CODE § 1052.051(e)(2)& (e)(3).

<u>e-Service</u> – When you file your answer, make sure everyone gets a copy by adding them to the e-service list. That should include the Court Investigator, if you are in a county that has an investigator.

If the matter becomes genuinely contested, your amplified answer will probably contain one or more affirmative defenses.

If no answer has been filed at the time of the proveup, there will be no prove-up.

M. INVESTIGATE: FINDING THE BLACK BOX:

You are looking for the functional equivalent of the flight data recorder: the real reasons that parties (other than the Proposed Ward) contest matters in guardianship proceedings are rarely what is in the pleadings. Both Ad Litems should be aware of undercurrents and hidden agendas that may work against the best interests of the Proposed Ward.

The need for a guardianship doesn't just appear out of thin air. Find out what necessitated the application. What was the "Bump in the Road" that finally got someone to notice the Proposed Ward was arguably in need of a guardian? This will help tremendously in determining how any conflicts may be dealt with and resolved.

Basic Investigative Steps along the path:

- 1. Thoroughly **examine the filings** in the court's jacket.
- 2. Review the available medical records (not just the doctor's letter) and note the diagnosis and any underlying anecdotal evidence. From the doctor's letter, determine the diagnosis and educate yourself as to the details and variations of the medical conditions which affect capacity, e.g. information on dementia from the National Institute of

Neurological Disorders and Stroke at www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/dementias/dementia.h tm.

IMPORTANT: Does the Proposed Ward have a uninary tract infection? <u>Major</u> indicator of undiagnosed promlems.

- 3. **Talk** to as many family members, friends, caregivers, clergy, hairdressers, neighbors, etc. as necessary for you to feel you have a firm grasp of the situation.
- 4 Spend some time checking out the extent of the **Proposed Ward's property**. Consult the local tax appraisal district's records to see if the proposed ward is still record title owner of property. Also, the Court Investigators are now authorized to compel production of the financial records of a Proposed Ward. See Appendix A.
- If you discover there is a representative payee for social security funds or if anyone other than the guardian is receiving funds on behalf of the ward, the Court Investigator (or other court official) need to be so advised.
- Make an independent determination of the suitability of the proposed guardian and attempt to ascertain whether any of the items of disqualification are applicable.
- 7. As you **interview the Proposed Ward**, you will necessarily be forming an opinion on whether ward has functional deficits which are the real basis behind the need for a guardianship.

The interview need not be exhaustive, but should be thorough and professional. With practice, you will develop your own style, but you should work off a list, so that you do not forget to cover everything. It is not necessary to be clinical. It is possible to be conversational and still get the information you need (like any skilled cross-examination).

This is a dance and you must lead: Inexperienced Ad Litems will often engage a Proposed Ward in pleasant conversation for an extended period of time, then report back that there is no basis for the doctor's diagnosis of dementia. As long as the Proposed Ward is able to direct the conversation, the coping and compensating mechanisms they have spent years developing will continue to serve them well in masking any deficits.

N. <u>ASSESS CAPACITY</u> - Capacity is a **complicated**, **multi-faceted concept**. One may have to capacity to do everything, many things or only a few things. A proper assessment of capacity looks at a number

of areas of functioning in a person's life, taking into account that functionality for a retired unskilled laborer might be quite different than that of a retired investment banker. See King, Levels of Incapacity, 2015 Advanced Guardianship Course, State Bar of Texas. See also The Capacity Assessment Handbook for Judges — A collaborative effort of the American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging, the American Psychological Association and the National College of Probate Judges, this handbook examines capacity from a progressive series of viewpoints. It is available free at www.apa.org/pi/aging/resources/guides/judges-diminished.pdf

Using the template from the Judicial Capacity Handbook, **consider the various axes of capacity**:

1. <u>Medical Condition</u>: Start with what you have gleaned from the medical records and talking to family and friends. Ask the client to tell you why they are in the facility and what their illness/condition is.

Estate of Robinson, 140 S.W.3d 782 (Tex. App. Corpus Christi, 2004, pet. denied) provides an excellent description of how a history of frequent falling can indicate atrophy of the brain and resulting diminution of capacity. Also see Estate of Lynch 2011 Tex. App. LEXIS 2942 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2011), remanded by 395 S.W.3d 215 (Tex. App. San Antonio, 2012, pet. denied) for some amazing insights into the pathology of dementia (and tips for litigators).

2. <u>Cognition</u>: As you ask your questions, observe <u>how</u>, not just <u>what</u>, your client answers and how well they are processing the information.

Rule out other Factors – There might there be reasons or conditions (other than medical) inhibiting the ability of the Proposed Ward to understand: hearing aid batteries /missing or broken glasses /sleeping pill shortly before Doctor's assessment / non-English speaking physician (difficult to understand)/ dehydration, diabetes, malnutrition or other physical condition.

- 3. Everyday Functioning: A series of questions may subtly determine the Proposed Ward's ability to function in a number of areas. (ADLs or "activities of daily living").
- Ask for <u>details of their family</u>: (childrens' birthdays, grandchildrens' names but ask for them in <u>reverse</u> chronological order)

- <u>Communication</u>: ask about the telephone, can they recall important telephone numbers?
- <u>Grocery Shopping and Meal Preparation</u>: ask a few questions about what it would take to prepare meals for a day (not "What do you like to eat?)
- <u>Housekeeping & Laundry</u>: (do not prompt) What is involved? What can they themselves do?
- <u>Personal Hygiene:</u> (casual observation and a look at the bathroom may answer this one).
- <u>Transportation:</u> driving self/driven by others/ public transportation.
- <u>Personal living decisions</u>. A discussion of <u>politics</u> can help determine the ability to vote. Similar discussions can focus on the ability to determine one's residence. (See below on the new prominence required for decisions regarding residence preference.).
- Medication Management: What do you take? What is it for? How often do you take it? How do you get it refilled? (This bears on the issue of whether they have the capacity to consent to medical, dental, psychological and psychiatric treatment a point on which most doctors are loath to concede.) Observe if the prescription bottles are current or empty.
- Finances: Ask them to count some pocket change, whether they know the relationships between the coins and a bit about the use of money. Discuss their bank accounts, any loans they may have at the bank, or any "loans" they may have made to family members or "friends." (This latter area is particularly important if there are allegations of fraud and abuse. Pertinent to ability to contract and incur obligations; to handle a bank account; to apply for, consent to and receive governmental benefits and services; to accept employment; to hire employees; and to sue and defend on lawsuits.) All of these are elements the doctor is asked to address in the CME.

An inability to recognize financial exploitation also goes to other areas, such as whether the Proposed Ward should be allowed to retain the right to marry, since this is one of the most commons avenues of exploitation (after black sheep).

Mandated Abuse Reporting: If, in your interview, you uncover fraud, abuse or neglect, you have an immediate (and affirmative) duty under TEX. HUM. RES. CODE §§48.051 & 48.052 to report that abuse to Adult Protective Services (800-252-5400/www.txabusehotline.org). Even the Court Investigators and judges have the same duty.

- 4. <u>Values and Choices</u>: Consider how the lifestyle and values of the Proposed Ward may affect the situation. Few people willingly choose to live in squalor, but clutter is not a sole reason for a guardianship. However, a chronic inability to deal with clutter can be a symptom of something more serious.
- 5. Risk And Level Of Supervision: Try to gauge the extent to which the deficits (if any) of your client threaten their ability to "care for himself or to manage his property." TEX. EST. CODE § 1101.151.
- 6. Means To Enhance Capacity This is where a thorough understanding of the concept of Supports and Services comes in. Consider the list of both Less Restrictive Alternatives (Appendix D) and Supports and Services (Appendix D-1) to determine whether you can recommend any of them to avoid or lessen the effect of a guardianship. This is a situation where a better "social safety net" might address the deficits.

Not Quite There Yet: In Techniques for Dealing with Clients Who Are Not Quite Incapacitated (State Bar of Texas Advanced Guardianship Law 2007), professional care manager Mary K. Koffend categorizes five types of her clients who may have a brush with the guardianship process, but who are not incapacitated (yet). These are clients:

- 1. With Serious Mental Health Problems,
- 2. With Increasing Dementia,
- 3. With Poor Judgment, or Alcohol or Drug <u>Issues</u>,
- 4. Who are Stubborn, Strong-Willed Individuals on a Disaster Course, and
- 5. Who are Over- or Under-Medicated.
- O. INDEPENDENT MEDICAL EXAM Unless you actually have a medical degree, don't try to outguess the doctor. If you really take serious issue with the doctor's conclusions, consider requesting an independent medical exam pursuant to TEX. EST. CODE § 1101.103(c) and request the exam to be conducted by a doctor in a different discipline (gerontology vs. psychiatry vs. neurology, etc.) (Appendix U).
- **P.** "THE AD LITEM'S DILEMMA" At this point that you must determine whether this will be a case

you will *actively contest* the application (see "Actively Contesting the Application," *infra*), or whether your job is to ensure the Applicant simply carries their burden of proof.

Some of the more common situations fall somewhere along a continuum:

- 1. THE COMATOSE CLIENT: If the Proposed Ward is unable to communicate because of either physical or psychological circumstances, the Attorney Ad Litem and Guardian Ad Litem can simply appear at the uncontested guardianship docket and act appropriately.
- 2. THE BRILLIANT STRATEGIST: If the Proposed Ward tells you that he or she wishes to actively contest the application but is also simultaneously consulting with his invisible field marshals about the next cavalry attack, you may ask the court to set the matter on the contested docket for one hour to allow the Proposed Ward to have their day in court. (the "pro forma" contest).
- 3. TOO CLOSE TO CALL: If you have genuine doubts about which way to jump, and want another set of eyes and ears to assess the situation, ask the court to appoint a Guardian Ad Litem.
- 4. <u>WINCHESTERS ON THE FENCELINE</u>: You have no doubt your client is getting thrown under the bus. Consider most, if not all, of the strategies under "Actively Contesting the Application," *infra*. Ask for a docket control conference at the earliest possible time. Make it real clear that you have serious problems with the proceeding going forward.

Q. IS THE APPLICATION TIMELY FILED? The Guardian Ad Litem's application should be filed immediately to ensure the Doctor's Letter is within the 120-day limitation (date of examination to date of *filing*) or on a Determination of Intellectual Disability ("DID") (twenty-four months from date of examination to date of hearing) TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1101.103, 1101.104.

Covering your Bases: the Guardian Ad Litem can initially plead as the Applicant and request that "any suitable person be appointed guardian of the person and, if necessary, the estate". The application can easily be amended without the necessity or re-posting the citation.

GAL: CME A.S.A.P. - The most important thing the Guardian Ad Litem can do to expedite the

process is to have the Doctor's Letter in hand before the application is filed.

R. WHO PICKS UP THE TAB? - AFFIDAVIT OF INABILITY TO PAY: an Affidavit of Inability to Pay (a "Pauper's Affidavit") pursuant to TEX. RULES CIV. PROC 145. (Appendix H) is only applicable and available if it is the Applicant who has no ability to pay costs or is receiving governmental assistance based on indigency. It is not the Proposed Ward whose inability to pay is measured. TEX. EST. CODE § 1052.051(e)(4): "a person who files an affidavit of inability..."

The test for determining entitlement to proceed *in forma pauperis* is whether the record shows the appellant would be unable to pay "if he really wanted to and made a good-faith effort to do so." *Pinchback v. Hockless*, 139 Tex., 164 S.W.2d 19 (Tex. 1942). Typically, only the clerk or an ad litem have standing to contest the affidavit. At a hearing on such a contest, the filer of the affidavit has the burden of proof. *Pinchback, at 20*.

An Affidavit of Inability, if accompanied by the attorney's certificate that the party is being represented either directly or by referral from a program funded by the IOLTA program and that the IOLTA-funded program screened the party for income eligibility under the IOLTA income guidelines, the affidavit of inability *may not be contested*. TEX. R. CIV. PROC. 145(c).

V. MEDICAL RECORDS

- **A. Federal and State Confidentiality Laws:** A number of federal and state enactments limit access to records of individuals.
- 1. <u>HIPAA</u> (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (P.L.104-191)) severely limits the ability of health care providers ("covered entities") to grant public access to patient records ("protected health information"). HIPAA is applied under state law by the Texas Medical Privacy Act, Tex. Hlth. & Saf. Code Chap. 181.
- a. <u>COURT ORDERED DISCLOSURE AN EXCEPTION TO HIPAA.</u> Because you, the ad litem, are specifically authorized access to such information, it is actually a violation of HIPAA to deny you the access. Both HIPAA and the Texas Occupations Code provide an exception for information sought pursuant to a court order. TEX. OCC. CODE §159.003(12). and 45 CFR 164.512(e)(1)(i). In fact, even an Attorney Ad Litem appointed in a guardianship proceeding has the authority to submit a written consent for release of confidential information. TEX. OCC. CODE §159.005.

For more on the impact of HIPAA, go to www.hhs.gov.ocr.hipaa or www.cdc.gov.mmwr.

- b. <u>REMEDIAL ACTION</u>: If you are denied access to medical records, your course of action is simple: ask for the exact spelling of the name of the custodian of the medical records and the correct physical address of the location. That way, the constable can properly serve the records custodian with the *subpoena duces tecum* you then obtain to have the records brought down to the courtroom for your leisurely review and copying (while the records custodian remains in attendance).
- 2. The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. § 552a(b) prohibits any federal agency from disclosing any records of an individual unless the disclosure is made pursuant to a specific exception, such as the order of a court of competent jurisdiction.
- 3. Veterans Administration Records 38 U.S.C. 5701 & 7332 similarly prohibit disclosure of the records of veterans without a valid court order or upon the request of the veteran or a guardian or other personal representative.

Solution: The Order Appointing the Attorney Ad Litem or Guardian Ad Litem should contain a provision such as the following.

This Order is issued pursuant to 45 CFR 164.512(e)(1)(i) Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act which authorizes covered entities to disclose protected health information in the course of any judicial or administrative proceeding when responding to an order of the Court, as well as the Privacy Act of 1974 pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a, and pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 5701 & 7332 regarding Veterans Administration Records.

B. The Physician's Certificate of Medical Examination (The "Doctor's Letter" or "CME")

Note: A standard form of CME (adopted by the Judges of all Texas Statutory Probate Courts (which includes a DID as well) is attached as Appendix C.

Most of the time, the only medical evidence of incapacity during the process of opening a guardianship will be the statement of the doctor who examined the proposed ward. As a result, it is an extremely important document in the course of the application process.

See Note re: Underlying medical records, *supra*. 1. Basics: Incapacitated Proposed Ward

A. <u>SINE QUA NON</u>: No guardianship of an incapacitated person may be granted without a certificate of medical examination which complies with TEX. EST. CODE § 1101.103. This section

specifically sets out the requirements of the report the court needs to have before it before it can legally grant a guardianship.

- B. <u>PHYSICIANS ONLY</u>: Only "physicians" may complete a certificate of medical examination. TEX. EST. CODE § 1101.103 (a).
- C. <u>TIME CONSTRAINTS</u>: Based on an examination conducted within 120 days before the application is filed and dated within that same 120-day time period. (Exception for mental retardation: 24 months)
- D. <u>DETAILED CONTENTS</u>: TEX. EST. CODE § 1101.103 is very specific as to the contents of the CME to better assess the functional deficits and abilities of the proposed ward. The CME must:
- 1. Describe the nature, degree, and severity of the proposed ward's incapacity, including deficits, with regard to several specific functional areas (financial and contractual decisions, medical consents) and specifically addressing the proposed ward's ability to safely operate a motor vehicle and vote in a public election; residence supports and services
- 2. Summarize the proposed ward's medical history (if available);
- 3. Evaluate and describe the proposed ward's physical and mental condition and functional ability, with and without supports and services available to the ward:
- 4. Comment on whether the proposed ward's demeanor or ability to participate in a court proceeding might be affected by any current medications; and
- 5. State whether the proposed ward would benefit from supports and services that would allow the individual to live in the least restrictive setting;
- 6. State whether specific powers or duties of the guardian should be limited if the Proposed Ward receives supports and services;
- 7. State whether improvement in the Proposed Ward's physical condition and mental functioning is possible and, if so, state the period after which the proposed ward should be reevaluated to determine whether a guardianship continues to be necessary. 1101.103(b).

If the CME indicates that improvement in the ward's physical condition or mental functioning is possible and specifies that the Ward should be reevaluated in less than a year, the order appointing the guardian must include the date by which the guardian must submit an updated CME. § 1101.153

2. Modification and /or Restoration: CME to consider Supports and Services

After a guardianship is granted, if the ward or a person interested in the Ward's welfare petitions the court for modification or restoration of the Ward under Ch. 1202, the court may not grant relief unless the

applicant presents to the court an updated certificate of medical examination which, among other requirements, must describe the nature and degree of incapacity, including the medical history if reasonably available, or state that, in the physician's opinion, the ward has the capacity, or sufficient capacity with supports and services, to:

- A. provide food, clothing, and shelter for himself or herself;
- B. care for the ward's own physical health; and
- C. manage the ward's financial affairs. § 1202.152.

3. Basics: Intellectually Disabled Potential Ward

- A. <u>DETERMINATION</u> OF <u>INTELLECTUAL</u> <u>DISABILITY</u> ("<u>DID</u>"): If the Proposed Ward is intellectually disabled (aka "*MR*"), a Physician's Certificate alone *will not* be sufficient to appoint a guardian. Instead, the Application must also include documentation regarding intellectual disability. TEX. EST. CODE § 1101.104.
- B. <u>PHYSICIAN OR PSYCHOLOGIST</u>: Either a physician <u>or</u> a psychologist may complete a DID pursuant to TEX. EST. CODE § 1101.104.
- C. <u>TIME CONSTRAINTS</u>: Rather than a 120 day timeframe, the DID must be based on an examination performed within the twenty-four months preceding the hearing. TEX. EST. CODE §1101.104(A)(2). It is not unusual to encounter an intellectually disabled patient who has not been examined in some years, particularly if their physical health is stable.
- D. "BOOSTER SHOT" CERTIFICATE: If no DID has been done within the last two years, see if your court (and local MHMR or doctor) will allow you to obtain a certificate to attach to the most recent (but now out-of-date) DID reflecting that the information contained in the most recent DID is still accurate, true, complete and correct. This "booster shot" approach works well and saves time and money.
- E. <u>DUAL DIAGNOSIS?</u>: In the event the Proposed Ward is "dually diagnosed," that is, an intellectual disability diagnosis, but also a medical diagnosis (i. e. autism, static encephalopathy, etc.), then a DID is not required and the regular CME may used.
- F. THE DOC CAN DO IT: Physicians are now authorized to perform DIDs and combine the CME with a DID. A traditional DID may also still be submitted. TPC §1101.104 (Appendix C)

4. Independent Medical Exam

A. <u>COURT'S OWN MOTION/ MOTION OF ANY PARTY</u>: If the court determines it is necessary, or if the ad litems or a contestant wants a "second opinion," the court may order an independent medical exam (IME) and appoint the necessary physicians. TEX. EST.

CODE § 1101.103(c)

Note: Tex. R. Civ. Proc. 204 (the general civil procedural vehicle to request a medical or psychological examination) does not apply to guardianship proceedings. The Texas Estates Code maintains its own framework for evaluating such issues. Karlen v. Karlen, 209 S.W.3d 841(Tex. App. Houston 14th Dist, December 5, 2006, no pet.)

- B. <u>NOTICE/WAIVER</u>: The proposed ward and all other parties must be given at least four-day's notice (which may be waived) before the hearing on the motion for a independent medical examination. *Ibid*. (Appendix U). C. <u>HEARING</u>: The court must make its determination with respect to the necessity for a physician's examination of the proposed ward at a hearing held for that purpose.
- D. <u>REPORT</u>: Any CME or other records resulting from the IME must be made available to the Attorney Ad Litem

E. PRACTICAL POINTERS:

- 1. Examine the Records: If the doctor's letter has not yet been supplied, you might consider reviewing the proposed ward's medical records at the doctor's office. Usually, giving the medical provider a copy of your order of appointment is (or should be) sufficient. (If you are refused access to the medical records, see the note concerning HIPAA, *infra*.)
- 2. <u>The Usual Suspects</u>: Find out whom the court usually appoints. This doctor will likely be familiar with the procedure and the court may already have confidence in him/her.
- 3. <u>Details</u>, <u>Details</u>: Make sure your order is sufficiently specific as to how soon the Proposed Ward will be examined and how soon the results will be reported. Thought should be given as to whom the results should be made available, if appropriate. The issue of costs should also be addressed.
- 4. <u>Hands Off</u>: It is also a good idea that no counsel or parties have any contact with the independent examiner so that the doctor will have no expectations regarding the Proposed Ward.

5. Evidentiary Considerations

A. EVIDENTIARY OBJECTIONS MAY NOT MATTER: In *Guardianship of Parker*, 275 S.W.3d 623 (Tex. App. Amarillo 2008, no pet.) the Amarillo Court of Appeals held the CME is not subject to evidentiary objections because TEX. EST. CODE § 1101.103 requires: 1. a CME to be in the court's file, 2. that it be presented to the court, and 3. that it be considered by the court before ruling on an application for guardianship.

Additionally, Tex. R. Evid. 509(e)(4) now provides an exception to the Physician-Patient Privilege in administrative proceedings or in civil proceedings in

court "as to a communication or record relevant to an issue of the physical, mental or emotional condition of a patient in any proceeding in which any party relies upon the condition as a part of the party's claim or defense."

B. YOUR STIPULATIONS COULD COME BACK TO HAUNT YOU: In Robinson v. Willingham, 2006 Tex. App. LEXIS 2788 (Tex. App. Austin 2006, no pet.), counsel for the proposed ward objected that the doctor's letter and accompanying reports as inadmissible because he did not waive physician-patient privilege in writing, citing TEX. R. EVID. 509, 510. However, the court found a pre-trial stipulation that each parties' experts' records would be admitted without proof of their business-record nature amounted to a waiver of any objection.

C. APPLICANT'S OFFENSIVE **MEDICAL** EVIDENCE: If you are the Guardian Ad Litem (or attorney for the Applicant) and bringing the application for guardianship, strongly consider submitting any nursing home records as business records. Guardianship of Parker, 2007 Tex. App. LEXIS 9428 (Tex. App. Fort Worth 2007, no pet.), the medical records of the proposed ward's nursing home were admitted into evidence as business records after the Guardian Ad Litem filed the appropriate notice under TRCP 902(10). The records contained numerous notes by the physicians, nurses, and caseworkers as to the proposed ward's condition and assessments over a period of time. The records also contained a nursing history and physical with detailed notes by the examining physician.

The appeals court rejected the hearsay objections by the Attorney Ad Litem because the business records affidavits accompanying the reports properly tracked the language of TEX. R. EVID. 803(6) and were therefore admissible under the "business records exception" to the hearsay rule. *Ibid*.

D. <u>NON-PHYSICIANS AS EXPERT WITNESSES</u> - Even though a psychologist or other non-physician cannot furnish a CME, it does not mean that the physician may not rely on testing or reports from these other professionals as a part of the basis for their professional opinion. Indeed, some conditions, such Fronto-Temporal Dementia cannot be diagnosed with neuro-psych evaluations.

It also does not mean that the court cannot hear testimony or reports from other non-physicians (including a nurse or social worker) as long as it passes the *Daubert* tests for helpfulness and reliability. TEX. R. EVID. 702, 703.

6. Maintenance of Guardianship Orders by Care Facilities –

A. Convalescent homes, nursing homes and assisted

living facilities are required to make a reasonable effort to request a copy of any court order appointing a guardian of a resident or a resident's estate from the resident's nearest relative or the person responsible for the resident's support. Health & Safety Code §§ 242.019, 247.070.

- B. Such an institution is required to maintain a copy of the court order in the resident's medical records. *Ibid*.
- C. Investigators from the Department of Aging and Disability Services are authorized, in conducting their investigations regarding reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, to inspect any such orders. Health and Safety Code § 260A.007(e)(6).

7. Defensive Considerations: The Answer May Depend On Who You Ask:

A. <u>TRULY EXPERT?</u> Is <u>this</u> doctor best qualified to determine incapacity? The doctor's letter is expert testimony and is measured by the requisites of *E.I. du Pont de Nemours v. Robinson*, 923 S.W.2d 549 (Tex. 1995) which adopted the U.S. Supreme Court's rationale in *Daubert v. Merrell-Dow Pharmaceuticals*, 113 S.Ct. 2786 (1993).

Just because the person providing the certificate is a "licensed physician" does not necessarily mean the doctor is qualified to opine on matters of psychology and neurology. Physicians are not necessarily experts in a field just because they are licensed to practice. *Broders et al v. Heise et al*, 924 S.W.2d 148 (Tex. 1996)

B. <u>DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES/ DIFFERING PER-SPECTIVES</u>: Different disciplines in the practice of medicine often approach their diagnostic role from different perspectives. It is important to understand these fundamental differences when considering the need for an Independent Medical Exam under TEX. EST. CODE § 1101.103.

Psychologists may have a Ph.D. in Psychology, but that does not make them a "physician." for purposes of § 1101.103. A psychologist licensed in this state or certified by the Department of Aging and Disability Services may, however, perform a Determination of Intellectual Disability under TEX. EST. CODE § 1101.104.

C. MEDICAL DOCTORS

1. <u>Physicians</u> (whether an M.D. or D.O.) (primary care clinicians or internists) can provide a summary of the proposed ward's major medical conditions. In some cases the physician may have provided care to the proposed ward over many years and can provide a historical perspective on the functioning of the proposed ward (although this cannot be assumed). Of note, a medical specialist such as a <u>cardiologist</u> or <u>orthopedic surgeon</u> may have developed a solid physician-patient

relationship over time yet may not have the requisite background to address questions of mental capacity.

- 2. Geriatricians (MD specialist in aging).
- 3. <u>Psychiatrists</u> (MD specialist in mental health, especially on treatment with medication) will be able to speak in more depth about how specific psychiatric conditions (e.g., schizophrenia) and related emotional/mental systems may be affecting the respondent and his/her capacity.
- 4. <u>Geriatric Psychiatrist</u> (MD specialist in mental health and aging).
- 5. <u>Neurologists</u> (MD specialist in brain and central nervous system function) can address how specific neurological conditions (e.g., dementia and other related cognitive problems) may be affecting the proposed ward and his/her capacity.
- 6. <u>Forensic Psychiatrist</u> MD mental health specialist trained to present findings in the legal arena. D. NON-PHYSICIAN MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS
- 1. <u>Psychologists</u> (may have a masters or doctoral level specialization in mental health, especially assessment with testing and on treatment with psychotherapy) tend to utilize standardized testing, useful when the judge wants detailed information about areas of cognitive or behavioral strengths or weaknesses.
- 2. <u>Geropsychologists</u> receive additional training in problems of aging; forensic psychologists receive additional training in mental health and the law.
- 3. <u>Forensic Psychologist</u> Mental health specialists trained to present their findings in the legal arena.
- 4. <u>Geropsychologist</u> Mental health specialists in aging.
- 5. Geriatric Assessment Teams, Geriatric Psychologists, are experienced in considering the multiple medical, social, and psychological factors that may impact an older adult's functioning.
- 6. <u>Neuropsychologists</u> (Psychologist specialist in brain-behavior relationships) can address relationships between neurological conditions, cognitive tests results, and a proposed ward's functional abilities.
- 7. <u>Nurses</u> have medical expertise and some, such as visiting nurses in Area Agencies on Aging, may have in-depth information on how a person's medical condition is impacting functioning in the home.
- 8. <u>Social Workers</u> are trained to consider the multiple determinants on an individual's social functioning, and are often knowledgeable about a wide range of social and community services that may assist the individual.
- 9. A <u>Geriatric Care Manager</u> is a health and human services professional, such as a gerontologist, social worker, counselor, or nurse, with a specialized body of knowledge and experience on issues related to aging

VII. DEALING WITH THE COURT AND COURT PERSONNEL/ PREPARING FOR HEARING

- **A. Your Best Allies**: Making friends with the court clerks and court staff is far more important that trying to get the judge to like you.
- 1. THE CLERK: The County Clerk in each county serves as the clerk of the court. However, remember, the clerk is a separately-elected public official and is not an employee of the court. Each court usually has a deputy clerk assigned to it for hearings. However, just because you tell something to the clerk, that doesn't mean the court automatically knows about it (and vice versa). By the same token, when you file something with the clerk (which is the only place you can file it) if you want the court to know about it, tell the court or drop off a courtesy copy with the court of whatever it was you filed.
- 2. <u>COURT STAFF</u>: The staff of a statutory probate court will vary, but is always larger and more varied than other courts. Get to know the personnel and their functions, then you will know where to go to get your problem addressed. (HINT: look on the court's website for details.)
- **B. Settings:** Determine when your court hears its guardianship docket and what its setting procedures are. It may be on the same day as the uncontested estate "prove-ups" or the court may set a docket for just guardianship hearings. If the ward opposes the guardianship and wishes to attend the hearing, even for a 'pro forma' contest, it may be better to have the application specially set to allow a bit more time for everyone.
- 1. <u>PLAN AHEAD</u>: Dockets fill up. If you have a dying proposed ward (why get a guardianship?) or an aging out MR minor, you need to think ahead and find sometime in advance for your prove-up.
- 2. <u>SETTING REQUESTS/CONFIRMATIONS</u>: All settings are to be by a request for a setting (by e-mail). *Settings should always be confirmed and all parties notified*. (see Appendix V).
- 3. <u>SEPARATE SETTING REQUEST NOT IN A PLEADING</u>: Settings requested in the prayer of a pleading or in transmittal letters will be <u>ignored</u>. Those documents go to the clerk's office, not the court. There is no mechanism for such a request to be brought to the court's attention.
- 4. <u>TIME ESTIMATE/ RECORD TO BE MADE?</u> Let the Coordinator know how long the hearing will take and whether a court reporter will be required (because

the probate courts also hear mental dockets, the reporter is not always immediately available at the courthouse). 5. <u>CALL IF YOU'RE NOT COMING</u>: If the hearing has to be cancelled or postponed, notify the court and all attorneys and ad litems of the cancellation or delay.

C. Working the File

- 1. <u>GENERALLY</u>: Because the court reviews all documents prior to the hearing in uncontested matters, it is important that all paperwork be in the file prior to the hearing. This is to ensure that hearings go more smoothly for participants who are already dealing with the stress of someone's death. Attorneys benefit as well from smoother hearings and can avoid having errors pointed out to them in front of their clients.
- 2. <u>SHOW YOUR WORK</u>: When possible, we recommend that you file all of your documents at the time you file the application. That way, those documents will be in the file when it's pulled for review.
- 3. <u>FILE IT FIRST</u>: Documents that you have been notified need to be filed (e.g. waivers, designations of resident agent) need to be filed sufficiently ahead of the hearing to get "into the system" and you need to alert the court coordinator that they have been filed (or you may lose your setting).

Hint: put your documents/files on your tablet computer to show the judge the documents got filed.

4. <u>FILE REPORTS EARLY</u>: The Guardian Ad Litem report (or in an heirship, the Attorney Ad Litem report) should be filed no later than three days before the hearing. It would be a shame to have to re-schedule the hearing because of a missing report.

<u>Copy Everyone</u> – When you file your report, make sure everyone gets a copy. That should include the Court Investigator, if you are in a county that has an investigator. That way, the Investigator does not have to keep checking with the clerk to see if you have filed your report.

- 5. "AND HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR NECK OF THE WOODS:" If there are some documents that you have not gotten to the court in advance of the hearing, determine how your court wants to handle that issue. Some judges will want the remaining paperwork e-filed, others may want you to e-mail editable copies, while others may want hard copies simply brought to the hearing.
- 6. <u>COURTESY COPY</u>, <u>PLEASE?</u> If you need anticipate the court will 'carve up' your order, find out whom to e-mail an editable copy for the court's use (but not on the hearing day).
- 7. <u>CORRESPONDENCE</u> regarding interaction between counsel should be sent to other counsel and pro se parties (but <u>not</u> the court).

- **D.** Ad Litem Reports: Prepare and file a report if one is expected. (see note above about copies)
- 1. <u>ATTORNEY AD LITEM</u>: Many judges feel requiring a report of the Attorney Ad Litem: a) violates the attorney-client privilege and b) exposes the Attorney Ad Litem to the potential of being called as a fact witness. However, your judge may well expect one. Find out either way.
- 2. <u>GUARDIAN AD LITEM</u>: Because the primary duty of the Guardian Ad Litem is to give an opinion, an initial written report <u>should</u> be filed within 30 days of appointment (and supplemented as necessary) so that the court can know what your position is. In any event, the Court <u>must</u> have your report <u>at least 3 days prior to any hearing</u>. If there are several guardianship hearings on the docket that week, it puts the court at a real disadvantage to have to wait until the last minute to react to new information. You might not like the result.

If possible, the Guardian Ad Litem should review the Court Investigator's report (TEX. EST. CODE 1054.153) to make sure everyone is on the same page.

E. Citation and Notice: A Jurisdictional Foundation and the Laundry List

- 1. <u>FOUNDATIONAL BASIS</u> The legal basis for service in a probate proceeding is <u>not</u> the same as in a district court proceeding. The general procedural provision, Tex. R. Civ. P. 103 provides for service of citation and other notices in all civil cases...(2) *by an person authorized by law or the written order of the court.* <u>However</u>, Tex. R. Civ. P. 2 limits the application of the Rules of Civil Procedure to situations where there is no substantive law addressing the same area and which differs from the Rules. As a result, the substantive provisions of the Estates Code control over the Rules of Civil Procedure.
- 2. <u>ESTATES CODE PROVISIONS ON NOTICE AND SERVICE</u> The requirements for notice, service and returns (in <u>guardianship</u> proceedings) are found in TEX. EST. CODE §§ 51ff and 1051ff. In <u>heirship</u> proceedings, additional considerations are involved. (see *infra* under HEIRSHIP/Citation.)
- a. <u>Basic Provision</u> TEX. EST. CODE §§ 51.001 and 1051.001 <u>No</u> notice or citation is necessary <u>unless</u>
 - 1. the Code requires it or
 - 2. The judge requires it.
- b. Methods of Service TEX. EST. CODE §§ 51.051ff, 1051.051ff.
 - 1. PERSONAL SERVICE
 - a. with lawyer on lawyer (by e-service)
 - b. without lawyer on person by Sheriff or constable
 - c. if out of state by any disinterested person
 - d. if not found re-issue citation and publication

- 2. POSTING
- 3. PUBLICATION
- 4. MAILING
- 5. OTHER §§ 51.151, 1051.201 as directed by court order and as authorized by the Estates Code or Rules of Civil Procedure *if*:
- a. no specific form of notice, service, or return is prescribed, or
- b. the code provisions are insufficient or inadequate, or
- c. any interested person asks (upon application and order).

c. How Served Personally

- 1. Basic Provision Sheriff or Constable §§ 51.051(b)(1), 1051.051(b)(1).
- 2. By a Disinterested Person (if person to be served is out of state) §§ 51.051(b)(2), 1051.051(b)(2).
- 3. By an alternative manner as directed by specific order (only upon application and order) §§ 51.151, 1051.201
- application must be supported by affidavit and order
- order should specify manner of service that will be reasonably effective to give notice.

Ask First: If you want service by private process or an alternative method, you must do so on application and order. Take some time to adequately describe what you are trying to do, so the judge can understand.

See if there is a local rule prescribing a form of the application and order or if the court has a form it prefers.

- 3. <u>CITATION AND NOTICE IN GUARDIANSHIPS</u>
 A. <u>Poster Citation</u>: Citation must be posted. (TEX. EST. CODE § 1051.102
- B. <u>Personal Service</u>: Citation must be <u>personally</u> served (TEX. EST. CODE § 1051.103) on:
 - 1. a proposed ward 12 or older;

THE ATTORNEY AD LITEM CANNOT ACCEPT SERVICE FOR THE PROPOSED WARD AND THE PROPOSED WARD CANNOT WAIVE PERSONAL SERVICE. (Pardon the shouting.) Even an agent under a valid power of attorney previously given by the ward cannot accept or waive service on behalf of the ward. *In re Martinez*, 2008 Tex. App. LEXIS 606 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2008, no pet.) All other persons entitled to personal service may file waivers. (TEX. EST. CODE § 1051.105).

- 2. the parents, if their whereabouts are known;
- 3. any court-appointed conservator or person with control of the care and welfare of the proposed ward;

- 4. the spouse of the proposed ward, if her/his whereabouts is known;
- 5. the proposed guardian, if not the same as the Applicant.
- C. <u>THE LAUNDRY LIST</u>: The Applicant **shall** serve the following by Certified Mail or Registered Mail (or UPS or Fed-Ex, if you now so choose TEX. EST. CODE § 1051.104):
 - 1. adult children of the proposed ward;
 - 2. adult siblings of the proposed ward;
 - 3. the administrator of a nursing home where the proposed ward is located; or
 - 4. the operator of a residential facility in which the proposed ward resides;
 - 5. any known holder of a power of attorney from the proposed ward;
 - 6. any person known to be designated to serve under a designation of guardian under TEX. EST. CODE § 1104.202;
 - 7. a person designated to serve as guardian in the probated will of the proposed ward's last surviving parent;
 - 8. any person known to be designated by a deceased parent to serve under a designation of guardian; under § 1104.151ff and
 - 9. Each adult named in the application as an "other living relative" of the proposed ward within the third degree by consanguinity, (if there is no spouse, parent, adult sibling or adult child) as required by § 1101.001(b)(11) or (13).

In case you just had to know: "...[R]elatives within the third degree by consanguinity include the proposed ward's: 1) grandparent or grandchild; and 2) great-grandparent, great-grandchild, aunt who is a sister of a parent of the proposed ward, uncle who is a brother of a parent of the proposed ward, nephew who is a child of a brother or sister of the proposed ward, or niece who is a child of a brother or sister of the proposed ward." §1101.001

The validity of a guardianship is not affected by the failure of the Applicant to serve any of the laundry list *except the adult children of the proposed ward* (but try to do it anyway). *Guardianship of V.A.*, 2012 Tex. App. LEXIS 3833 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2012, no pet. h.).

Note: If the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) is the intended successor guardian, they <u>must</u> be served with personal citation by a sheriff/ constable. TEX. EST. Code § 1203.108(5).

D. WHAT TO SEND:

- 1. If personal service is otherwise required, and waivers can be given, (not the proposed ward), obtain a Waiver of Citation (Appendix F)
- Moving the Ward: §1151.051(e) requires a guardian, before moving a ward to a more restrictive care facility, to provide notice of the proposed placement to the court, the ward, and any person who has requested notice. The most common sense way to determine if a person will request notice is to provide them with that option in the waiver form, so that their choice will be documented.
- 2. If the person is on the "Laundry List" TEX. EST. CODE § 1051.104, a copy of the front side of the Poster Citation may be sent.
- E. <u>LEAD TIME REQUIREMENT</u>: Be sure, as Guardian Ad Litem, as you are in the process of obtaining the waivers and serving the "laundry list," that you:
 - 1. Get your waivers/notices and affidavit of service under TEX. EST. CODE § 1051.104(b) affidavit processed with enough lead time to comply with the **10-day 'lead-time' requirement** under TEX. EST. CODE § 1051.106. (See Appendix G). But see *Guardianship of V.A., supra*.
 - 2. Keep copies of all of your paperwork.
 - 3. Make certain there is a certificate of service on the ad litem report.
- F. <u>RECENT CASES</u> some appeals courts view the otherwise strict requirements of citation with a dose of reality:
- 1. Guardianship of Jordan, 348 S.W.3d 401 (Tex. App. Beaumont July 28, 2011, no pet. h.) Lack of personal service on proposed ward did not deprive the court of subject matter jurisdiction where no clear legislative intent to make loss of jurisdiction mandatory and where parties had made appearances in court.
- 2. Guardianship of Bays 355 S. W. 3d 715 (Tex. App. Fort Worth 2011, no pet. h.) upheld substituted service on a proposed ward, pointing out that it was authorized, but only on motion, affidavit and order.

Note: The *Bays* decision would seem to indicate a 'standing order' for service by private process would not work.

- 3. Guardianship of V.A., supra.
 - failure to serve Father not error where parental rights had been terminated.
 - failure to notify the Ward's managing conservator, given notice, but not personally

- served per TPC § 633(c)(3) (now § 1051.103) (here a *jus tertii* argument).
- savings provision (TPC § 633(f), now § 1051.104(c)): "The validity of a guardianship created under this chapter is not affected by the failure to comply with the requirements of Subsections (d)(2)-(9) of this section" excused failure to serve adult siblings (§ 633(d)(2), now 1051.104(a)(2)) and Hospital Administrator (§ 633(d)(2), now § 1051.104(a)(3), therefore not error.
- failure of Court to observe "ten day waiting period" imposed by TPC § 633(f) (now §1051.106), held not to be jurisdictional.
- 4. *Interest of X.L.S.*, 2012 Tex. App. LEXIS 8756 (Tex. App. Corpus Christi, October 18, 2012, no pet.) Failure to strictly comply with statutory ten-day waiting period following filing of application for guardianship, but granting a permanent guardianship when the active pleadings sought only temporary guardianship deprived parent of notice that applicant sought permanent guardianship.

F. Paperwork to Have on Hand:

1. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

- A. <u>Early Paperwork</u>: Try to get your paperwork to opposing counsel, the court investigator and the court at least a few days before the hearing.
- B. <u>Blanks?</u> Fill in all the blanks you can, especially the date (or at least provide a date line long enough). If the court has already had to carve up your order with corrections and interlineations, it takes all that much longer to fill in the case number, the court designation, the date of the hearing, the date the application was filed and the date signed. (see comments above re: furnishing electronic copies)
- C. <u>Proofread!!</u> Did you remember to change the names and dates from the last time you used that computer form?
- D. <u>Social Security Numbers</u>: Please provide the court clerk the Social Security Numbers for the Ward and Applicant (on a <u>separate</u> sheet for the court's records). TEX. EST. CODE § 1201.004.
- 2. <u>PROOF OF FACTS</u>: If you will be putting on testimony during the hearing, bring a completed Proof of Facts, Appropriate Oath (to be executed after the testimony is given in open court), appropriate Bond and proposed Order. (Review TEX. EST. CODE § 1101.101). Make sure you track the findings required by the appropriate Code Sections. (Appendices W through Ad)

3. SURETY BOND

A. Why Have a Bond? The ad litem who asks the judge to set a low bond is not acting in his or her

- client's best interests. If, for any reason, you should be re-activated because of improper actions of the guardian, the best thing you could have ever done for the ward would have been to make sure the judge required enough bond. Very often, it is the only available financial resource left to a successor guardian.
- B. Safekeeping Agreements Prior to Qualification (Appendix Ad) To save on the amount that has to be bonded (and at risk), TEX. EST. CODE § 1101.156 now allows a court, before appointing a guardian to require cash, securities, or other assets of a proposed ward or ward to be deposited pursuant to a safekeeping agreement as described in TEX. EST. CODE § 1105.155(b).

After the Applicant has provided an exhibit (Appendix X) to assist the judge in determining the amount of the Safekeeping Agreement and the bond, the court can approve the use of the Safekeeping Agreement, (Appendix Ad) and the guardian may deposit the estate cash or other assets in a state or national bank, trust company, savings and loan association, or other domestic corporate depository, to be held under an agreement that the depository will not allow withdrawal or transfer of the principal of the assets and/or interest on the deposit except on written court order

Caveat: TEX. FIN. CODE § 201.101 defines the types of financial institutions with whom safekeeping agreements may be executed. Unless chartered as a bank, brokerage houses usually do not qualify as institutions who can enter into valid safekeeping agreements.

B. <u>Types of Sureties</u> TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1105.160, 1105.201ff <u>Personal</u> sureties and <u>corporate</u> sureties are both authorized by the Code. With personal sureties (two or more required) each must satisfy the court they own non-exempt property of at least twice the amount of the bond and execute an affidavit to that effect (TEX. EST. CODE § 1105.201(a)) or deposit cash or other securities with a qualified corporate depository. TEX. EST. CODE § 1105.157. However, cash deposits in lieu of bonds pose an administrative nightmare for the clerk.

It is much more common that the surety is an *authorized corporate surety*: "a domestic or foreign corporation authorized to do business in Texas for the purpose of issuing surety, guaranty or indemnity bonds guaranteeing the fidelity of executors, administrators and guardians" TEX. EST. CODE § 1002.003.

- C. Advantages of Corporate Sureties over Personal Sureties:
- 1. Only one corporate surety is generally required

rather than two individual sureties (court may require two corporate sureties if the bond is greater than \$50,000 TEX. EST. CODE § 1105.161(a)).

- 2. The bond premium is payable by the Estate. TEX. EST. CODE § 1105.161(b).
- 3. Corporate sureties generally are better able to respond financially, giving the guardian (and court) more comfort.
- 4. Corporate sureties often come in and aggressively defend the guardian, certainly making the guardian more comfortable.
- 5. A corporate surety bond is less prone to misinterpretation than the affidavit of a personal surety as to non-exempt assets. ("I agreed to *what*?")
- 6. The guardian will not have to beg friends and relations to personally guarantee his actions.
- 7. CAVEAT: Make sure the Power of Attorney on the Bond form is not limited to an amount lower than the Bond amount.
- D. Filing TEX. EST. CODE § 1105.002, 1105.003, 1105.110. Bonds must <u>approved</u> and <u>filed</u> within twenty (20) days after the order granting letters.
- E. <u>Qualifying for a Bond</u>: Be aware that bond underwriting is currently based almost entirely on the credit history of the Principal. If your applicant has any credit problems, you need to be talking to a bonding agent ahead of time. The trend is toward the courts requiring *pre-qualification* for bonds.
- 1. At the hearing, the testimony should include information about the approximate extent of the ward's estate so the judge can accurately determine an initial amount of the corporate surety bond for the newly-appointed guardian.
- 2. Arriving at a bond amount is not a big mystery. Ask the court what its guidelines are.
- 3. Some bonding agents will even come to the hearing with you and have the bond ready to be approved.
- 4. The court has a minimum bond amount for guardians of the estate, ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000. Guardians of the person may be required to post either a personal surety bond or corporate surety bond, depending on the court's policies. The guardian's oath should not be executed before the bond has been filed with the clerk.
- F. <u>Bonding Problems?</u> Plan Ahead! Surety bonds are underwritten on the basis of credit history. Find out ahead of time if the proposed guardian will have a problem. It is not unusual for an experienced attorney or a paid professional guardian to have to step in to serve as guardian of the estate when no family can qualify. However, from the standpoint of the ward, this may be good news. If the initial applicant has credit problems, he/she might not make a good financial

manager for the ward.

4. OATH A bench oath is included at Appendix Ac.

G. The Proposed Order: Powers of the Guardian/Limitations of the Ward – Consideration should be given whether the order should simply grant plenary authority: "the guardian is hereby granted all powers authorized by the Texas Estates Code and the rights of the Ward are hereby restricted to the extent not inconsistent therewith" or whether the order should attempt to specify the powers granted. Compare the order granting a temporary guardianship (where each power must be spelled out (Appendix J) and the order granting a permanent guardianship (Appendix Aa)

The listing of powers is problematic. a short form order, granting plenary authority, may provoke an objection from some provider or bank who is looking for a specific power written into the order (if not a line specifying their bank and no other!). A balancing f interests is required. Consideration should be given to the anecdotal evidence as well as the CME and the results of your investigation and capacity assessment.

<u>Driving (!?)</u>, <u>Voting and Decisions Concerning Personal Residence</u>: The application, the CME, and the order appointing the guardian all must specifically address the ability of the ward to operate a motor vehicle and to vote in a public election. TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1101.001, 1101.103 and 1101.151ff.

In addition, any order appointing a guardian, whether with full authority or less than full authority, or upon modification of a guardianship, must specifically address the ability of a Ward to make decisions regarding residence. TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1101.151(a) & (b), 1101.152(a) & (b) and 1202.156.

Preference of Proposed Ward - The court is required to make a reasonable effort to consider the Proposed Ward's preference of the person to be appointed guardian, regardless of whether the person has designated in a 'pre-need' designation. TEX. EST. CODE § 1104.002

"Katie's Law" and Elder Texas Drivers - Effective September, 1, 2007, Texas drivers aged 79 or older can no longer renew a driver's license by mail or electronic means, but must renew the license in person at an authorized license renewal station. In addition, drivers aged 85 and older will now have to renew every two years, rather than every six years. TEX. TRANSP. CODE §521.2711.

The "Re-Test Request" - A potential ward who refuses to stop driving may be reported to the DPS by a physician, a family member, or even a stranger,

if the person's driving capability is impaired. Although physicians are somewhat reticent to report their patients because of the physician-patient privilege and HIPAA, it is possible for the applicant in a guardianship or the ad litem to request the court to make a referral to the Department of Public Safety for the proposed ward to be re-tested under DPS regulations to determine the proposed ward's suitability to continue to drive. See the Probate investigator for an example of a request letter.

See "Note on Required Disclosures," infra

H. Appointment of Resident Agent: If your Applicant is not a Texas resident and has not appointed a resident agent for service, they are <u>disqualified by law</u> until such an agent is designated. (Either e-file the completed form or bring a blank form with you to the hearing for the Appointee to execute). Resident agents may resign and a new agent may be appointed TEX. EST. CODE § 1057.001. Also, a non-resident guardian may be removed without notice for failure to appoint a new resident agent. TEX. EST. CODE § 1203.051(5).

Important: Determine if your judge will also require you to file an acknowledgment by the resident agent appointed.

I. Copies - If it is your order - it is your responsibility to distribute the copies.

Find out the court's preference on conforming copies. Some judges want to keep things moving and will let the courtroom clerk (or the clerk down the hall) conform the copies. Some judges will conform a limited number of copies themselves, unless there have been numerous strikeouts and amendments. Unless you order and pay for certified copies, don't expect your tax dollars to pay for free copies.

VIII. HEARING DAY: SOME GENERAL AND PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

A. Generally:

- 1. <u>COME WATCH</u>: If you have never done so, go watch the uncontested hearing docket to get an idea of the flow.
- 2. <u>PULL THE RABBIT OUT OF THE HAT</u>: The Court would usually rather be relieved than surprised. If you have an unusual fact situation (or the situation is not what it appears), find some way to plead it. Please don't make the court guess at what is going on and have to delay your hearing until we find out.
- 3. <u>PROBLEMS?</u> It is <u>not</u> always better to get forgiveness than permission ask first.
- 4. <u>SPEAK TO THE MAN</u>: Check in with the bailiff not with the court coordinator.

- 5. <u>CALL</u> if you're not coming.
- 6. <u>WHERE'S JUDGE WALDO?</u>: The hearing may now be held in a location convenient and accessible to the individual. TEX. EST. CODE § 1055.053.

B. Decorum:

- 1. <u>NOT THE BUS STATION</u>: While this is a public building, it is a court of law, not the bus station.
- 2. <u>ZERO TOLERANCE</u>: Most courts have written notices posted with regard to the rules of decorum for the court. As a result, you and your clients/witnesses may or may not be given a warning of infractions before the court either asks you to leave or holds someone in contempt.
- 3. <u>NO!</u> No tobacco/ No gum/ No shorts/ No hats/ No cell phones/ No pagers/ No client conferences in the courtroom.
- 4. <u>PROPER ATTIRE</u>: If the court has a dress code, observe it. Advise your clients accordingly or reschedule your hearing.
- 5. <u>CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?</u> A telephone going off in the courtroom is usually followed by impoundment of the telephone or an immediate finding of contempt.
- 6. <u>SSSSH!</u> Talking in the courtroom is not only disrespectful, it is disruptive to the judge trying to hear a witness who is too scared to speak up. If you need to talk to a witness, do so outside. Let the bailiff know you need to speak to a witness and to let you know when the court is ready.
- 7. <u>TAKE IT OUTSIDE</u>: Talking in the foyer outside the courtroom is no improvement. If you think you have gotten out of earshot, think again. Take it out into the hallway.
- 8. <u>NOT IN THERE EITHER</u>: Don't use the court's offices as a conference room or for your telephone calls. The court staff have to get their work done, too.
- 9. WHERE DID YOU GET THAT TIE? If you have a minor emergency or wardrobe malfunction (or nonfunction) remember: the court reporter usually has pens, paper, an Estates Code, emergency supplies, reading glasses, and a coat and tie available. (The tie may be pretty ugly though.)
- C. The Hearing at the Bench ("Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent.") Proverbs 17:28 (NIV): Although you are standing at the bench rather than standing to address the court from the counsel table this is still a <u>formal</u> proceeding and your conduct should reflect such.
- 1. <u>ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES:</u> Advise the court (when you set the hearing) if the applicant or any of the witnesses
 - will require a translator (language or signing)

- has any particular disability issues for which the court will need to make accommodation.
- 2. <u>PREPARED TESTIMONY</u>: Unless a record is being made by a court reporter, <u>always</u> have your testimony reduced to writing (Appendix W), in <u>all</u> cases, for all witnesses, every time.

Hint: See if your court has preferred forms on its website.

- 3. SPEAK UP: it's your show.
- 4. <u>LEAD THE WITNESS</u> and avoid droning repetition.
- 5. <u>BE CONSIDERATE</u>! If you think you are nervous, imagine how the applicant/ witness/ward feels! Don't make your client grasp for dates, names, etc. Phrase questions to be easy to answer.
- 6. <u>PREPARE YOUR WITNESSES</u>: Discuss the testimony and legal issues outside the presence of the Court and then ask summary questions (e.g.: disqualification, incapacity).
- 7. <u>CANDOR TOWARD THE TRIBUNAL</u>: Even if you do not actively contest the application, make sure the court has a full picture of the situation. Rather than merely saying "No questions," ask questions to highlight any points not covered by the Applicant or Guardian Ad Litem. But use some judgment. Sometime "No questions" is the proper tactic. (See Appendix Z for suggested cross-examination questions)
- 8. <u>BOND TESTIMONY</u>: Elicit sufficient testimony on the nature and extent of the Estate to enable the court to set the bond: TEX. EST. CODE §1105.153.

Rant: Direct Examination by the Ad Litem
If you are examining multiple witnesses on direct examination, after you have finished with the first witness, it is fine to ask the second witness:

"If I asked you the same questions that I just asked (1st Witness), would your answers be the same?"

However, it makes little or no sense to listen to a direct examination and then ask the <u>same</u> witness (on cross-examination):

"If I asked you the same questions you were just asked, would your answers be any different?

How confused must the witness (and opposing counsel and the judge) think you are?

D. Burden(s) of Proof: Findings Required.

Be aware that the court is required to make several findings before appointing a guardian. Some of these are specified to be found by clear and convincing evidence, while others may be proven by a preponderance of the evidence. TEX. EST. CODE § 1101.101.

1. CLEAR AND CONVINCING STANDARD:

- A. a determination of incapacity;
- B. appointment of a guardian would be in the best interest of the proposed ward; and
- 3. appointment of a guardian would protect the proposed ward's rights or property.

2. PREPONDERANCE STANDARD:

- 1. proper venue;
- 2. person to be appointed guardian is eligible to act as guardian and entitled to appointment, or, if no eligible person entitled to appointment applies, person appointed is a proper person to act;
- 3. (minors only) guardianship not created for primary purpose of enabling minor to establish residency for school enrollment for which minor is not otherwise eligible; and
- 4. description of nature and extent of incapacity.

E. Bench Instructions and Training

1. <u>GUIDANCE</u>: Attached as Appendix Ai are examples of bench instructions given to the newly-appointed guardian. More than once, counsel for the guardian has asked for an extra copy for his or her own reference. If the appointee is required to sign and return a copy of the instructions to the court, it tends to eliminate the excuse of "But I never knew I was supposed to do that!" In at least one instance, an appellate court noted that the appellant had not only had her responsibilities pointed out to her, but that the judge had given her instructions in writing, which she had signed to acknowledge. *Thedford v. White*, 37 S.W.3d 494 (Tex. App. Tyler 2000, no pet.)

<u>BYOH</u>: (Bring Your Own Handout) If your judge doesn't provide such handouts, make a suggestion or bring your own (for defensive purposes).

2. TRAINING: See if your court offers any training for the newly-appointed guardian. Our court has a training class one hour prior to the guardianship docket, with simple Powerpoint presentations for guardians of the person and guardians of the estate. The national trend is toward statutorily-mandated training (Cf: Alaska's one-hour training requirement for all guardians: www.courts.alaska.gov/forms.htm Form PG-510, p. 5).

F. Contested Hearings (with a Court Reporter)

- 1. <u>KEEP US IN THE LOOP</u> Let us know if you settle and no longer need <u>our</u> time. Like firemen we have to be ready to go when you need us. If we don't need to be helping you, there's usually someone else who could use that hearing slot.
- 2. <u>NEED A RECORD?</u> If you are on the record, you are dictating a document for the appellate courts. If you want a record just so you do not have to take notes, let

the court reporter know up front and be ready to put down a deposit up front for the transcript.

- 3. <u>WHAT WAS THAT?</u> If the reporter cannot hear what is said, she cannot write it down <u>Stay on the microphones</u>.
- 4. <u>YOUR NERVOUS HABITS</u>: Although they will seldom comment on it (other than to the judge), irritations to the court reporter include:
- nervous habits such as clicking a ball-point pen, jingling change in your pocket, tapping a pen on your paperwork
- talking over someone else. The reporter can write only what one person is saying. If it is the judge, I have it on good authority they will report what the judge is saying.
- marking exhibits: wait until the reporter gets through marking the exhibit before talking again. (Her hands are busy.)
- **G. Trainwrecks**: If something unexpected happens and the order is not going to be signed right then, or the hearing otherwise turns into a trainwreck, try to think fast and see if some of the work can be salvaged.
- 1. <u>NO PAPERWORK?</u> If you failed to have your testimony reduced to writing, the court may pass your hearing and allow you to complete a blank form by hand, then take you after the next hearing.
- 2. "SIGNED IN OPEN COURT" If your witness cannot sign the testimony at that time, they will have to return to sign the testimony before the courtroom clerk who took the hearing.
- 3. <u>SUBJECT TO:</u> Maybe the court will hear early testimony and rule on the application "subject to" whatever curative matters you still need to get done.
- 4. ONE PIECE AT A TIME: Maybe the court can grant guardianship of the person and defer ruling on the guardianship of the estate until the facts are better developed.
- **H. Clerk's Follow-Up Duties:** As a result of the court's findings in the order of appointment, the county clerk has a number of responsibilities
- 1. BRADY BILL IMPLICATIONS: The probate clerk will now be required to prepare and forward information to DPS within 30 days of a determination by a court that a person is incapacitated or that a person is determined to be mentally ill and involuntarily committed to a mental hospital. DPS will transmit this information to the FBI-run National Instant Criminal Background Check System (commonly known as NICS), a clearinghouse used to prohibit disqualified persons from purchasing firearms. Persons who have been restored to capacity or have been found by a mental health court to no longer be dangerous, could have their right to

- purchase firearms restored. TEX. GOVT. CODE §§411.052 and 411.0521.
- 2. <u>VOTER REGISTRATION</u>: If the order specifies that the ward does not retain the right to vote in a public election, the clerk is required to file an abstract of the guardianship order with the voter registrar. TEX. ELECT. CODE § 16.002.
- 3. <u>DRIVER'S LICENSE</u>: Similarly, if the order specifies that the ward does not retain the right to maintain eligibility to hold or obtain a license to operate a motor vehicle, the clerk is required to file DPS Form D-17 with the Texas Department of Public Safety within 10 days of the judgment. TEX. TRANSP. CODE §521.319.

I. Say the Words, Take the Money, Go Home

- 1. <u>DISCHARGED</u>: Unless the court specifies otherwise, both the GAL and AAL are **discharged** as of the signing of the order granting the guardianship or dismissing the application is signed. TEX. PROB CODE §§ 1054.002, 1054.053.
- 2. SEPARATE ORDER REQUIRED FOR FEES: By a specific directive of the Texas Supreme Court, any order awarding a fee to a person appointed by a Statutory Probate Court (such as an Attorney or Guardian Ad Litem) must be separate and apart from any other pleading. Misc. Docket Nos. 94-9143 (Sept. 21, 1994) & 07-9188 (Oct 30, 2007) reprinted in *Texas Rules of Court 2013* at page 775.

J. Selling the Follow-Through

Be aware that the court is charged by statute (TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1054.102, 1201.001, 1201.052, 1163.001 & 1163.101) to annually monitor all guardianships through the use of annual accounts, annual reports and court visits. The judge is charged to annually determine whether the guardianship should be adjusted or the ward's rights restored. Additionally, statutory probate courts are required to have a program to make and follow-up on annual visits on each ward.

Most of the statutory probate courts actively monitor more than 1,100 wards per court, including sending out Annual Reports of the Guardian of the Person, approving such reports, appointing court visitors for each ward, reviewing and acting on any recommendations made by the court visitors and maintaining the records on the guardianship monitoring, separate and apart from the "public files" in the clerk's office.

Both the Guardian Ad Litem and Attorney Ad Litem need to help the new guardian-to-be understand that there is a continuing obligation in a guardianship both to the ward and to the court. It is important that the guardian qualify in a timely manner and that the

guardian understands that any reports required to be filed must be treated seriously. "Selling the Follow-Through" is an important part of the job of the ad litem in upholding the integrity of the system.

If the newly appointed guardian has to be removed for failure to qualify within 20 days or removed a year later for failure to stay in touch with the court or file an accounting or report, the result is the same: the ward has suffered some damage because of the inaction of the guardian.

IX. ACTIVE CONTEST OF THE APPLICATION

Threshold Consideration: Even though earlier dicta suggested that an Attorney Ad Litem was to exhaust all remedies available (*Cahill v. Lyda*, 826 S.W.2d 932 (Tex. 1992)), the clear legislative intent of the guardianship statutes, as reflected in TEX. EST. CODE §1001.101, is that a <u>less restrictive alternative</u>, if available, or the availability of Supports and Services, is to be considered.

As referenced above ("the ad litem's dilemma"), often the job of the Attorney Ad Litem is to require that the Applicant meet his burden under the statute. However, there are instances where "all is not well" and the ad litem is compelled to actively contest the proceeding. Most often, but not always, this has more to do with the personalities of the individuals involved and competing desires for control of access to the proposed ward or over the proposed ward's estate.

In actively contesting a guardianship proceeding, the ad litem should consider among the following:

A. File An Answer! In every case, file a general denial to put matters in issue. Beyond that, raise the necessary affirmative defenses (Appendix M) to give the court and other counsel adequate notice as to what is disputed:

Incapacity/ inability to care for self or protect own rights/ inability to manage property/ applicant not qualified/ applicant not a suitable person/ objection to CME.

- **B. Determine If Immediate Action is Appropriate.** Legal triage may be necessary. See discussion *supra* under "Ad Litem Boot Camp."
- C. Set the Hearing on the Contested Docket. This should be the first and best notice to the court that you don't intend to "go along quietly." Be sure you give the required 45-day notice of hearing under TEX. R. CIV. PROC. 245 or get waivers in writing from all the players. (See the Setting Confirmation form at Appendix V.)

D. Calling for Backup. In an appropriate case, the attorney ad item for a proposed ward may be authorized, upon application and order, to enlist the assistance of additional counsel to represent the proposed ward when warranted by the circumstances. *Guardianship of Glasser*, 2009 Tex. App. LEXIS 2680 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2009, no pet.) In *Scally v. Scally*, 2010 Tex. App. LEXIS 8045 (Tex. App. Houston-14th Dist 2010 no pet.), the ad litem in a SAPCR proceeding retained counsel to collect fees awarded the ad litem.

E. Retained Counsel

1. THE FAMILY RETAINER: It is not unusual for a proposed ward or a family member who objects to the guardianship (or proposed guardian) to seek out an old family friend who is a lawyer and ask them to defeat the guardianship application.

Newly enacted TEX. EST. CODE § 1054.006 recognizes the ability of a proposed ward (with sufficient capacity) to retain counsel.

- 2. TRCP12: The Applicant or Guardian Ad Litem might well consider a Motion to Show Authority pursuant to TEX. R. CIV. PROC. 12. In this sworn motion, the privately-retained attorney is cited to appear and bear the burden show his authority to act on behalf of the proposed ward. (See Appendix S.) A "Rule 12" motion is the exclusive method of questioning an attorney's authority to represent a party, and such a motion must be heard and determined before the parties announce ready for trial. *Price v. Golden*, 2000 Tex. App. LEXIS 5906 (Tex. App. Austin 2000, no pet.) Such a motion might be a conflict for an Attorney Ad Litem, who may be in a position to defend his client's capacity.
- 3. <u>KEY ISSUE: CONTRACTUAL CAPACITY</u> The key issue is whether the proposed ward has sufficient capacity to understand the concept of the contractual relationship between attorney and client. It gives the court an early opportunity to observe the proposed ward and sometimes results in the pursuit of a less restrictive alternative. However, if the attorney cannot sustain his burden to show such authority (and demonstrate the threshold capacity of the proposed ward to be able to retain counsel), he is barred from representing the proposed ward in the proceeding. Tex. R. Civ. P. 12. While this is a fairly low burden, it is dispositive on the issue. *Logan v. McDaniel*, 21 S.W.3d 683 (Tex. App. Austin 2000, pet. denied).

In *Oldham v Calderon*,1998 Tex. App. Lexis 1539, (Tex. App. Houston 14th Dist. 1998, pet. denied), The 14th Court of Appeals affirmed the trial court's substitution of privately-retained counsel in place of the court-appointed Attorney Ad Litem and allowed the

private attorney's fees to be paid out of the ward's estate. The appellate court recognized that, at times, counsel with whom the ward is familiar can render more effective assistance of counsel than a courtappointed 'stranger.' However, in Guardianship of Benavides, 403 S.W.3d 370, 377 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2013), subsequent appeal at Benavides v. Mathis, 433 S.W.3d 59, 2014 Tex. App. LEXIS 1488 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2014, pet. den.), following hearing on a Motion to Show Authority, the trial court found retained counsel had no authority to represent the proposed ward in the guardianship proceeding and struck all of retained counsel's pleadings. The appellate court held the trial court was well within its discretion in finding that retained counsel had no authority to represent the proposed ward in the underlying guardianship proceedings.

- 4. <u>CERTIFICATION REQUIRED</u>: See discussion *supra*.
- 5. <u>INEXPERIENCE</u>: Even if retained counsel does indeed have the proposed ward's best interest at heart, an inexperienced attorney can end up doing a disservice to his client, often by increasing the costs of the proceeding without realizing that the proposed ward foots the bill.
- 6. NO PLAY, NO PAY: The unpleasant "flip side" of being the privately-retained white knight is that, if your client lacks the capacity to hire an attorney, you are not entitled to recover fees for the legal services in the guardianship contest. *Breaux v. Allied Bank of Texas*, 699 S.W.2d 599 (Tex. App.-Houston [14th Dist.] 1985, writ ref'd n.r.e.), cert. denied, 479 U.S. 1002 (1986).

Also, there is no "fall back" to recover fees based on a theory of *quantum meruit* in such a situation. *Price* v. *Golden, supra; Breaux, supra*.

F. Request A Statutory Probate Judge: If you are in a county without a statutory probate court or county court at law, you may request the judge to have a statutory probate judge appointed pursuant to TEX. GOVT CODE §25.0022 to hear the contested portion of the guardianship proceeding. If the county judge has not already transferred the proceeding to the district court, it is mandatory that the judge request the assignment. Failure by the county judge to do so is an abuse of discretion. *In re Vorwerk*, 6 S.W.3d 781 (Tex. App. – Austin, 1999, no pet.).

Be sure your motion doesn't get "lost" or returned for an unpaid filing fee to give the opposition time to request a transfer to the district court. *In re Lewis*, 185 S.W.3d 615 (Tex. App. Waco, 2006 no pet.).

Also, don't give the judge any excuse to deny your

motion on procedural grounds. *In re Routh*, 2005 Tex. App. LEXIS 5562 (Tex. App. Waco 2005, pet. denied) is an example of the court dodging a motion because the motion referenced the wrong section of the Probate Code.

G. Intervention by "Interested Persons" – Just when you thought everything was ready to move forward, a sibling or son-in-law or neighbor of the Ward decides they want to take over the process. Heretofore, they simply jumped in and started litigating and issues of their standing or bona fides were often not addressed. Now, under TEX. EST. CODE § 1055.003, notwithstanding the Rules of Civil Procedure, a potential intervenor in a guardianship is required to file a timely motion setting out the purpose for which intervention is sought and serve the parties. The court, in its discretion, may grant or deny the motion, taking into consideration whether the intervention will unduly delay or prejudice the adjudication of the original parties' rights.

H. Consider Seeking Security For Costs:

1. DO NOT BE CONFUSED BY OLD, BAD LAW: Until 2013, there was a provision in the Probate Code that allowed for the possibility of obtaining a rule for costs (TEX. PROB. CODE § 622). However, it was a right without a remedy because TEX. PROB. CODE §§ 665A & 669 still required the ward's estate to bear all the costs of the proceeding, if there was one. This basically meant the costs in a guardianship contest could not be taxed against the losing party as in a will contest.

There are a considerable number of decisions under the prior law. If these are cited to you as controlling, make sure of the statutory basis for the decision.

Guardianship Cases: in re Brookshire, 2006 Tex. App. LEXIS 8257 (Tex. App. Houston, 1st Dist., 2006, orig. proceeding); Guardianship of Humphrey, 2008 Tex. App. LEXIS 4429 (Tex. App. Tyler, 2008, no pet.); Guardianship of Humphrey 2009 Tex. App. LEXIS 1099, 1100 (Three Opinions) (Tex. App. Tyler 2009, pet. denied); Guardianship of Thomas, 2009 Tex. App. LEXIS 1813 (Tex. App. Fort Worth, no pet.); Guardianship of A.M.K. and A.A.K., 2009 Tex. App. LEXIS 2551 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2009, no pet.); Estate of Frederick, 2010 Tex. App. LEXIS 2537 (Tex. App. Fort Worth 2010, no pet.); Guardianship of Marburger, 329 S.W.3d 923 (Tex. App. - Corpus Christi 2010, no pet. h.); Trevino v. Reese, 2011 Tex. App. LEXIS 4558 (Tex. App. Houston 1st Dist, 2011, no pet.); In Re Mitchell, 2011 Tex. App. LEXIS 3538 (Tex. App. El Paso, 2011, no pet.), Guardianship of Vavra, 2012 Tex. App. LEXIS 2481 (Tex. App. Eastland, 2012, no pet. h.).

Decedent's Estates: Ajudani v. Walker, 232 S.W.3d 219 (Tex. App. Houston 1st Dist, 2007, no pet.) which followed TEX. PROB. CODE §669(a) to deny taxings the costs in a will contest against the losing party on the ad litem's motion. The Fort Worth Court of Appeals expressly disapproved Adujani in Estate of Frederick, 2010 Tex. App. LEXIS 2537 (Tex. App. Fort Worth 2010, no pet.) and upheld the taxing of costs (ad litem fees) against the losing party in an enforcement action brought by the ad litem in a decedent's estate.

Other Reported Decisions on Security for Costs and Taxing of Costs: Clanton v. Clark, 639 S.W.2d 929 (Tex. 1982) (will contest); Shirley v Montgomery, 768 S.W.2d 430 (Tex. App. Houston 14th Dist., 1989, orig. proc.) (custody battle); ex parte Hightower, 877 S.W.2d 17 (Tex. App. Dallas 1994, wr. dism w.o.j.) (custody battle); Estate of Stanton, 2005 Tex. App. LEXIS 10901 (Tex. App. Tyler 2005, pet. denied.); (dependent administration and heirship); Overman v. Baker, 26 S.W.3d 506, 512 (Tex. App.-Tyler 2000, no pet.); Guardianship of Soberanes, 100 S.W.3d 405, 408 (Tex. App. - San Antonio 2002, no pet.).

The Estates Code was amended in 2013 to allow the taxing of costs and requiring reimbursement of attorneys fees of persons found to have acted without good faith or just cause. TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1155.151.

In addition, TEX. EST. CODE § 1053.052(a) was amended in 2015 to allow the clerk to obtain an order from the court to require an applicant, complainant, or contestant (other than a guardian, attorney ad litem, or guardian ad litem) to provide security for the probable costs of the guardianship proceeding before their application, complaint, or contest may be filed.

- 2. <u>PUT UP OR SHUT UP!</u> (TEX. EST. CODE § 1053.052). (Appendix R) *The strongest string in the ad litem's bow.* An applicant or contestant in a guardianship proceeding may be required on motion, notice and hearing to give security for the probable costs of the guardianship proceeding within twenty days of the date of the order. Failure to provide security will result in dismissal of the contest or opposition.
- 3. WHY IS THIS SUCH AN ISSUE? The proposed ward has little or no control over his or her own estate. Minors and persons *non compos mentis* are *non sui juris* and remain altogether under the court's protection, even when represented by a next friend or guardian. *Byrd v. Woodruff*, 891 S.W.2d 689, 704 (Tex. App. 1994); *M.K.T. Ry. v. Pluto*, 138 Tex. 1, 156 S.W.2d 265, 268 (1941); *Greathouse v. Ft W. & D. C. Ry. Co.*, 65 S.W.2d 762 (Comm. App. 1933). It is the responsibility of the Court in such an instance to protect the estate of an alleged incapacitated person. TEX. EST. CODE § 1201.003.

Also, the required appointment of one or more ad

- litems, proportionally increases the probable costs of a contest. Contested guardianship proceedings are highly structured and the costs incurred can quickly go far beyond the normal filing fees and discovery items associated with civil cases. (see discussion infra)
- 4. WHO MAY BE MADE TO GIVE SECURITY? The laws regulating costs in ordinary civil cases apply to a guardianship matter *unless otherwise expressly provided for*. TEX. EST. CODE § 1053.051.
- A. <u>In Ordinary Civil Cases</u>: Only a party "who seeks affirmative relief" (TEX. R. CIV. P. 143) or "who seeks judgment against any other party" (TEX. R. CIV. P. 147) may be ruled to give security for costs.
- B. <u>In Guardianship Proceedings</u>: Because any "interested party" is allowed to contest any portion of a guardianship administration, the vulnerability of the proposed ward's estate to substantial costs from repeated contests is greatly increased. As a result, in guardianship proceedings, security may be required from persons who are simply complaining about or opposing a guardianship matter, regardless of whether they are seeking affirmative relief. TEX. EST. CODE § 1053.052.
- C. Exception: As mentioned above, no security for costs may be required of a guardian, Attorney Ad Litem, or Guardian Ad Litem appointed under this chapter in any suit brought by the guardian, Attorney Ad Litem, or Guardian Ad Litem in their respective fiduciary capacities. TEX. EST. CODE § 1053.052(c).
- 5. <u>WHO MAY SEEK SECURITY?</u> The Guardian (or Applicant), the Attorney Ad Litem, the Guardian Ad Litem and now, the Clerk. (*supra*)
- 6. <u>WHEN?</u> Such a motion may be filed and heard at any time before the trial. TEX. EST. CODE § 1053.052(b).
- 7. <u>HOW IS THE AMOUNT OF SECURITY DETERMINED?</u>
- A. <u>In Ordinary Civil Cases</u>: the party seeking affirmative relief may be ordered to deposit a sum "sufficient to pay the <u>accrued</u> costs". TEX. R. CIV. P. 146.
- B. In Guardianship Proceedings: the court is to order security for the "probable costs of the proceeding." TEX. EST. CODE § 1053.052. The court must receive proof as to the probable costs expected to be incurred by any party to the proceeding, which could include items such as compensation for one or more guardians ad litem, TEX. EST. CODE § 1054.005; compensation for attorneys (including the Attorney Ad Litem), mental health professionals, and interpreters appointed by the court, TEX. EST. CODE § 1155.051; and even the costs associated with a receiver to take control of the proposed ward's property, especially if a going business is involved, TEX. CIV. PRAC. & REM.

CODE §§ 64.001ff, TEX. EST. CODE § 1354.001 or a temporary guardianship pending the contest. TEX. EST. CODE § 1251.051.

Note: The court may also require a party found to have acted in bad faith and without just cause to reimburse the ward's estate for any award of attorney's fees (TEX. EST. CODE § 1155.054), but these amounts are <u>not</u> classically considered "costs" and so are not to be included in calculating the "probable costs" under TEX. EST. CODE § 1053.052. See "Award of Attorney's Fees, infra.

- 8. <u>HOW ARE THE COSTS SECURED?</u> A party ordered to provide security for costs has three options:
- A. Writ of Attachment Allowing a writ of attachment to be filed on property, real or personal, of the person giving security. TEX. R. CIV. P. 146 (regarding attachments, see TEX. R. CIV. P. 592ff); Writs of attachment are somewhat arcane and maintenance-intensive procedures which require the person allowing the attachment to have sufficient attachable property in the county and to allow additional attachments if property is sold or values drop. *Ibid*. This is a rarely used option.
- B. <u>Surety Bond</u> Posting a *surety bond* under TEX. R. CIV. P. 148. It is to be a bond with sureties (preferably corporate) to secure costs, but the court may not fix a specific amount for anticipated costs. *Johnson v. Smith*, 857 S.W.2d 612, 615 (Tex. App. –Houston, 1st Dist., 1993, orig. proceeding); *Smith v. White*, 695 S.W.2d 295 (Tex. App. Houston, 1st Dist., 1985, orig. proceeding). It is, in effect, an open bond to secure payment of whatever costs might accrue. *Mosher v. Tunnel*, 400 S.W.2d 402 (Tex. Civ. App.- Houston, 1st Dist., 1966, writ ref d n.r.e.) A bond for a specified amount, rather than an open-ended bond, will not satisfy Rule 143. *Clanton v. Clark*, 639 S.W.2d 929, 930-3 1 (Tex. 1982). *Hager v. Apollo Paper Corp.*, 856 S.W.2d 512 (Tex. App. Houston, 1st Dist., 1993, no writ).
- C. <u>Cash</u>: Depositing *cash* with the clerk of the court in lieu of the bond. TEX. R. CIV. P. 146. Like attachments, the cash deposit is a maintenance-intensive option. If the "probable costs" exceed the cash deposit, additional cash deposits would be necessary. However, if either an attachment or bond is furnished, no further security is required. TEX. R. CIV. P. 146.
- 9. WHO CHOOSES THE TYPE OF SECURITY? The option lies with the party ruled for costs, and not the court, as to whether a cost bond shall be furnished or a deposit in lieu of bond. *Buck v Johnson*, 495 S.W.2d 291, 298 (Tex. App Waco 1973, no writ).
- 10. ENFORCEMENT: Failure to give security as

- ordered within twenty days of the order will result in dismissal of the contest or opposition. TEX. R. CIV. P. 143; *Guardianship of Thomas*, 2009 Tex. App. LEXIS 1813 (Tex. App. Fort Worth 2009, no pet.).
- 11. <u>REVIEW OF ORDER</u>: Mandamus will lie to correct the requirement of payment of a fixed amount of security prior to final judgment. *TransAmerican Natural Gas Corp. v. Mancios*, 877 S.W.2d 840, 844 (Tex. App.- Corpus Christi 1994, orig. proceeding, mand. overruled).
- 12. The Court Makes its Determination: If the matter goes to its ultimate resolution and the judge or the jury picks a winner and taxes the costs, the payment of costs by the party against whom the costs are taxed is mandatory: TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1155.151 "...shall be paid...."
- 13. Award of Attorney's Fees TEX. EST. CODE 1155.054 (d) If the court finds that a party in a guardianship proceeding acted in bad faith or without just cause in prosecuting or objecting to an application in the proceeding, the court may require the party to reimburse the ward's estate for all or part of the attorney's fees awarded under this section and shall issue judgment against the party and in favor of the estate for the amount of attorney's fees required to be reimbursed to the estate.

14. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATONS

- A. Either the attorney for the applicant, the Guardian Ad Litem or the Attorney Ad Litem may file a motion for security. However, the Attorney Ad Litem does not need to be running up time unnecessarily if other counsel are doing the heavy lifting. The Attorney Ad Litem doesn't have to be the lead sled dog unless there is no attorney for the applicant other than the Guardian Ad Litem and the Guardian Ad Litem chooses not to seek security for costs.
- B. Seek security for costs at the beginning of the contest. There is no point in allowing billable time to stack up on all sides if the contest is a fight for control or not necessarily about the ward.
- C. Follow up! Don't expect the court to count the days if security is not furnished. File a motion to dismiss or provide in your order granting security for costs that you may obtain an order of dismissal of the contest without further hearing upon the contestant's failure to provide security within the allotted time.
- D. Consider including a specific provision <u>severing</u> the issue of security for costs upon dismissal of the contest to ensure that it will become a final order. *Crowson v. Wakeham*, 897 S.W.2d 779 (Tex. 1995).
- E. If the contestant files a Pauper's Affidavit (see discussion under III.N. *supra* and Appendix H *infra*) you, as the ad litem, should <u>contest</u> the pauper's affidavit (unless it is an *uncontestable* affidavit (*see*

supra and Tex. Rules Civ. Proc. 145(c). If a contest is not filed, the uncontested affidavit is conclusive as a matter of law. Guardianship of Humphrey, (Tex. App. Tyler, February 18, 2009, pet. denied).

I. Ask For A Jury Trial.

- 1. <u>AN EASIER TOUCH?</u> Individuals on a jury are usually quicker to deny a guardianship application than a judge, either through sympathy or lack of intimate familiarity with incapacity. TEX. EST. CODE. §§ 1055.052, 1101.052.
- 2. <u>SPECIAL ISSUES</u>: You can 'reverse engineer' your issues from the sample order (Appendix Aa) or consult *Texas Pattern Jury Charges 2012: Family Law & Probate, State Bar of Texas.* For an excellent background discussion of the issues, consult Darlene Payne Smith: *Jury Questions and Instructions: No Pattern for Probate & Pattern Jury Charges and Joint Defense Agreements in Probate, Trust and Guardianship Litigation*, both in the 25th Annual Advanced Estate Planning and Probate Course (2001), State Bar of Texas and Darlene Payne Smith, *Pattern Jury Charges in Probate, Trust and Guardianship Litigation*, Probate Litigation Seminar (2002), Tarrant County Probate Bar Association.

Note on jury size: while generally, statutory probate courts have six person juries, if the case is one in which the district court would otherwise have concurrent jurisdiction (e.g. TEX. EST. CODE § 1022.006, a twelve person jury may be requested. TEX. GOVT. CODE §25.00261. A specific request for a 12-person jury must be timely made, otherwise, a 6-person jury will be impaneled. *In re Lynch*, 35 S.W.3d 162 (Tex. App. Texarkana 200, no pet.).

J. Pursue Adequate Discovery. 'nough said.

K. Advocate for Mediation -

- 1. <u>LEGISLATIVE INTENT</u>: Just because you have a responsibility to advocate does not mean you are to ignore the clear statement of legislative intent found in TEX. CIV. PRAC. & REM. CODE §154.002: It is the policy of this state to encourage the peaceable resolution of disputes, with special consideration given to disputes involving the parent-child relationship, including the mediation of issues involving conservatorship, possession, and support of children, and the early settlement of pending litigation through voluntary settlement procedures.
- 2. <u>THE REAL ISSUE</u>: Although mediation training often instructs that guardianship contests are not mediable and that the issue of incapacity is beyond the

- ability of the parties to resolve, rarely is incapacity the real issue.
- 3. <u>UNRESOLVED FAMILY ISSUES</u>: Most often, decades of unresolved family conflict among the family members of the proposed ward spark the contests. Perceived favoritism, sibling rivalry, jealousy of a stepparent or step-children or step-siblings, unresolved grief, etc. all are manifested in the guardianship arena.
- 4. <u>SMOOTHING THE SURFACE ONLY</u>: While resolution of a guardianship contest might remove the procedural obstruction in granting a guardianship, it rarely resolves the family disputes and wounded relationships which led to the contest. Mediation can provide a level playing field for the family to resolve the issues behind the guardianship fight. The long-standing "burrs under the saddle" that so often give rise to family disputes can be aired and often resolved.
- 5. <u>COMING BACK TO HAUNT YOU</u>: If mediation is not attempted, the underlying issues cannot be addressed. These unresolved deeper, more serious family dynamics will often re-surface after the ward's death in a will contest or other dispute.
- 6. MEDIATION OF CONTESTED GUARDIANSHIP PROCEEDING. TEX. EST. CODE § 1055.151 (NEW!) By agreement or on the court's own motion, a contested guardianship proceeding may be referred to mediation.

Any mediated settlement agreement (MSA) reached is then binding on the parties, provided the agreement: A. provides "prominently" (boldface, capital letters, or underlined) that the agreement is not subject to revocation;

- B. is signed by
- 1. each party to the agreement; and
- 2. by attorneys (if any) who are present at the time the parties sign.

If the MSA meets these requirements, a party is entitled to judgment on the MSA notwithstanding TEX. RULES CIV. PROC. 11 or another rule or law.

<u>Trump Card</u> Nevertheless, the court may decline to enter a judgment on the MSA if the court finds the agreement is not in the ward's or proposed ward's best interests.

L. Shutting the Gate: TROs, Temporary Guardianships, Notices of Lis Pendens and Receivers

Is the real concern the potential for financial abuse of the proposed ward by someone with a power of attorney? You have several options:

1. An <u>INJUNCTION PROCEEDING</u>, starting with a Temporary Restraining Order leading to a Temporary Injunction. However, if the potential wrongdoer is elusive, notice and service of citation might make this remedy ineffective.

- 2. A <u>TEMPORARY GUARDIANSHIP</u>, while now more technically difficult, has the benefit of not requiring the "bad guy" to be there and it allows the judge to <u>suspend</u> an abused power of attorney until the dust settles.
- 3. A <u>NOTICE OF LIS PENDENS</u> under TEX. PROP CODE §12.007 may be used to effectively "cloud" the Proposed Ward's title, but should really only be used in conjunction with pleadings seeking affirmative relief regarding the alleged wrongdoer (such as a suit to impose a constructive trust) since a lis pendens notice is properly only used to protect innocent purchasers from buying land subject to litigation. *Kropp v. Prather*, 526 S.W.2d 283 (Tex. Civ. App. Tyler, 1975, writ ref'd n.r.e.).
- 4. Appointment of a <u>RECEIVER</u> to take control of specific property, especially if a going business is involved, is certainly a less intrusive alternative to a guardianship. TEX. EST. CODE § 1354.001; TEX. CIV. PRAC. & REM. CODE §§64.001ff.

M. "Interesting" Challenge – Interest for Standing vs. Adverse Interest:

- 1. <u>STATUTORY BAR</u>: Under TEX. EST. CODE § 1055.001(b), a person with an adverse interest to a proposed ward may not:
 - A. apply to create a guardianship;
 - B. contest the creation of a guardianship;
 - C. contest the appointment of a guardian; or
 - D. contest an application for complete restoration of a ward's capacity or modification of a ward's guardianship.
- 2. CHALLENGE: The proper challenge is by motion in limine. TEX. EST. CODE. § 1055.001(c). Either the Attorney Ad Litem or Guardian Ad Litem may file such a motion. Such a motion is not to be confused with a pre-trial motion in limine (seeking to exclude evidence of particular testimony). Estate of Chapman, 2010 Tex. App. LEXIS 4127 (Tex. App. Beaumont 2010, no pet.). 3. BURDEN: Where the standing is challenged, the one whose interest is challenged has the burden of proof to present sufficient evidence during an in limine proceeding to prove that he is an interested person. Womble v. Atkins, 160 Tex. 363, 369 (Tex. 1960) (will contest); Elliott v. Green, 1995 Tex. App. LEXIS 3607 (Tex. App. Dallas 1995, no pet.) (breach of fiduciary duty); A & W Indus. v. Day, 977 S.W.2d 738, 741-742 (Tex. App. Ft. Worth 1998, no pet.) (contract dispute in decedent's estate); Betts v. Brown, 2001 Tex. App. LEXIS 329 (Tex. App. Houston 14th Dist., 2001, no pet.) (guardianship); Guardianship of Soberanes, 100 S.W.3d 405, 406 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2002, no pet.) (guardianship); and In Re Miller, 299 S.W. 3d 179 (Tex. App. Dallas 2009, no pet.).

4. <u>ADVERSE INTEREST</u>: Although 'adverse interest' is not a defined term, the 14th Court of Appeals in *Betts v. Brown, supra,* analogized with issues of standing of personal representatives of decedent's estates, concluding that an <u>adverse interest</u> is one that "does not promote the well-being of the ward." The court went onto say that an adverse interest must be something other than the conditions of disqualification under TEX. EST. CODE § 1104.351-357, as discussed below. *Ibid.*

The Dallas Court of Appeals, in the case of *In Re Miller*, *supra*, declined to hold that evidence of indebtedness by an applicant to a Proposed Ward automatically rises to the level of an adverse interest sufficient to divest a person of standing under TEX. PROB. CODE §642 (now TEX. EST. CODE § 1055.001), particularly where TEX. EST. CODE § 1104.354 9(2) allows for a person indebted to the proposed ward to pay the debt and be appointed as guardian.

Wife who filed litigation to invalidate premarital and separate property agreements and to classify husband's guardianship estate assets as community property held to have adverse interest in guardianship proceeding. *Guardianship of Benavides*, 2014 Tex. App. LEXIS 1747 (Tex. App. San Antonio, Feb. 19, 2014, pet. denied)

5. <u>UNDERLYING FACTS</u>: Hard facts (and not emotions or suspicions) must be fully developed to show adverse interest. The proposed ward, family members and friends of the ward will be the best sources of information as to any adverse interest of the Applicant.

CAVEAT: Weigh carefully whether other family dynamics are at work and the possible motivation of family members and others willing to 'side' with the proposed Applicant. Those contesting the application are also subject to a standing challenge under TEX. EST. CODE § 1055.001. A form of Motion in Limine is attached as Appendix T.

N. Challenging the Applicant - Disqualification: Even though the Applicant may have proper standing, he or she may nonetheless be disqualified by statute to serve as guardian. TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1104.351-357. The list of persons who are disqualified is detailed in full in the code, including: 1) minors; 2) notoriously bad people; (3) incapacitated persons; (4) parties to lawsuits affecting the proposed ward's welfare (unless the court determines no conflict exists or appoints a Guardian Ad Litem for the proposed ward); 5) persons indebted to the proposed ward (unless the debt is paid before appointment); 6) persons with an adverse claim to the

proposed ward or his property; 7) people who lack the experience, education, or judgment (bankruptcy?) to properly manage the ward's estate or control the ward or 8) (the court's trump card) one found unsuitable by the court; (9) one expressly disqualified by the proposed ward in a prior designation under TEX. EST. CODE § 1104.202(B); or (10) a nonresident who has not designated a resident agent for service.

Practice Tip: A negotiated point in determining the suitability of an applicant might be to have the would-be guardian order a credit report. Criminal history reports are already required on non-family members under TEX. EST. CODE § 1104.401ff.

Criminal Background Checks – Except for attorneys, everyone – <u>including</u> family members – who are proposed to serve as guardian, will have to submit to a criminal background check. TEX. EST. CODE § 1104.402(a).

Additionally, employees, volunteers and service providers of the Department of Aging and Disability Services will now be subject to criminal background checks, as well as individuals, including relatives of the Ward, who seek to have unsupervised visits with a Ward for whom DADS is guardian. TEX. GOVT. Code §§ 411.1386(a-1), (a-3) & 411.13861.

a. <u>Suitability</u> A finding by the court of unsuitability under TEX. EST. CODE § 1104.352 trumps any priority for appointment under TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1104.051 & 1104.102. *Guardianship of K.B.*, 2006 Tex. App. LEXIS 5123 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2006, pet. denied), *Phillips v. Phillips*, 511 S.W.2d 748, 749 (Tex. Civ. App.--San Antonio 1974, no writ). But see *Estate of Gay*, 309 S.W.3d 676 (Tex. App. Houston 14th Dist 2010, no pet.) where the trial judge's finding of unsuitability was held to be an abuse of discretion.

b. Gold Digger Alert: If you have a situation where one of the players in the guardianship is a "newly-acquired" spouse, consider instituting a proceeding under TEX. FAM. CODE §6.108 to declare the marriage void based on the lack of mental capacity. It can address a number of issues: 1) The priority claim of a spouse to be appointed guardian, 2) claims for support for the spouse 3) claims of a surviving spouse upon the death of the ward or proposed ward.

Even if the ward or proposed ward then dies, as long as the §6.108 proceeding was pending, the probate court may then declare that marriage void based on a lack of capacity. TEX. EST. CODE §§ 123.101, 123.102.

c. <u>Second Chance at the Gold Digger?</u>: If a proceeding pursuant to TEX. FAM. CODE §6.108 was

not pending at the decedent's death, all is not lost. An interested person may file a declaratory judgment action in the probate court requesting that the court void the marriage, provided the marriage was commenced not earlier than three years before the decedent's death. TEX. EST. CODE § 123.102(a)(2). Such a proceeding may not be filed after the first anniversary of the date of the decedent's death. TEX. EST. CODE § 123.102(c).

- O. If Advantageous, Try to Have Your Client Appear at the Hearing: Consider whether the proposed ward can make it to the hearing, alone or with aid. Never underestimate the power of a well-reasoned and dignified personal plea by the proposed ward to the judge. However, it could certainly backfire if he/she gets lost or shows up in a bathrobe and slippers an hour before your first employee arrives in the morning. Then again, you might get lucky your client might not show up until after the hearing is concluded.
- **P.** Consider Requesting a Closed Hearing: Advisable particularly if a sideshow atmosphere is anticipated. A rare 'private trial' procedure. TEX. EST. CODE § 1101.051(c)).
- **Q.** The Order: Negotiate a Tactical Retreat: If it is clear a guardianship will be granted, negotiate a possible limitation of the powers of the guardian as set forth in the order (Appendices J, Aa). See discussion supra regarding: 1) Supports and Services, 2) Decisions regarding Personal Residence, 3) the Preference of the Ward for a Guardian and 4) any indicated re-evaluation date indicated in the CME

If there are to be co-guardians (particularly if they are no longer married), ask the court to specify in the order whether they may act independently or unanimously in exercising important powers.

Disclosure Requirement: Right to Physical Possession of Ward: In any order appointing a Guardian (with either limited authority (§ 1101.152) or full authority (§ 1101.151), a "prominent" statement (boldfaced, capital letters, or underlined): 1) advising peace officers of their ability to assist a guardian enforcing their right to have physical possession of the ward or to establish the ward's legal domicile, 2) assuring the peace officer of their immunity from prosecution in enforcing the guardian's rights and 3) admonishing the guardian of the criminal penalties for misuse of the order.

R. An Appealing Thought?

1. NOT ON YOUR DIME: Once a guardian is appointed, unless the Attorney Ad Litem or Guardian Ad Litem are specifically "kept on board," the ad litem(s) are discharged. TEX. EST. CODE §\$ 1054.002, 1054.0053. As a result, the duties of the Attorney Ad Litem do not extend to filing an appeal. Bosworth v. Bosworth, 2011 Tex. App. Lexis 3648 (Tex. App. Austin, May 11, 2011, no pet.).

However, if you really think there has been a serious abuse of discretion committed, make the argument to the trial court (prior to the appointment of the guardian) that your appointment should be extended because you have the responsibility to exhaust all remedies available to your client, including representing the proposed ward on an appeal. *Cahill v. Lyda*, 826 S.W.2d 932 (Tex. 1996). This is, of course, subject to the strictures of the *Hahn* decision (*infra*).

- 2. <u>STANDARD OF REVIEW</u>: Orders appointing a guardian are reviewable upon an <u>abuse of discretion</u> standard. *Cox v. Young*, 405 S.W.2d 430 (Tex. Civ. App. Eastland 1966, writ ref'd n.r.e.); *Trimble v. TDPRS*, 981 S.W.2d 211 (Tex. App. Houston [14th Dist.] 1998, no writ).
- 3. NO FRIVOLOUS APPEALS: If the ward nevertheless demands an appeal, and the ad litem (you) reasonably believes the appeal would be without merit and totally frivolous, the ad litem should advise the court of appeals and request permission to withdraw. The request to withdraw must be accompanied by a brief referring to anything in the record that might arguably support the appeal and a copy of the brief must be furnished to the ward. *Guardianship of Hahn*, 276 S.W.3d 515 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2008, no pet.), Following *Anders v. California*, 386 U.S. 738, 87 S. Ct. 1396, 18 L. Ed. 2d 493 (1967), *accord: State ex rel L.E.H.* 2007 Tex. App. LEXIS 2754 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2007, no pet.) (mental health appointment).
- **S. Potential Ancillary Litigation**: Often, there is some other litigation involving the Proposed Ward, possibly a personal injury action pending in another forum. Determine if those bases are covered by another ad litem and whether a settlement is pending. Seek to determine the solvency of the defendant and consider a guardianship management trust under TEX. EST. CODE § 1301.051 as a less restrictive alternative.

<u>WATCH YOUR STEP</u>: If a structured settlement is being offered, unless you are <u>very</u> familiar with this area, consider seeking a discharge (or associating counsel) so that the court can appoint a more experienced advocate. The needs of a gravely injured incapacitated person can greatly exceed what many insurance companies are willing to place outside of the structured portion of a settlement. The ward may not

survive until the annuity fully loads. In such cases, failure to negotiate a commutation rider in the annuity could be viewed as <u>MALPRACTICE</u>. Look it up.

T. More Practice Pointers

- Review the most current State Bar of Texas Fiduciary Litigation Seminar materials.
- Just because you must advocate doesn't mean you mustn't settle.
- Find some way to take the money off the table: get a neutral third party, professional guardian, bank trust department or volunteer guardian to serve and isolate the dispute to the interpersonal issues.
 - Don't try to be the lead counsel.
- Don't dig down until you can't get out of the hole (time-wise).
- Don't side against your own client/don't sell your client out.
- In contested matters do not ask court staff for guidance unless all other counsel are present and the judge is in the room. Otherwise it is an *ex parte* discussion.
- Are you in over your head? You <u>can</u> ask procedural questions of court staff, including how to get out of a jam.

X. FEE CONSIDERATIONS

- **A. Introduction**: It is the Court's duty to ensure that estates of decedents and wards pay only for "reasonable attorney's fees necessarily incurred" TEX. EST. CODE § 352.051 (decedent's estates) and § 1155.101 (guardianships) and "necessary and reasonable" expenses. TEX. EST. CODE § 352.051 (decedent's estates) and § 1155.102 (guardianships).
- 1. <u>PUBLISHED POLICIES</u>: The majority of the statutory probate courts have promulgated stated policies regarding attorneys fees. These standards are not absolute rules, and the Court will often make exceptions in particular circumstances. An excellent example is on the Travis County Probate Court website: http://www.co.travis.tx.us/probate/pdfs/attorneyfees.pdf.
- 2. <u>RECENT CASES</u>: There has been a proliferation in the last few years of cases defining the compensable and non-compensable elements in ad litem fees in personal injury actions, family law cases and in guardianships. *Jocson v. Crabb, supra; Goodyear Dunlop v. Gamez*, 151 S.W.3d 574 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2004, no pet.); *Magna Donnelly v. Deleon*, 267 S.W.3d 108 (Tex. App. San Antonio, June 4, 2008, no pet.); *Land Rover U.K., Ltd. v. Hinojosa*, 210 S.W.3d 604 at 607 (Tex. 2006) (per curiam); *Garcia v. Martinez*, 988 S.W.2d 219 at 222 (Tex. 1999). *Jocson v. Crabb*, 133 S. W. 3d 268 (Tex. 2004) (per curiam), *on remand*, 196 S.W.3d 302 (Tex. App. Houston 1st Dist. 2006, no pet.); *Estate of Frederick, supra; Ford Motor Company v. Garcia*,

2010 Tex. App. LEXIS 8129 (Tex. App. Corpus Christi, 2010, (reversed & remanded 363 S.W.3d 573 (Tex. 2012); Columbia Rio Grande Healthcare v. De Leon, 2011 Tex. App. LEXIS 431 (Tex. App Corpus Christi 2011, no pet.); In Re Mitchell, supra; Trevino v. Reese, 2011 Tex. App. LEXIS 4558 (Tex. App. Houston 1st Dist, June 16, 2011).

- **B. Basic Premise**: Absent specific statutory authorization, the probate court **cannot** award attorney's fees. Fortunately, both Ad Litems are entitled to reasonable compensation, to be taxed as costs in guardianship (TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1155.051 (Attorney Ad Litem), § 1204.002 (Attorney Ad Litem in final account), § 1054.055 (Guardian Ad Litem) TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1202.102 (Restoration/Modification)), estate (TEX. EST. CODE § 53.104), heirship (TEX. EST. CODE § 202.009), and trust (TEX. PROP. CODE § 115.014) proceedings.
- C. Burden of Proof: The ad litem has the burden to apply for the fees and to appear and give sufficient evidence that the ad litem has stayed within the statutorily-defined scope of the appointment, and to establish the amount of time spent as an ad litem on behalf of the client, that such time expended was reasonable and necessary, and to establish the appropriate hourly rate. *Goodyear Dunlop v. Gamez*, 151 S.W.3d 574 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2004, no pet.); *Magna Donnelly v. Deleon*, 267 S.W.3d 108 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2008, no pet.) *In Re White Inter Vivos Trusts*, 2009 Tex. App. LEXIS 6933 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2009, no pet.).
- **D. Question of Fact:** What is a reasonable attorney fee is a question of fact to be determined by the trier of facts and the award must be supported by competent evidence. *Great American Reserve Insurance Company v. Button*, 406 S.W.2d 901 (Tex. 1966); *Bullock v. Foster Cathead Company*, 631 S.W.2d 208 (Tex. App.-Corpus Christi 1982, no writ); *Mills v. Mills*, 559 S.W.2d 687 (Tex. App.-Ft. Worth 1977, no writ); *Brown & Root U.S.A., Inc. v. Trevino*, 802 S.W.2d 13 (Tex. App.-El Paso 1990, no writ). The amount of the ad litem's fee is left to the trial court's discretion and will not be overturned absent evidence that the trial court abused its discretion. *Garcia v. Martinez*, 988 S.W.2d 219 (Tex. 1999); *Ford Motor Company v. Garcia, supra.*
- **E. Reasonableness:** In determining the reasonableness of an ad litem's fee, the same factors used to determine the reasonableness of attorney's fees in general are

- considered. *Land Rover U.K.*, *Ltd. v. Hinojosa*, 210 S.W.3d 604 at 607 (Tex. 2006) (per curiam); *Garcia v. Martinez*, 988 S.W.2d 219 at 222 (Tex. 1999). If these factors form the basis of the trial court's decision, the fee award cannot be successfully challenged for abuse of discretion for not "employing a set of standard guiding principles." These factors include:
- 1. the time and labor required, the novelty and difficulty of the questions involved, and the skill required to perform the legal service properly;
- 2. the likelihood...that the acceptance of the particular employment will preclude other employment by the lawyer;
- 3. the fee customarily charged in the locality for similar legal services;
- 4. the amount involved and the results obtained;
- 5. the time limitations imposed by the client or by the circumstances;
- 6. the nature and length of the professional relationship with the client;
- 7. the experience, reputation, and ability of the lawyer or lawyers performing the services; and
- 8. whether the fee is fixed or contingent on results obtained or uncertainty of collection before the legal services have been rendered. *Id.* at 607. TEX. EST. CODE § 1155.053(c).
- **F. Guidelines, Not Elements**: A trial court is not required to consider all of the factors in every case. The factors are guidelines for the trial court to consider, not elements of proof. *Petco Animal Supplies, Inc. v. Schuster*, 144 S.W.3d 554, 567 (Tex. App.--Austin 2004, no pet.); *Academy Corp. v. Interior Buildout & Turnkey Constr., Inc.*, 21 S.W.3d 732, 742 (Tex. App.--Houston [14th Dist.] 2000, no pet.); *Estate of Johnson*, 2010 Tex. App. LEXIS 9473 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2010, no pet. h.).

To apply these factors, a reviewing court "may draw upon the common knowledge of the justices and their experience as lawyers and judges to view the matter in light of the evidence and the amount in controversy." *Land Rover v Hinojosa*, 2006 Tex Lexis 1264 (Tex. 2006); *Borden, Inc. v. Martinez*, 19 S.W.3d 469, 471 (Tex. App.-San Antonio 2000, no pet.).

Some of the factors may be given more weight than others by the trial court. *Ford Motor Company v. Garcia, supra* (short timeframe and complexity of the case).

G. Evidence Required: However, the court cannot adjudicate the reasonableness of attorney's fees on judicial knowledge without the benefit of evidence. *Bullock v. Foster Cathead Company, supra; Mills v.*

Mills, supra. The detailed billing records supply such evidence.

- **H. Expert Testimony:** If challenged, evidence on the reasonableness of attorney's fees comes under the definition of expert testimony and is measured by the requisites of *E.I. du Pont de Nemours v. Robinson*, 923 S.W.2d 549 (Tex. 1995) which adopted the U.S. Supreme Court's rationale in *Daubert v. Merrell-Dow Pharmaceuticals*, 113 S. Ct. 2786 (1993).
- I. No "Bonus" Factors: Absent exceptional circumstances, a court should not enhance the fee calculated by multiplying necessary number of hours expended by a reasonable hourly rate. Additional sums are rarely appropriate, particularly since the Guardian Ad Litem serves, in part, as an advisor to the court and will enjoy the protection of qualified judicial immunity. TEX. R. CIV. P. 173, cmt. 5 and TEX. EST. CODE § 1054.056. Land Rover, supra; Ford Motor Company v. Garcia, 2010 Tex. App. LEXIS 8129 (Tex. App. Corpus Christi, October 7, 2010), supra.
- **J. No Prior Objections Required:** Complaints about the ad litem's services need not be made prior to the fee hearing. *Jocson v. Crabb, supra.*
- **K.** Limited Duties: A Guardian Ad Litem's duty is to act as the personal representative, rather than as the attorney, for the client (minor or proposed ward), and to participate only to the extent necessary to protect the client's interests. The ad litem's services must not duplicate the work performed by the plaintiff's attorney. A Guardian Ad Litem's participation in depositions, hearings, conferences, strategy sessions and other activities must be tested by what is necessary to protect the client's interests.

If the ad litem engages in work more appropriate for the plaintiff's attorney and beyond the scope of the ad litem's role, such work is non-compensable. *Goodyear, supra* at 582-585. The burden is on the ad litem to ensure that the services performed do not exceed the scope of the role assigned. Ford Motor Co v Garcia, 363 S.W.3d 573 (Tex. 2012); Ford Motor Co v Chacon, 2012 Tex. LEXIS 557 (Tex. 2012).

The same is true in guardianships for both the Attorney Ad Litem and the Guardian Ad Litem. Because the work performed must be both reasonable and *necessary*, the trial court may see fit to pare down the requested fee if the ad litem has misapprehended his or her role. To that end, when in doubt, an ad litem should request guidance from the trial court in advance

before engaging in the particular activity in question. *Goodyear, supra* at 588; *Chacon, supra*.

- **L. Non-Compensable Activities**: While ad litems are entitled to be compensated for their time in preparing their ad litem reports, they were not entitled to charge for:
- 1. <u>RESEARCH</u>: If you undertake to practice in this area, you should be familiar with probate and guardianship matters, so the Court will not ordinarily reimburse attorneys for basic legal research in these areas. The <u>contract</u> costs of computerized legal research (Westlaw and Lexis) are a part of overhead, as are the costs of a hard-copy library. *Goodyear-Dunlop, supra*. Reimbursement <u>may</u> be allowed for research to address: 1) novel legal questions raised by opposing counsel or 2) questions posed by the Court.
- 2. PREPARATION OF FEE APPLICATION, FEE HEARINGS, APPEALS: Preparing and defending a fee application at a hearing or on appeal promotes the ad litem's interests, not those of the client. Time expended in such activities are not reimbursable. *Goodyear, supra* at 587-593; *Holt Tex., Ltd. v. Hale*, 144 S.W.3d 620 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2004, no pet.) *Guardianship of Glasser*, 297 S.W.3d 369 (Tex. App. San Antonio, 2009, no pet.).

However, appellate attorney's fees were held proper for an ad litem who successfully appealed a trust termination and had the trust reinstated as to the ad litem's clients. *In Re White Inter Vivos Trusts*, 2009 Tex. App. LEXIS 6933 (Tex. App. San Antonio, August 31, 2009, no pet.).

M. Going It Alone: Only the ad litem is appointed, not the entire law firm of the ad litem: the court's intent is that the appointed attorney act personally as an officer of the court. An ad litem may not be compensated for time expended by other attorneys, unless the court has made a <u>specific</u> finding that the other attorney's services were reasonable and necessary under a particular extenuating circumstance. *Goodyear*, *supra* at 588; *Jocson*, *supra* at 271. Appendix N is an application and order to seek such authority.

However, in extenuating circumstances, and with prior permission of the court, additional counsel and/or support staff may be employed. This will still be subject to a subsequent finding by the court that the additional attorney's services were reasonable and necessary. *Goodyear Dunlop v. Gamez, supra; Guardianship of Glasser*, supra (Attorney Ad Litem in guardianship allowed to retain litigation counsel); accord *Scally v. Scally*, 2010 Tex. App. LEXIS 8045 (Tex. App. Houston-14th Dist 2010, no pet.) (Ad litem in SAPCR proceeding retained counsel to collect awarded fees.)

The applicant must show particular, unusual circumstances why it was necessary for persons other than the ad litem to fulfill the ad litem's duties. *Ford Motor Co v Garcia, supra*. Additionally, full narrative detail must be provided for any services performed by anyone other than the ad litem. *Ibid*.

Additionally, legal work performed by legal assistants may be recovered as an element of attorney's fees. *Gill Sav. Ass'n v. Int'l Supply*, 759 S.W.2d 697, 702 (Tex. App. Dallas 1988, wr. denied). The proof required for billings by legal assistants is set forth in detail in that opinion. *More recently, see Ford Motor Company v. Garcia*, 363 S.W.3d 573 (Tex. 2012) for specific application to ad litems.

N. Fee Applications: The attorney representing the Applicant, the Guardian Ad Litem and the Attorney Ad Litem must all file an Application for Payment of Fees and Expenses (including a detailed and itemized narrative statement including the dates, description of services, time expended and hourly rate as an exhibit with a separate Order attached. Appendices Ae, Af. TEX. EST. CODE §667, *Woollett v. Matyastik*, 23 S.W.3d 48 (Tex. App.-Austin, 2000, pet denied).

It is a good idea to include any time expended but not charged-for to present the reviewer with a complete picture of activities. When appropriate, reflect problems encountered which cause excessive time to be expended.

A trial court abuses its discretion when it awards compensation for a Guardian Ad Litem's non-necessary activities or where the ad litem performs services beyond the scope of the appointment. Ford Motor Company v. Stewart, Cox, and Hatcher, 2013 Tex. LEXIS 69 (Tex. 2013) In Guardianship of Vavra, 365 S.W.3d 476 (Tex. App. Eastland 2012, no pet.), the appeals court held that, where the ad litem did not even meet with the proposed ward, it was error to award any fees.

Caveat: A policy of minimum billing (i.e. tenminute or quarter-hour increments), is legally insufficient to support an application for fees. *Ford Motor Co v Garcia*, *supra*.

Similarly, a court cannot "back into" the number of hours necessary by dividing the amount requested by a court-approved maximum rate. <u>Spell it out</u>. *Ibid*.

O. County-Pay Cases: If, after examining the proposed ward's assets, the court determines that the proposed ward is unable to pay for the services provided, the <u>county</u> is responsible for the cost of these services. TEX. EST. CODE § 1155.051 *Overman v. Baker*, 26 S.W.3d 506 (Tex. App.-Tyler 2000, no pet.) In such

cases, the Court approves fees under a budget approved and overseen by the Commissioners Court. Consequently, attorneys cannot be reimbursed at their regular hourly rates. "County-Pay" cases may be on a "capitated fee" (reduced set fee) basis or on a reduced hourly rate (if the case demands exceed the norm - i.e. "the Guardianship from Hell"). Appendices Ae, Af.

P. Private-Pay Cases: When an ad litem can be compensated from a solvent estate, the Court's award of reasonable attorney's fees begins with the Court's determination of whether the representation reasonably required of (and actually provided by the ad litem) is "typical" or "normal." The court's analysis is based on the "Garcia" factors (*supra*) as well any unusual circumstances peculiar to probate and guardianship. These factors determine the extent to which the fee allowed should be more than, equal to, or less than the typical or normal fee. In general, ad litem fees are less than the fee of the applicant's attorney unless special factors are present.

If a Guardianship Management Trust is created, regardless of whether a guardian is also appointed, the Guardian Ad Litem may be compensated from the available funds of the management trust. TEX. EST. CODE § 1102.005. Also, the available funds of the management trust are a source for payment or reimbursement of costs under TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1052.051(f) & 1155.151(a).

Q. Hourly Rates: The hourly rates allowed will vary, depending on the nature of the case and the experience of the attorneys involved. Rates may vary from \$150/hr for no-asset, county-pay cases to \$200+/hr for complex litigation (wrongful death/ malpractice/ fiduciary breach).

Although your local court will most likely have a published policy regarding what can and cannot be charged for, an attorney's hourly rate is expected to cover the office overhead (everything except actual out-of-pocket expenses such as filing fees).

R. Expenses: Separate expenses and travel costs should be detailed in attached exhibits. Check your mileage with one of the online map services like *Google Maps* or *Mapquest*. If you don't, the court may.

S. Do Not Bill For:

1. CONSULTATIONS WITH COURT STAFF regarding procedural questions unless the court staff has specifically requested information to be provided not ordinarily contained in properly drafted pleadings or if the fee petition reveals special circumstances requiring the attorney to seek guidance from the Court.

2. <u>TELEPHONE CALLS</u> inquiring about the

status/location of paperwork with probate court staff or the Clerk's office. Attaching a self-addressed, stamped envelope to all applications and proposed orders (wirh copies to be file-marked and conformed) coupled with payment of any required filing and posting fees will help ensure attorneys receive heir conformed copies of submitted orders. This will reduce or eliminate the necessity for calls to the Clerk's office to check on the status of a particular order.

3. PORTAL-TO-PORTAL TIME PLUS MILEAGE!

- **T.** When to File: The application and order for fees and expenses should be filed at or shortly after the hearing on the guardianship. You should be prepared to report to the court at the hearing on any continued need for your appointment or whether you should be discharged. If the Guardian Ad Litem has brought the application, the application for fees should be made after the guardian has qualified.
- **U. What to Do with the Fee Application:** e-File the application as you would any other pleading and let it be handled through channels.

Because all appointee fees must be reported to the supreme court's Office of Court Administration (TEX. GOVT. CODE Ch. 36), your court may have additional requirements on how the order is to be submitted. Check your local listing.

V. Separate Order Always Required – By a specific order of the Texas Supreme Court, any order awarding a fee to a person appointed by a Statutory Probate Court must be separate and apart from any other pleading: Amended Order Regarding Mandatory Reports Of Judicial Appointments & Fees, Misc. Docket No. 94-9143, (Sept. 21, 1994) and Misc. Docket No. 07-9188 (Oct. 30, 2007) reprinted in *Texas Rules of Court 2013* at page 775, cited in *Epstein v. Hutchison*, 175 S. W. 3d 805 (Tex. App. - Houston - 1st District, 2004, pet. denied).

W. Specific Areas of Concern on Fee Applications:

1. <u>CONTESTS</u>: Contests in guardianships are particularly hard on ad litems because lawyers just want to do the right thing. In a guardianship or heirship contest where the applicant has retained counsel and the contest is by a third party disputing something other than incapacity, neither the Guardian Ad Litem nor the Attorney Ad Litem should confuse their responsibilities with that of privately-retained counsel.

Pointer 1: It may not be your fight. If it is, and your client (the proposed ward) has no assets from which you may be paid, strongly consider a motion for Security for Costs and/or a conference with the court as to the scope of your responsibility.

Pointer 2: If you, as Attorney Ad Litem, require the Applicant to jump through an inordinate number of hoops before you will consent to a settlement, the court may not share your views as to whether your actions on behalf of your client were both reasonable and necessary.

2. NEVER FILE FEE APPLICATIONS AS CLAIMS: Despite the dicta in the case of Guardianship of Fortenberry, 261 S.W.3d 904 (Tex. App. Dallas 2008, no pet.), fee applications should be filed as separate pleadings. Requests for fees should never be "imbedded" in some other pleading. Fee applications should not be filed as claims against the estate unless the estate is insolvent or the Guardian has indicated they will refuse to pay when application is made. Why take the chance that you may caught in the claims process and have to file suit for your fees when you can simply apply for the fees and meet any questions headon? In re Archer, 2004 Tex. App. LEXIS 327 (Tex. App. San Antonio 2004, pet. denied)

XI. CLOSING THOUGHTS

A. Removal of an Ad Litem

1. An ad litem may be removed by the trial court, but only after proper procedures are followed and a sufficient record made showing some principled reason to justify the removal or replacement exists. *Coleson v. Bethan*, 931 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. App. Fort Worth 1996, no pet.).

For whatever reason, if the removal of an ad litem is sought - disagreement with the conduct of the case, failure or refusal to act, an interest adverse to that of the ward - the decision to appoint or to replace an ad litem must be based upon the best interests of the ward, not the interests of the ad litem, the guardian or the guardian's attorney. *Urbish v. 127th Judicial Dist. Court*, 708 S.W.2d 429 (Tex. 1986) (orig. proceeding); *Coleson, supra.*

- 2. <u>STANDARD OF REVIEW</u>: The trial court's decision to remove is reviewed on an abuse of discretion standard. *Texas Indemnity Ins. Co. v. Hubbard*, 138 S.W.2d 626, 632 (Tex. Civ. App. -- 1940, writ dism'd judgmt. cor.); *Coleson, supra*.
- 3. <u>PROCEDURE</u>: Where the Estates Code is silent, the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure govern the procedures to be followed in county courts. TEX. R. CIV. P. 2.

A. Motion to Show Authority: Where perhaps the Attorney Ad Litem's duties had been fulfilled but the Attorney Ad Litem continued to act and failed to seek his or her discharge, removal could be sought under TEX. R. CIV. P. 12, with a sworn "Motion to Show Authority" challenging the ad litem's authority to act on

behalf of the client. Ten days' notice to the "challenged" attorney must be given before the hearing date. TEX. R. CIV. P. 21a.; Garner & Goehrs, Guardianship Update Including 1995 Legislation, 1995 State Bar of Texas Advanced Estate Planning and Probate Course.

B. <u>Temporary Restraining Order</u>: Where a trial court has specifically continued the ad litem's appointment, the court, on its own motion, or on that of opposing counsel, may seek removal of the ad litem by motion and request a temporary restraining order under TEX. R. CIV. P. 680. Like any TRO, it may be granted without notice, but would expire within fourteen days and should be immediately set for hearing at the earliest possible date. *Ibid*.

Regarding attempts by opposing counsel to "get rid" of an ad litem, see Keith v. Solls, 256 S.W.3d 912, 919 (Tex. App. Dallas 2008, no pet.).

B. Re-Activation of the Ad Litem

Some specific instances call for the reactivation of one or the other of the ad litems.

- 1. <u>RE-ACTIVATION TO INVESTIGATE</u>: When the guardian himself or herself becomes incapacitated, resigns, or is otherwise removed for misfeasance, malfeasance or nonfeasance, the court may either reactivate the ad litem for investigative and monitoring purposes or appoint the ad litem as the successor guardian. (TEX. EST. CODE ANN. §§ 1203.101ff). This is often preferable to the immediate appointment of a successor guardian because of the qualified judicial immunity of the Guardian Ad Litem. (TEX. EST. CODE ANN. §1054.056).
- 2. <u>GUARDIAN SEEKING TO PURCHASE FROM ESTATE</u>: Under TEX. EST. CODE ANN. § 1158.653(b), when a guardian seeks to **purchase property** of the estate, an Attorney Ad Litem must be appointed to represent the ward's interests.
- 3. ESTATE PLANNING, TAX-MOTIVATED, CHARITABLE, NON-PROFIT & PERIODIC GIFTS: When a guardian seeks authority to establish an estate plan for the ward under TEX. EST. CODE § 1162ff, a Guardian Ad Litem may be appointed for the benefit of the ward or any interested party. TEX. EST. CODE § 1162.008.
- 4. MODIFICATON OR RESTORATION: When an informal request is made to modify the guardianship or restore the ward's capacity in whole or in part under TEX. EST.CODE ANN. \$1202ff, the court may appoint a Guardian Ad Litem to investigate TEX. EST. CODE \$ 1202.054. If the proceeding goes forward, the court shall appoint an Attorney Ad Litem to represent the ward. TEX. EST. CODE \$1202.101. Additionally, the ward is authorized to retain counsel in such event.

TEX. EST. CODE § 1202.103. See *supra* for the discussion regarding Supports and Services and the ability of the Ward to make decisions regarding residence.

- 5. <u>SETTLING AND CLOSING GUARDIANSHIP</u>: During the process of the **settling and closing** of the guardianship of the estate, an Attorney Ad Litem may be appointed for the ward's interests. TEX. EST. CODE § 1204.001(e). Specific provision is now made to allow the ad litem's compensation in this case to be taxed as costs.
- 6. <u>FINAL SETTLEMENT OF ESTATE</u>: In settling and closing a ward's estate, an Attorney Ad Litem may be appointed under TEX. EST. CODE ANN. § 1204.002 if:
 - the ward is deceased and has **no executor or** administrator or
 - the ward is a **non-resident** of the state or
 - the ward's residence is unknown.
- 7. <u>ATTORNEY AD LITEM CERTIFICATION</u> <u>STILL REQUIRED</u>: Even after the grant of letters of guardianship, any Attorney Ad Litem appointed must be certified under TEX. EST. CODE § 1054.201. *Guardianship of Marburger, supra.*

In *Guardianship of Wehe*, 2012 Tex. App. LEXIS 8931 (Tex. App. Corpus Christi, October 25, 2012, no pet.), it was held that where counsel lacked certification under TEX. EST. CODE § 1054.201, the non-certified attorney lacked standing to appeal the guardianship.

XII. HEIRSHIP PROCEEDINGS

A. Introduction

Appointment of an Attorney Ad Litem is mandatory in all heirship determinations. TEX. EST. CODE 202.009; TEX. R. CIV. PROC. 244).

Because the Estates Code provides only for the appointment of attorneys ad litem and not guardians ad litem in heirship proceedings, new TEX. R. CIV. PROC. 173.1ff will not apply here.

This outline and materials are designed to assist you, the practitioner acting as an Attorney Ad Litem, in adequately representing your clients, even though you (in most instances) will never meet them and (in some instances) they will not "exist," except in a legal fiction. Two general situations will be addressed:

PROVING UP THE OBVIOUS VS. SOLVING AN OLD MYSTERY In many cases, you merely will be verifying otherwise straightforward family history facts. In other cases, the existence of heirs will not be disclosed, either from ulterior motives or honest ignorance. In yet other situations, the existence of heirs "on the other side of the family" is simply a mystery.

- 1. THE "PLAIN JANE" CASE: If your principal job is to confirm that a) the application is correct, b) there appears to be no controversy in the proceeding and c) the applicant has carried his/her burden of proof, (and for which you are receiving only the capitated \$400.00 fee), your checklist is simpler and should look something like the one shown below.
- 2. THE "MYSTERY" CASE: If it appears that there are heirs whose very existence as well as whereabouts are unknown, you have just become a genealogist/skip tracer. Keep your time and understand what resources will be available to pay your fee. Your checklist is constrained by your imagination, the size of the estate and what the judge considers to be a <u>reasonable</u> effort to locate the "missing" heirs.
- **B. Statutory Bases for Heirship Proceedings** Heirship is the relationship between a Decedent (a person who dies owning or entitled to property and who leaves no will, or whose will fails to effectively dispose of all of that person's property) and an Heir (the person designated by the applicable Laws of Descent and Distribution to receive the property). TEX. EST. CODE § 202.002.

It is now also possible for a trustee holding assets for the benefit of a decedent to seek to determine the heirs of the decedent. TEX. EST. CODE § 202.002(3).

- 1. <u>NECESSITY</u>: The lawful heirs and their shares of the estate must be determined in an intestate administration. TEX. EST. CODE § 202.002.
- 2. <u>APPLICATION</u>: TEX. EST. CODE § 202.005. A representative, a person claiming part of the estate, or a secured creditor can apply to determine heirship. The application should contain the information listed in TEX. EST. CODE § 202.005, and shall be supported by an affidavit stating that all facts are true and that nothing has been omitted. All unknown heirs, known heirs, and all persons shown by the deed records to own a share or interest in any of the estate property shall be made parties to the proceeding.
- 3. <u>CITATION</u>: TEX. EST. CODE § 51.001. The citation required here differs in several ways from the citation and service required for an administration.
- A. <u>Service by Certified Mail</u> on all distributees over 12 whose names and addresses can be found with reasonable diligence (Court can require personal service here). TEX. EST. CODE §§ 51.001(b), 202.051, 202.054.

A parent, managing conservator, guardian, Attorney Ad Litem, or Guardian Ad Litem of a distributee who is younger than 12 may waive citation required to be served on the distributee under this section. TEX. EST. CODE § 202.051.

- B. <u>Service by Publication</u> in a newspaper of general circulation on 1) all unknown heirs and 2) heirs whose addresses cannot be found, in the county of the proceeding and the county of the decedent's last residence. TEX. EST. CODE § 202.052.
- C. <u>Posted Citation</u> in the county where proceedings are commenced and where the decedent last resided, except where publication is used as in (B) above. TEX. EST. CODE § 202.053.

4. APPOINTMENT OF ATTORNEY AD LITEM

Except as provided by TEX. EST. CODE § 202.009 (mandatory appointment of Attorney Ad Litem for unknown heirs), the judge of a probate court may appoint an Attorney Ad Litem to represent the interests of a person having a legal disability, a nonresident, an unborn or unascertained person, or an unknown heir in any probate proceeding. Each Attorney Ad Litem appointed under this section is entitled to reasonable compensation for services in the amount set by the court and to be taxed as costs in the proceeding. TEX. EST. CODE § 53.104.

A court <u>must</u> appoint an Attorney Ad Litem for all unknown heirs and <u>may</u> appoint an Attorney Ad Litem for all the living heirs whose whereabouts are unknown. TEX. EST. CODE § 202.009.

An Attorney Ad Litem must be appointed where service has been made by publication and no answer has been filed nor appearance entered. TEX. R. CIV. PROC. 244.

5. EVIDENCE IN HEIRSHIP

- A. The <u>Live Evidence</u> in an heirship hearing usually consists of live testimony by witnesses with personal knowledge regarding the family history of the decedent and the heirs. This includes information regarding identity and relationship of the family members, births, deaths and marriages, as well as the order of deaths and marriages.
- B. <u>Affidavits of Heirship</u> and <u>Judgments concerning Heirship or Family Identity</u>, as authorized by TEX. EST. CODE §203.001ff, are prima facie evidence of such matters, but only (as to the affidavits) if the affidavits have been of record in the records of a county or district court for at least five years by the time the instant heirship proceeding is commenced.

Any errors contained in such recorded instruments may be proved by interested parties during the heirship proceeding. *Ibid*. This provision is not exclusive of any other methods of proof available under other rules or law. *Ibid*.

C. What this means is:

1. Affidavits of heirship filed expressly for the current proceeding are <u>inadmissible</u> and essentially a waste of time. *Compton v. WWV Enterprises*, 679 S.W.2d 668 (Tex. App. - Eastland 1984, no pet.).

- 2. Recorded documents such as birth, marriage and death certificates are admissible because of TEX. EVID. RULE 902(1) ("Domestic Public Documents Under Seal").
- 3. Written statements of fact concerning personal or family history contained in family Bibles, genealogies, charts, engravings on rings, inscriptions on family portraits, engravings on urns, crypts or tombstones, etc. are specifically excepted from the hearsay rule TEX. EVID. RULE 803(13), but are subject to the twenty-year authentication requirement of TEX. EVID. RULE 901(b)(8).
- 4. On the other hand, oral statements of reputation concerning personal or family history TEX. EVID. RULE 803(19) are hearsay exceptions without any authentication requirement other than a demonstration of personal knowledge. TEX. EVID. RULE 901(b)(1).
- D. <u>Evidentiary Standard</u>: The lack of specifics in the heirship provisions of the Estates Code would indicate that, beyond requiring "that level of proof which would create in the trier of fact a firm belief or conviction as to the truth of the allegations sought to be established" *Transportation Ins. Co. v. Moriel*, 879 S.W.2d 10, 31 (Tex. 1994), the judge (or jury) in an heirship proceeding is guided by their own sense of what is right, just and true.
- E. <u>Evidence Reduced to Writing</u>: A Court may require all or any part of the evidence to be reduced to writing and subscribed and sworn to by the witnesses. TEX. EST. CODE § 202.151.
- F. <u>Statement of the Evidence No Separate Statement Required</u>: TEX. RULES CIV. PROC. 244 provides: "A statement of the evidence approved by the Court must be filed with the record where service has been made by publication and no answer has been filed nor appearance entered." This need not be a separate document. A properly drafted Order Determining Heirship will contain the appropriate findings and holdings required and satisfies this requirement. A separate "Statement of the Evidence" is unnecessary.
- G. <u>Heirship Judgment.</u> TEX. EST. CODE § 202.001ff. To be a final judgment, the order declaring heirship must include:
- 1. The names and places of residence of the heirs;
- 2. The respective shares and interests in the real and personal property of the estate;
- 3. Whether the proof is deficient in any respect.

NOTE: Unless specific declaratory relief is requested, the court can make no findings as to the characterization of property. A judgment which addresses only some, but not all, categories of property: real <u>and</u> personal, separate <u>and</u> community does not comply with the statute. It is extremely common for additional property to be

discovered. If it is not addressed in the judgment, another heirship hearing will be necessary. Make sure the suggested form of judgment categorically includes the division of every type of property.

If all of these elements are present, the judgment is final and may be appealed. TEX. EST. CODE § 202.202.

However, an heirship judgment that does not include all the elements required by TEX. EST. CODE § 202.201, *supra* is not a final judgment. *Estate of Loveless*, 64 S.W.3d 564, 570 (Tex. App. Texarkana 2001), subsequent appeal after remand 2003 Tex. App. LEXIS 676 (Tex. App. Texarkana 2003, no pet.).

C. Scope of "Heirship Determinations"

For purposes of appointments under TEX. EST. CODE § 202.009 "heirship determinations" will include those proceedings:

- 1. incident to a dependent administration;
- 2. where no other administration is sought or pending;
- 3. pursuant to declaratory judgment actions where it is necessary to determine heirs because of intestacy under a will, trust or other instrument, etc.
- 4. where an intestate independent administration is sought pursuant to TEX. EST. CODE § 401.003.

Note: Texas Estates Code § 202.057 now requires the Applicant in an heirship determination to file an affidavit (or their counsel to file a certificate) regarding service of citation, similar to the affidavit regarding notice in a guardianship proceeding. See Appendix Al.

D. Duty and Standing of the Attorney Ad Litem

It is the duty of the Attorney Ad Litem to defend the rights of his involuntary client with the same vigor and astuteness he would employ in the defense of clients who had expressly employed him for such purpose. *Estate of Tartt v. Harpold*, 531 S.W.2d 696, 698 (Tex. App.-Houston [14th Dist.] 1975, writ ref'd n.r.e.) (quoting *Madero v. Calzado*, 281 S.W. 328 (Tex. Civ. App.-San Antonio 1926, writ dism'd)); *Estate of Stanton*, 2005 Tex. App. LEXIS 10901 (Tex. App. Tyler 2005, pet. denied). (dependent administration and heirship).

The Attorney Ad Litem in an heirship proceeding appointed under TEX. EST. CODE § 53.104 was found to have both standing and authority to oppose the appointment of a temporary administrator and apply for the appointment of an independent third-party administrator, to the same extent as if his clients had been present. *Estate of Stanton*, 2005 Tex. App. LEXIS

10901 (Tex. App. Tyler 2005, pet. denied). (dependent administration and heirship).

E. Pointers on Different of Types of Cases:

1. The "Plain Jane" Case -:

- pigeonhole the situation: if it is simple to start with, it should end up that way. If it is complicated, learn how to chart your findings and explain the complications so even the judge can understand it.

It is not your job to duplicate all efforts made by the attorney for the applicant. You simply grade the other guy's homework, not do it all over yourself. YOU do not do the spadework <u>unless</u> there truly are unknown heirs.

2. The "Mystery" Case

On the other hand, if there is an allegation that there are heirs whose whereabouts or identities are unknown, you have just become a genealogist/skip tracer.

The only known surviving heirs may be from only one side of the family and there may be literally no one who can easily tell you who the other heirs might be. While it is nigh impossible that there are no heirs on a particular side of a family, it may not be possible, given the constraints of the information, your abilities or the available resources of the estate, to track down the whereabouts of those heirs whose whereabouts are unknown within a billable-timeframe that is reasonable.

The secret is determining where the "tipping point" is devoting billable time to the search vs. the hope of discovering the answers. When in doubt, schedule a conference with the court and all other counsel and get your marching orders in a clear fashion.

Caveat: Anyone trying to suppress information regarding the "black sheep" of the family will, of course, present you with a straightforward picture of a happy family - minus the black sheep.

For a scenario where the ad litem in an heirship proceeding exposed fraud by the applicant, see *Beevers v. Lampkins*, 2012 Tex. App. LEXIS 3443 (Tex. App. Amarillo 2012, no pet. h.).

In complicated cases, a fair amount of deductive reasoning and intuition (or genealogical research experience) must sometimes be employed.

Appendix E is a distillation of a few books on searching for lost persons plus some helpful websites.

Using appropriate forms to record your data, obtain as much additional information as possible to build a "family tree," including identity and location information on all family members (not just heirs), with dates and references to documentation.

Having every little scrap of information recorded and easily available can be invaluable. If the record keeping gets too cumbersome, specialized genealogy programs such as *Family Tree Maker*© or *Personal Ancestral File (free!)* can be lifesavers.

In an appropriate situation, (and on prior approval by the court) a professional forensic genealogist may be retained.

A great little paperback to provide guidance in genealogical research is <u>Searching for your Ancestors:</u> <u>The How and Why of Genealogy</u> by Gilbert H. Doane. It is available for under \$2.00 at www.abebooks.com.

- **F. Due Diligence** In either type of heirship case described, the Attorney Ad Litem should:
- 1. Review all relevant pleadings, documents and citations: Get a copy of the order appointing you.
- 2. <u>File an Answer</u> on behalf of your clients. This 'joins the issues' and properly gets you in court. (Appendix Am.)

3. Contact the Applicant's attorney to get:

- a) copies of the pleadings, any death certificates, birth certificates, divorce decrees, etc. and any other 'official' documentation affecting descent and distribution. You do not necessarily need original seals on your certified copies, but you might look at them for comparison purposes.
- b) the names and contact information of family members and disinterested witnesses who might be knowledgeable of the facts of heirship.
- 4. <u>Personally interview</u> the Applicant to verify the heirship facts and obtain the names and whereabouts of persons knowledgeable of the heirship facts.
- 5. Contact at least two disinterested persons, if not all of the persons known to have knowledge of the heirship facts (not just the one you may be referred to by the family) and verify the information provided. Telephone interviews are OK as long as you can determine to whom you are really talking.

<u>Note</u>: If possible, try to get to someone <u>truly</u> disinterested, who has no particular reason to try to please the Applicant.

- 6. After about two hours of billable time are spent, check back with the court for guidance as to how much time should be spent, even in a complicated case.
- 7. Make an independent determination (if appropriate) whether the information provided is sufficient, whether there are persons not listed in the application, whether intentionally or unintentionally omitted, who may be minors, otherwise incapacitated or whose identity or whereabouts may be unknown. It is always necessary for the ad litem to ask the <u>impolite</u> questions: whether there were any other marriages, whether there were any other children (born in or out of wedlock), etc. (the <u>Smell Test</u>: If it smells, find out where it has been swimming and how long it has been dead.)
- 8. If the issue of common-law marriage or the lack thereof presents itself, the ad litem should look for affidavits of 'single-hood' by the alleged common-law

spouse to obtain or retain public assistance, health insurance, life insurance, military benefits, social security.

- 9. Send a letter by certified mail, return receipt requested, to all of your clients whom you are able to locate, informing them of the heirship proceeding, that they may have an interest in the decedent's estate and to contact you. Seek to obtain waivers of citation from each of them, if the attorney for the Applicant has not already done so.
- 10. Prepare a written <u>report</u> of your findings when you have completed your investigation. This report should contain:
- a) a statement of whether you agree or disagree with the application for determination of heirship;
- b) a <u>skeletal</u> recitation of the documents reviewed and persons consulted; and
- c) <u>a distribution chart</u>, fully showing how all interests devolve upon the heirs.

Note: DO NOT OMIT THE DISTRIBUTION CHART. It is usually the first document the judge will review when the file is brought to court for hearing (which may literally be seconds before your hearing).

Thought for the Day: Statutory probate courts almost always have crowded dockets, whether the hearings are specially-set or on a first-come first-serve basis, so clarity and precision are crucial for paperwork in uncontested hearings. If the Judge has to try to decipher a convoluted family tree/pedigree chart (whether drawn on butcher paper or created by specialized software), chances are you may be coming back for a chambers conference to complete the hearing.

Appendix An contains a strongly suggested format which can be easily prepared on any word processor. No butcher paper or special software is necessary. It is based on the format of a division order title opinion from oil & gas practice.

11. If you have located a heir whose name or whereabouts was previously unknown, include all contact information for each such individual in your report, with a copy of the report to all counsel.

Note: SSA Letter Forwarding to Missing Person For \$25.00, the Social Security Administration will attempt to forward a letter to a missing person under circumstances involving a matter of great importance, such as a death or serious illness in the missing person's immediate family, or a sizeable amount of money that is due the missing person.

Because SSA reads each letter to ensure it contains nothing embarrassing to the missing person

if read by a third party, the letter should be in a plain, unstamped, unsealed envelope showing only the missing person's name.

The missing person's Social Security number or date and place of birth, father's name, and mother's full birth name must be furnished.

The letter is usually forwarded to the employer who most recently reported earnings for the missing person. If the person is receiving benefits, a home address maybe available. No second letters will be sent.

Social Security Administration Letter Forwarding P.O. Box 33022 Baltimore, MD 21290-3022 http://www.ssa.gov/foia/html/ltrfwding.htm

At this point, if you have found an "unknown heir," the Applicant should be preparing an amended application to determine heirship. If they are unwilling to do so, consider seeking security for costs TEX. EST. CODE § 53.052 or setting a conference with the court.

If these newly discovered heirs want you to represent them, you may well have a conflict of interest among your clients. Consider requesting the Court to appoint another ad litem, so you may withdraw and enter an appearance on behalf of your new clients.

- 12. Confer with Applicant's attorney as to an appropriate date for the hearing on the application and ensure you get a copy of the confirmation of the setting.

 13. If the Applicant's attorney gets out a Deposition on Written Questions (Tex. Est. Code § 51.203) for a witness who cannot attend the hearing, consider whether you need to propound cross-questions. Do not do so unless you need to.
- 14. At the hearing: See "Dealing with Court Personnel" *supra*.

While you are still out in the hall before your hearing:

- a) Review the proposed order to make sure it accurately reflected the names and locations of the heirs and has correctly calculated the distribution in the proposed judgment.
- b) Compare the judgment with your notes and report.
- c) Introduce yourself to the witnesses if there is time.

In the hearing:

- a) When the attorney for the applicant passes the witness, don't simply say: "No questions." If nothing else, ask: "Since we last spoke, is there anything that you recall regarding the Decedent that you did not tell me at that time?"
 - b) Ask about relationships that might have lasted

more than a few months. Ask about any claims of paternity or court proceedings for paternity or legitimization. Ask about any direct knowledge of children put up for adoption or about deceased siblings who had children. For suggested Cross-Examinations questions for the hearing, see Appendix Z.

G. Time Records and Fee Applications

- 1) Determine beforehand whether you are to receive a set fee. You will receive a fee of \$400 unless the Court has previously determined that additional time is required due to the circumstances of the particular matter.
- 2) If you have a "Mystery" case, schedule a conference with the court and all other counsel to get some idea of how far you can go (time-wise) and any procedural suggestions you might get.
- 3) Keep your time in either type of case, just in case things get unexpectedly complicated.
- 4) After you have spent about two hours on the case, unless you can see the light at the end of the tunnel, check signals with the court.
- 5) Find out how the court appointing you wants the fee application handled. If you need to file your application with the clerk, don't hand it to the judge at the bench and expect it to be acted on at that moment. The judge has no way of knowing if you have had a disagreement with staff and may be trying an "endaround."
- 6) If you have had a "Plain Jane" case, file an Application for Payment of Fees with an Order and seek discharge of your appointment as Attorney Ad Litem. (Appendix Ao). Do <u>not</u> simply send an order for payment of your fees to the Court.
- 7) If you have had a "Mystery " case, file an itemized Application for Payment of Fees with a narrative of time expended and services rendered.
- 8) In an appropriate case, consider seeking <u>security for costs</u>. *Estate of Stanton*, *supra*. See discussion under "Actively Contesting the Guardianship" *supra*.
 - 9) See "Fee Considerations," supra.

H. Areas of Particular Concern

- 1. Shares of the Estate are better noted as fractional interests ("½ of ¼ of ¼") rather than as "1/88" or ".011363636." This allows the court (and others) to better understand the division of the property in the tabular listing of the distributees. Fractional listings are also more definite than decimal listings, where arguments have been known to arise over how many places should be used to accurately express the decimal interest.
- 2. <u>How Did We Get Here</u>? Like your Junior High math teacher told you, you should "show your work" in

your Distribution Chart. If one set of cousins gets 1/5 each and another set gets 1/10 each, show the derivative predeceased ancestors that made it be that way. Don't make the judge guess. You might not like the answer.

3. <u>Imbedded Heirships</u> - If you are running down the list of heirs and determine that one of the heirs has survived the Decedent, then subsequently died, the trail ends there for this proceeding. For purposes of this case, the relevant determination is whether that deceased heir has had an estate administration opened or not. If so, any distributive share is payable to the personal representative of the estate. If not, the distributive share of the deceased heir is payable to the registry of the court.

Do not attempt to "double-up" and go on to determine the heirship of an heir who survived, but then died unless a separate heirship proceeding has been filed on that heir's behalf. The court can only act within its jurisdiction and that jurisdiction (for these purposes) is determined by the pleadings and citation of whose heirship is being determined. An attempt by the court to act outside of or beyond its jurisdiction produces a void result. *Kowalski v. Finley*, 2004 Tex. App. LEXIS 8393 (Tex. App. Houston 14th Dist. 2004, no pet.).

4. Per Stirpes and Per Capita Distributions - TEX. EST. CODE §201.101 When the intestate's children, descendants, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, or any other relatives of the deceased standing in the first or same degree alone come into the distribution upon intestacy, they shall take per capita, namely: by persons; and, when a part of them being dead and a part living, the descendants of those dead shall have right to distribution upon intestacy, such descendants shall inherit only such portion of said property as the parent through whom they inherit would be entitled to if alive.

These terms relate to situations in which property passes by intestacy to a group of people, some of whom have predeceased the Decedent. When those people stand within the first degree of consanguinity (children, descendants, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts) and they all survive the decedent, each takes a full share for those who survive. This is *per capita* ("by heads").

However, if some of these people predeceased the Decedent and some are still living, the descendants of those who have predeceased share the portion of the one through whom they inherit would be entitled to if alive.

For example, Mother dies with five children. If all five survive, each of the five take one-fifth. If four survive and the fifth children leaves three children, the three grandchildren of the Decedent with the predeceased parent divided that child's one-fifth. This distribution is *per stirpes* ("by the roots").

If none of the people of a certain generation

survive, the per capita distribution is determined at the generation at which there is a living relative. (hence "standing in the first or same degree alone").

5. Half-Blood and Whole-Blood Distributions -High divorce rates and serial marriages make this a real probability. In a typical situation, May Jones first married John Smith. They had four children. John Smith died. Mary then married John Doe and they had two children.

Mary Jones

m1: John Smith (deceased)

- a. Bob Smith
- b. Randy Smith
- c. Sally Smith
- d. Johnny Smith

m2: John Doe

- a. Jane Doe
- b. John Robert ("J.R.") Doe

Mary and John Doe subsequently die. Later, Bob (one of Mary's children by her first husband) dies intestate (without children or a wife) and you have to determine the distribution of Bob's estate among his collateral kindred.

Mary Jones

m1: John Smith (deceased)

- a. Bob Smith
- b. Randy Smith
- c. Sally Smith
- d. Johnny Smith

m2: John Doc

- a Jane Doe
- b. John Robert Doe

TEX. EST. CODE § 201.057 provides: HEIRS OF WHOLE AND HALF BLOOD. In situations where the inheritance passes to the collateral kindred of the intestate, if part of such collateral be of the whole blood, and the other part be of the half blood only, of the intestate, each of those of half blood shall inherit only half so much as each of those of the whole blood; but if all be of the half blood, they shall have whole portions.

To make the proper calculation, you first determine at what level the initial distribution is made. It must be at the highest level (generation closest to the decedent) at which someone is living TEX. EST. CODE § 201.101. Here, that's easy because all survivors are of the same generation.

Next, a per capita ("by head") share is assigned to each person.

Mary Jones

m1: John Smith (deceased)

- a. Bob Smith
- b. Randy Smith (one share) c. Sally Smith (one share) (one share)
- d. Johnny Smith

m2: John Doe

a. Jane Doe (one share) b. John Robert Doe (one share)

Then, each "Whole-Blood" - those sharing both ancestors (here, both parents) with the Decedent (Black's Law Dictionary 182 (8th ed. 2004) - get another share.

Mary Jones

m1: John Smith (deceased)

- a. Bob Smith
- b. Randy Smith (two shares) c. Sally Smith (two shares) d. Johnny Smith (two shares)
- m2: John Doe
 - a. Jane Doe (one share) b. John Robert Doe (one share)

As there are 8 shares, each share is 1/8. The Half-Bloods take 1/8 each, while the Whole-Bloods take 2/8 or 1/4 each.

Mary Jones

m1: John Smith (deceased)

a. Bob Smith

b. Randy Smith $2/8 \text{ or } \frac{1}{4}$ $2/8 \text{ or } \frac{1}{4}$ c. Sally Smith d. Johnny Smith 2/8 or 1/4

m2: John Doe

1/8 a. Jane Doe b. John Robert Doe 1/8

Note 1: This section applies only to collateral kindred, not lineal kindred. If the inheritance is determined in a straight line, up or down, it is lineal. If lineage can only be determined by reference to a person other than the deceased, such as siblings, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins-who are not descendants or ancestors but are related to the decedent through an ancestor, they are collateral kindred. Blacks Law Dictionary 741 (8th ed. 2004).

Note 2: If Mary were the decedent in the above example, there would be no half-bloods, since they are all her children. Additionally, if John Doe (Mary's 2nd husband), were the decedent, the step-children from the first marriage would take nothing.

Note 3: Grandparent adoptions of a favored grandchild

can wreak havoc with the distributive scheme. Adoptions of stepchildren can "promote them" into being whole-bloods.

- 6. <u>Heirship and Disclaimers</u> The order showing the identity of the heirs and their respective shares of the estate should not reflect the effect of any disclaimers or transfers executed pursuant to TEX. EST. CODE § 122.001ff. *Welder v. Hitchcock*, 617 S.W.2d 294 (Tex. Civ. App.--Corpus Christi 1981, writ ref'd n.r.e.).
- a. A declaratory judgment action is the proper vehicle to determine if a disclaimer or transfer is effective for estate planning, tax purposes or for creditor avoidance. *Tate v. Siepielski*, 740 S.W.2d 92, 93 (Tex. App.-Fort Worth 1987, no writ). Such an action may be validly joined with the heirship proceeding to properly place before the court the legal effect of the disclaimer. Otherwise, it is asking the court to render judgment on the legal effect of the disclaimer by taking several shortcuts without sufficient citation, pleadings, testimony and evidence.
- b. In Welder, supra, the appellants argued the language of the disclaimer statute created a legal fiction ("as if the person disclaiming had predeceased the decedent") requiring a different distribution - one showing the effect of the disclaimer as a part of the heirship determination. The Corpus Christi court of appeals rejected this argument, holding such an argument would require 1) a finding that the Legislature intended to alter partially the order of descent and distribution set out in TEX. PROB. CODE § 43 (now TEX. EST. CODE § 201.101) by the enactment of the disclaimer statute and 2) a finding that the effect of the disclaimer was to re-order and affect the distribution of the entire estate rather than "the property subject thereof," referring only to the property over which the disclaimant had authority by inheritance. The court in Welder held that, by enacting TEX. EST. CODE §37A (now TEX. EST. CODE § 122.001), the Legislature intended to affect only to whom a disclaimed share descends, and not the manner in which an entire estate is to be distributed.
- 7. Adult Adoptees An adopted adult is entitled to inherit from and through the adopted adult's adoptive parents as though the adopted adult were the biological child of the adoptive parents. However, the adopted adult may <u>not</u> inherit from or through the adult's biological parent. Also, a biological parent may <u>not</u> inherit from or through an adopted adult. TEX. FAM. CODE § 162.507
- 8. <u>Deadbeat Dads</u> Although the legislature attempted to block "Deadbeat Dads" from inheriting from deceased minor children where the parent had either abandoned the mother and child or had been found guilty of a list of crimes enumerated within the

- statute, (TEX. EST. CODE §§ 201.062, the Texas Attorney General has opined that, except in narrow circumstances, these provisions run afoul of Article I, section 21 of the Texas Constitution, which provides that "no conviction shall work corruption of blood or forfeiture of estate." In Opinion No. GA-0632 (May 30, 2008), Attorney General Abbott concludes that unless the parent is also within the provisions of the Slayer's Rule (see *infra*) the new provisions go too far and are unconstitutional.
- 9. The Slayer's Rule Heirs convicted (or in a wrongful death suit - found by a civil court) of "willfully bringing about the death of the Decedent" do not forfeit their right to inherit under TEX. EST. CODE § 201.058. However, under TEX. INS. CODE §21.23 there is statutory exception to this rule, imposing a forfeiture. This is cross-referenced in TEX. EST. CODE § 201.058(b). In addition, the courts of Texas have recognized the equitable right of a family member to seek the imposition of a constructive trust against the ownership interest of one who willfully brings about the death of a family member. see Branyon, The Slaver's Rule Revisited, 1996 Advanced Estate Planning and Probate Course, State Bar of Texas and Bounds v. Caudle, 560 S.W.2d 925 (Tex. 1977); Medford v. *Medford*, 68 S.W.3d 242 (Tex. App. Ft. Worth 2002, no pet.); Mowbray v. Avery 76 S.W.3d 663 (Tex. App. Corpus Christi 2002, pet. denied); and Admin. Comm. for the H.E.B. Inv. & Ret. Plan v. Harris, 217 F. Supp. 2d 759, (E.D. Tex. 2002). (ERISA discussion).
- 10. <u>DNA Evidence and Heirship</u> Thanks to amendments in 2007, probate lawyers can now take advantage of genetic testing in heirship without the necessity of instituting a Uniform Parentage Act proceeding under TEX. FAM. CODE Chap 160.

New TEX. EST. CODE §§ 204.001ff allow a petition for a right of inheritance and the use of genetic testing. For an extended discussion (and forms), see King, Blood Will Out: The Use of DNA Evidence in Texas Estate Proceedings, 30th Annual Advanced Estate Planning and Probate Course, State Bar of Texas 2006.

11. <u>Surviving Spouse's Interest</u> – Get it clear: with community property - if there are heirs other than the children of the Decedent and the Surviving Spouse, the Surviving Spouse does not inherit anything. However, the Surviving Spouse <u>retains</u> his/her half of the community property.

I. Job Skills - More a list of pointers than anything else. You should:

1. <u>Really</u> understand the intestacy chart: Appendix Ap. 2. Make sure you have all necessary documentation and information by counsel for the Applicant. The Applicant must bear the burden of proof - let them do

the heavy lifting.

- 3. Feeling a lack of cooperation? Get a feeling they are hiding something? Ask for a conference with the court and all other counsel or consider the tactics listed under "Actively Contesting the Application," *supra*.
- 4. Don't contest something just because you are unsure as to how to proceed. ASK.
- 5. Be professionally skeptical. As President Reagan quoted to Gorbachev during the U.S.-Russia disarmament talks in the 1980s: "Doveryay, no proveryay" (Trust, but verify).
- 8. See through prejudice and ignorance of the law. People are often defensive about embarrassing family situations or lifestyles. Family members may emotionally "write off" the children of a deceased "black sheep" with the rationalization "We were never close to them." Adopted-out children born out of wedlock are sometimes 'conveniently' forgotten.

XIII. EPILOGUE: TAKING OVER THE REINS

- A. Changing Hats Make an Appearance It is quite common for an experienced ad litem, once a guardianship is granted, to be asked to represent the guardian. This is no problem, since the ad litem has been discharged upon the granting of the guardianship. TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1054.002, 1054.053, but you should make an appearance in your new role since you now represent a different party. (Otherwise, the clerks may not get it straight.)
- B. (Yet More) Practice Pointers When you think

- you're through, you're not through. Think through the process and make sure you haven't been counting on someone else to do what you should have done.
- Don't rely on counsel for the applicant or court personnel to tell you when to do your job.
- Don't make work or churn the file for more billable time, but stay on top of what needs to be done.
- Use the flowchart as starting point for checklist of responsibilities. Develop your own checklists for scheduling the progress in a guardianship matter. Create a memo knowledge bank
- Don't ask the court to count the days on enforcement matters.
 - Always listen for the dog that is not barking.
- **C.** <u>Real</u> Continuing Education Traditionally, ad litem certification training ends with the process of appointing the guardian. However, it is not uncommon for an ad litem to be asked by the newly-appointed guardian to represent the guardian to help with the administration of the guardianship.

Occasionally, an ad litem is "pressed" into service to serve as guardian, either because a guardian cannot be found, the appointed guardian cannot qualify, or the guardian must be removed.

In any event, it is vital for the probate attorney to have a basic understanding of the administration of a supervised estate. Learning how a guardianship estate is handled also gets you ready to handle the administration of a decedent's estate.

GUARDIANSHIP SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

- I. What is a guardianship?
- II. When is a guardianship necessary?
- III. How does one get a guardianship started?
- IV. Who will serve as guardian?
- V. How is the guardianship supervised?

INTRODUCTION

The laws governing guardianships are principally found in the Texas Estates Code (Tex. Est. Code) §§ 1001.001 – 1356.056. The Courts are required to customize each guardianship to fit the needs of the Incapacitated Person. The Courts are also required to supervise guardianships more closely and are given three methods to do so:

- 1. Guardian of the Person Reports (Tex. Est. Code §1163.101);
- 2. The Court Visitor Program (Tex. Est. Code §1054.102); and
- 3. Annual Determination (Tex. Est. Code §1201.052)

This supervision is in addition to the auditing process that is mandated if the incapacitated person has an estate.

Statutory Probate Courts also employ Court Investigators who review guardianship applications to determine if less restrictive alternatives to guardianship are available, to investigate complaints about guardianships and, generally, to act as a liaison between the public, social workers, attorneys and the Court.

In conducting their investigation, the Court Investigators are authorized to compel the production of the financial records of the Proposed Ward. TEX. FIN. CODE § 59.006(a)(9).

I. WHAT IS A GUARDIANSHIP?

- **A. Basic Definition** A guardianship is a Court supervised procedure where the Court gives one person the legal authority to make personal or financial decisions for a person who can no longer make such decisions for himself or herself.
- **B.** Incapacitated Person A person for whom a guardianship is necessary is known as an

"Incapacitated Person" which is defined in Tex. Est. Code § 1002.017 as

- 1. a minor;
- 2. an adult who, because of a physical or mental condition, is substantially unable to:
 - a. provide food, clothing, or shelter for himself or herself;
 - b. care for the person's own physical health; or
 - c. manage the person's own financial affairs; or
 - 3. a person who must have a guardian appointed for the person to receive funds due the person from a governmental source.
- C. Policy Purpose of Guardianship Unless a Court determines that a guardian with full authority over an IP is necessary, the Court should limit the authority of the guardian so that it is the least restrictive authority possible. Tex. Est. Code § 1001.001 provides that:
 - 1. A court may appoint a guardian with full authority over an Incapacitated Person; or
 - 2. A court may appoint a guardian with limited authority over an Incapacitated Person:
 - a. As indicated by the incapacitated person's actual mental or physical limitations, and
 - b. Only as necessary to promote and protect the well-being of the person.
 - 3. Except for minors, the Court may not use age as the sole factor in determining whether to appoint a guardian for the person.
 - 4. In creating a guardianship that gives a guardian limited power or authority over an Incapacitated Person, the Court shall design the guardianship to encourage the development or maintenance of maximum self-reliance and independence in the incapacitated person.
- **D. Guardian** A guardian is the person who accepts the Court's appointment to be responsible for making decisions for the Incapacitated Person. A guardian has only those powers specified in the

Order Appointing Guardian. Generally, two types of guardians exist:

- 1. <u>Guardian of the Person</u> A guardian of the person has the:
 - a. right to have physical possession of the Incapacitated Person and to establish the Incapacitated Person's legal domicile;
 - b. duty of care, control and protection of the Incapacitated Person;
 - c. duty to provide the Incapacitated Person with clothing, food, medical care and shelter; and
 - d. power to consent to medical, psychiatric, and surgical treatment other than the in-patient psychiatric commitment of the Incapacitated Person.
- 2. <u>Guardian of the Estate</u> A guardian of the estate of the Incapacitated Person has the following powers and duties:
 - a. to possess and manage all property of the Incapacitated Person;
 - b. to collect all debts, rentals or claims that are due to the Incapacitated Person:
 - c. to enforce all obligations in favor of the Incapacitated Person; and
 - d. to bring and defend suits by and against the Incapacitated Person.

II. WHEN IS A GUARDIANSHIP NECESSARY?

- A. Common Situations intellectual disability, Alzheimer's dementia, multi-infarct dementia, Down's syndrome, Parkinson's disease, closed head injuries, chronic mental illness, excessive short term memory loss.
- **B.** Guardianship Not Appropriate treatable mental illness, drug addiction, alcoholism, homelessness, spendthrifts, persons receiving only social security benefits (no Guardian of the Estate is necessary).
- C. Less Restrictive Alternatives Mandated by Tex. Est. Code § 1001.001.

 Court Investigators are to investigate the

circumstances of each application to determine if a less restrictive alternative to guardianship is available. In counties without a Court Investigator, the attorney ad litem for the Incapacitated Person should examine these alternatives. A list of some of the most common Less Restrictive Alternatives is attached to this paper.

III.HOW DOES ONE GET A GUARDIANSHIP STARTED?

- **A.** Courts Statutory Probate Courts, County Courts at Law and County Courts (in that order) have jurisdiction of guardianship cases.
- **B.** Attorneys Most Courts will allow only attorneys to file a guardianship application. In an ideal situation, a concerned family member will contact an attorney to file an application to be appointed as guardian of an Incapacitated Person.
- C. Court Initiated Guardianships The Texas Estates Code provides that "if a Court has probable cause to believe that a person domiciled or found in the county in which the Court is located is an incapacitated person, and the person does not have a guardian in this state, the Court shall appoint a guardian ad litem or a court investigator to investigate and file an application for the appointment of a guardian of the person or estate, or both, of the person believed to be incapacitated." Tex. Est. Code § 102.001.

In Tarrant County, the Courts require an information letter and a doctor's letter to establish probable cause. If the Incapacitated Person's incapacity is intellectual disability, the Court must be provided with a Determination of Intellectual Disability (DID) pursuant to Tex. Est. Code § 1101.104. This section states that if the basis of the Proposed Ward's incapacity is intellectual disability, a physician or psychologist shall conduct an examination according to the rules adopted by the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation and shall submit written findings and recommendations to the Court. This

report must be based upon an examination conducted not earlier than twenty-four months before the date of a hearing to appoint a guardian for the proposed ward. Unless the Incapacitated Person is in imminent danger, Court-Initiated Guardianships take at least 4 to 6 weeks from the date the Court receives the proper letters.

D. Social Worker Involvement

- 1. Adult Protective Services If there is concern that an adult is being abused, exploited or neglected, Adult Protect Services should be called (1-800-252-5400). APS sends a worker to investigate. If APS believes a guardianship is necessary, the worker will take a doctor to examine the Incapacitated Person. If no emergency action is necessary, APS should make a referral to the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services for a guardianship investigation.
- 2. Nursing Home and Hospital Social Workers Social Workers at nursing homes and at hospitals have also used the court initiated guardianship procedure to begin the guardianship process for clients or patients who are Incapacitated Person. Hospital discharge planners should determine if the patient is an IP as soon as possible since the procedure may take a while. Stating that the Incapacitated Person will be in imminent danger when discharged is not considered imminent danger by most courts.

E. Guardian Appointment Process

- 1. An <u>Application for Guardianship</u> is filed by a private attorney, guardian ad litem or court investigator. Only attorneys can file applications.
- 2. The Sheriff or Constable <u>personally serves</u> the Incapacitated Person with a copy of the Application.
- 3. The Court <u>appoints an Attorney Ad Litem</u> to represent and advocate for the Incapacitated Person.
- 4. The <u>known relatives</u> of the Incapacitated Person must <u>receive</u> statutory <u>notice</u> of the application.
- 5. Unless the application is for the appointment of a temporary guardian, the guardianship cannot be established until the Monday following ten days from the date the Incapacitated Person is personally served.

- 6. The <u>Attorney ad litem</u> must <u>personally visit</u> the Incapacitated Person and determine if the Incapacitated Person wants to contest the guardianship.
- 7. The applicant's attorney must file a <u>doctor's letter</u> with the court which states that the Incapacitated Person is incapacitated and generally describes the nature of the incapacity.
- 8. A <u>hearing date is set</u> with the Court. The Incapacitated Person must attend the hearing unless the Court determines that it is not in the best interests of the Incapacitated Person to attend.
- 9. The <u>Judge or jury hears testimony</u> and decides if a guardianship is necessary, what powers the guardian should have, how the Incapacitated Person's rights should be limited and whether the person seeking to be appointed guardian is suitable.
- 10. The Judge then <u>signs an Order</u> Appointing Guardian. The Guardian must file an Oath and Bond in order to qualify. The Clerk then issues Letters of Guardianship to the guardian.

IV. WHO WILL SERVE AS GUARDIAN? - Tex. Est. Code §§ 1104.051ff & 1104.101 provides guidance for the priority of persons seeking to be appointed guardian.

A. Guardian of a Minor

- 1. If the parents live together, both parents are the natural guardians of the person of the minor children by the marriage. One of the parents is entitled to be appointed guardian of the children's estates. If the parents disagree, the court shall appoint the parent who is better qualified to serve. If the parents do not live together, the court shall appoint a guardian considering only the best interests of the child or children. If one parent is deceased, the surviving parent is the natural guardian and entitled to be appointed guardian of the estate for the children. Tex. Est. Code § 1104.051.
- 2. If the minor has no parents, or no parent is suitable for appointment,
 - a. the court is to appoint a guardian designated by a deceased parent in a will or written declaration. Tex. Est. Code § 104.053
 - b. if there is no designation by will or written declaration, and two or more

eligible persons are equally entitled to be appointed guardian, the priority of appointment is as follows (Tex. Est. Code § 1104.052):

- 1. the nearest of kin ("ascendant") in the direct line of the minor, considering the minor's best interests; or
- 2. the nearest of kin of the minor, considering the minor's best interests; or
- 3. a qualified person.
- c. If the minor is at least 12, the minor may select a guardian in writing, subject to the court's finding that it is in the best interest of the minor. Tex. Est. Code § 1104.054.

B. Guardian of an Adult

The overriding concern of the court is to consider the best interests of the Incapacitated Person. If two or more eligible persons are equally entitled to be appointed guardian, the priority of appointment is as follows (Tex. Est. Code § 1104.102):

- a. the spouse of the Incapacitated Person:
- b. the nearest of kin, considering the minor's best interests; or
- c. an eligible person who is best qualified to serve.

V. HOW IS A GUARDIANSHIP SUPERVISED?

A. Annual Reports A guardian of the person is required to file a guardian of the person report each year concerning the Incapacitated Person's

mental and physical condition and stating any change of the residence of the Incapacitated Person or guardian. A guardian of the estate is required to file an annual account stating all receipts, disbursements, cash on hand, and assets being administered. Failure to file either of these reports may lead to fines and/or removal.

B. Court Visitor Program Each statutory probate court is required to establish a Court Visitor Program. As a part of this program a volunteer makes an annual visit on each Incapacitated Person who is the subject of a guardianship. The Court Visitor personally visits the Incapacitated Person and the guardian and reports his or her findings and conclusions to the Court concerning the social and intellectual functioning of the Incapacitated Person as well as living conditions. If the Court Visitor recommends an increase or decrease in the guardian's powers or removal of the guardian or guardianship, the Court will appoint a Court Investigator or Guardian ad litem to investigate, and, if necessary, to file a petition to modify the guardianship order or to remove the guardian or guardianship.

C. Annual Determination Each Court is required to make an annual review and determination of whether a guardianship should be continued, modified or terminated. In making this annual determination, the Court reviews the Court Visitor report and the guardian of the person report.

Rev. January 2015

COURT INITIATED GUARDIANSHIPS IN TARRANT COUNTY PROBATE COURTS

If a court has probable cause to believe that a person domiciled or found in the county in which the court is located is an incapacitated person, and the person does not have a guardian in this state, the court shall appoint a Guardian Ad Litem or court investigator to investigate the person's circumstances to determine whether: (1) the person is an incapacitated person; and (2) a guardianship is necessary. Texas Estates Code § 1102.001

The Tarrant County Probate Courts have implemented the following procedures to comply with this statute.

- 1. The court must receive a **fully completed** Information Letter from a concerned party such as Adult Protective Services, a hospital, a nursing home or a relative or friend of the Proposed Ward. This letter is a request for the court to initiate a guardianship proceeding and should <u>not</u> be confused with an Application for Appointment of a Guardian which must be filed by an attorney. **This should be furnished on the form prescribed by the court (included). All issues on the form must be addressed.**
- 2. The Court must be supplied with a letter or certificate describing the Proposed Ward's incapacity from a physician (M.D. or D.O.) licensed to practice medicine in Texas. This must be furnished on the form prescribed by the court (included). All issues on the form must be addressed. If the basis for incapacity is Intellectual Disability, a Determination of Intellectual Disability (DID) must be furnished.
- 3. Assignment to a Court The Information Letter and Doctor's Certificate should be mailed to:

Tarrant County Probate Courts Tarrant County Courthouse 100 W. Weatherford Fort Worth, Texas 76196

(Requests may be sent to the court by fax at 817/884-3178, but must be followed by originals.)

Once these documents are received, the case will be assigned to either Probate Court One or Two

4. Upon the motion of the Court Investigator or upon the court's own motion, the court will then either appoint a Guardian Ad Litem or the Court Investigator to investigate and, if necessary, file an Application for the Appointment of a Guardian of the Person or Estate, or both, of the Proposed Ward.

COMPLETION OF COURT-INITIATED GUARDIANSHIPS MAY TAKE 4 TO 6 WEEKS FROM THE DATE COURT

RECEIVES THE PROPER DOCUMENTATION. ACTUAL TIME TO A HEARING REQUIRES AT LEAST 20 TO 45 DAYS

- 4. The duties of a Guardian Ad Litem or the Court Investigator upon such appointment are as follows:
- a. personally interview the Proposed Ward as soon as possible;
- b. interview the person who filed the Information Letter concerning the Proposed Ward as well as the known relatives/friends of the Proposed Ward;
- c. consider whether less restrictive alternatives to guardianship are advisable;
- d. consider the necessity of filing for a temporary guardianship (see 5. below);
- e. as soon as possible, file an Application for Appointment of a Guardian (if necessary) and prepare an Order Appointing Attorney Ad Litem;
- f. set the case for a hearing and call the Probate Clerk's Office, to ensure that Proposed Ward is properly served and that the citation has been on file for a sufficient amount of time prior to hearing;
- g. locate a person to serve as Guardian or contact Guardianship Services, Inc or the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services. (amend the Application, if necessary);
- h. file a Report of Ad Litem with the Court at least a week prior to the hearing date (if the guardianship will not be established, file a Final Report by way of explanation):
- i. notify family members and file your affidavit as required by Texas Estates Code § 1051.104;
- j. visit with the Attorney Ad Litem concerning the Application;
- k. prepare Proof of Facts, Bond, Oath and Order and attend the hearing on the Application;
- l. assist the Guardian in obtaining his or her bond and letters, discuss the guardian's statutory duties and responsibilities, and (if necessary) assist in preparation of an Affidavit of Inability to Pay Costs.

- 5. If the Guardian Ad Litem or Court Investigator files an Application for Appointment of a Temporary or Permanent Guardian, the Court will appoint an Attorney Ad Litem for the Proposed Ward.
- 6. The duties of the Attorney Ad Litem are as follows:
- a. review the Application, certificates of physical, medical and intellectual examination and all the relevant medical, psychological and intellectual testing records of the Proposed Ward;
 - b. personally interview the Proposed Ward;
- c. discuss with the Proposed Ward the laws and facts of the case, the Proposed Ward's legal options regarding disposition of the case and the grounds on which a guardianship is sought;
- d. ascertain whether the Proposed Ward wishes to oppose the proceedings (if the Proposed Ward is unable to communicate, the Attorney Ad Litem is to act in best interest of the Proposed Ward).
- e. file an Answer that states whether the Proposed Ward objects to the guardianship or the Proposed

Guardian, or both as soon as possible;

- f. visit with the Guardian Ad Litem or the Court Investigator concerning the Application;
- g. represent and advocate on behalf of Proposed Ward at the hearing, bearing in mind the requirements of the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct 1.02(g) which states:.

"A lawyer shall take reasonable action to secure the appointment of a Guardian or other legal representative for, or seek other protective orders with respect to, a client whenever the lawyer reasonably believes that the client lacks legal competence and that such action should be taken to protect the client."

h. file an Application for Payment of Fees and Order (form included) and report on the need for continuation of the appointment or discharge of the Attorney Ad Litem at the hearing.

Questions concerning these procedures should be addressed to the following:

BARRIE ALLEN 817-884-2189

Court Investigator

ballen@tarrantcounty.com

MARY CAROE 817-884-1897

mecaroe@tarrantcounty.com

Assistant Court Investigator

Probate Court Number One 100 W. Weatherford, Rm. 260A

Fort Worth, TX 76196

Fax: 884-3178

JEFF ARNIER 817-884-3395

Court Investigator

jarnier@tarrantcounty.com

ARLENE SHORTER 817-884-2719

ashorter@tarrantcounty.com

Assistant Court Investigator

Probate Court Number Two

100 W. Weatherford, Rm. 314A

Fort Worth, TX 76196

Fax: 884-1807

Appendix C: Information Letter		formation Letter	Date:			
Judge 100 W	Patrick est Wea	I. King, Tarrant Cou W. Ferchill, Tarrant otherford Street X 76196	nty Probate Court 1 County Probate Court	: 2		
	Re:		d for Guardian or Ne under § 1102.001, Te			
		st the Court to inves	tigate the need for a g	uardian for or the circumstances of the following		
Name				Phone:		
Addre				Birthdate:		
-						
Race:				Driver's License:		
The pr	,	•		(nature of incapacity):		
-		-	-	e □ nursing home □ hospital		
I am:	Name	(printed)				
	Addres	SS:				
	e-mail:		oh:Pager			
My re		ip to the person for v	whom the investigation	n is requested:		
	□ a s	ocial worker in a: \Box riend \Box a doctor	l hospital nursing l	nome		
□ YES		□ NO There is danger to the physical health or safety of this person or to the property or assets of this person unless immediate action is taken. If "YES", explain:				
			unless immediate act	tion is taken. If "YES", explain:		
□ YE	S	assets of this person	is imminent.			

To my kno	owledge, tl	his person:			
□ YES □ YES	□ NO □ NO	is a resident of Tarrant Coun is located in Tarrant County			
☐ YES ☐ YES	□ NO □ NO	has a Guardian in Texas. (Pa has executed a Power of Atto	rents are the n	atural guardians S " to whom was	of children under 18.)
		has executed a 1 ower of Att	Phone:	5, to whom was	it given!
Relationsh	nip:		Social Secur	ity Number:	
Address: _					
☐ cannot ☐ cannot The person	provide fo care for th manage th n has the f	an adult od, clothing, or shelter for him e individual's own physical hea e individual's own financial aff following property:(include Re curities, other investments, auto	alth. fairs. al Property, C		nts, Certificates of
		Description			Value
			TOT	A T	
			101.	AL	
		ME: (Show sources and amount Description punt received per month)	s per month)		Value
		mount received per month)			
			TOT	AL	
Family M sheets as r		All immediate family members	s, living or dec	eased, must be li	sted. Attach additional
Name:			☐ Living	☐ Deceased	Age:
Relationsh	າາp:		\square YES	□ NO Willing	g to serve as Guardian?
					mber:
Name:			☐ Living	☐ Deceased	Age:
Relationsh	າາp:		\square YES	□ NO Willing	g to serve as Guardian?
Address: _			If "YES," So	ocial Security Nu	mber:

Name:			_	☐ Deceased Age:			
Relations	hip:		\square YES	☐ NO Willing to serve as G	luardian?		
Address:		_ If "YES," S	If "YES," Social Security Number:				
			Phone:				
Non-fami	ily members w	who might be willing to		Attach additional sheets as nee			
Name:			Phone:				
Relations	hip:		Social Secu	rity Number:			
Address:				-			
Relations	hip:		Social Secu	Phone:Social Security Number:			
Address:							
	indicate that	•	initialing the blank	uested to review this list, and above and do not believe a less	;		
			DECLARATION		_		
"N	My name is	(First)	(Middle)	(Last)	and		
			,	,			
m	y address is	(Street & Ant #)	(City)	(State) (Zip Code) (Cou	 ntry)		
"I	declare under	penalty of perjury that	t the foregoing is tru	e and correct to the best of my k	nowledge."		
Ez	xecuted in Cou	unty of	, State of	, on	·		
			Declarant				
			Printed Nan	ne of Declarant			

Physician's Certificate of Medical Examination Revision September 2015

In the Matter of the Guardianship of	For Court Use Only Court Assigned:
an Alleged Incapacitated Person	Court Assigned.
-	Γο the Physician
This form is to enable the Court to determ	nine whether the individual identified above is incapacitated), and whether that person should have a guardian appointed.
1. General Information	
Physician's Name	Phone: ()
Off: an Andreas	, <u>, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , </u>
☐ YES ☐ NO I am a physician currentl	y licensed to practice in the State of Texas.
Proposed Ward's Name	
	Age Gender □ M □ F
Proposed Ward's Current Residence:	
I last examined the Proposed Ward on	, 20 at a
\square a Medical facility \square the Proposed Ward's	residence
☐ YES ☐ NO The Proposed Ward is under	my continuing treatment.
☐ YES ☐ NO Before the examination, I info	ormed the Proposed Ward that communications with me would not
be privileged.	
☐ YES ☐ NO A mini-mental status exam w	vas given. If "YES," please attach a copy.
2. Evaluation of the Proposed Ward's Physica	al Condition
Physical Diagnosis:	
a. Severity: ☐ Mild ☐ Moderate ☐ Sev	vere
b. Prognosis:	
c. Treatment/Medical History:	
3. Evaluation of the Proposed Ward's Mental	<u>Functioning</u>
Mental Diagnosis:	
a. Severity: ☐ Mild ☐ Moderate ☐ Sev	vere
b. Prognosis:	
c. Treatment/Medical History:	
If the mental diagnosis includes dementia, ans	
	Ward's best interest to be placed in a secured facility for the elderly
- ·	that specializes in the care and treatment of people with dementia.
the care and treatment of do	Ward's best interest to be administered medications appropriate for
	ly has sufficient capacity to give informed consent to the
administration of dementia	
d. Possibility for Improvement:	
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	osed Ward's physical condition and mental functioning possible?
	roposed Ward be reevaluated to determine whether a guardianship
continues to be necessary?	<u> </u>
4. Cognitive Deficits	
a. The Proposed Ward is oriented to the follow	wing (check all that apply):
☐ Person ☐ Time ☐ Place ☐	Situation
	Page 1 of 4

b. The Proposed Ward has a deficit in the following areas (check all areas in which Proposed Ward has a deficit):
□ Short-term memory
□ Long-term memory
□ Immediate recall
☐ Understanding and communicating (verbally or otherwise)
☐ Recognizing familiar objects and persons
□ Solve problems
☐ Reasoning logically
□ Grasping abstract aspects of his or her situation
□ Interpreting idiomatic expressions or proverbs
□ Breaking down complex tasks down into simple steps and carrying them out
c. \square YES \square NO The Proposed Ward's periods of impairment from the deficits indicated above (if any) vary
substantially in frequency, severity, or duration.
5. Ability to Make Responsible Decisions
Is the Proposed Ward able to initiate and make responsible decisions concerning himself or herself regarding the
following:
☐ YES ☐ NO Make complex business, managerial, and financial decisions
☐ YES ☐ NO Manage a personal bank account
If "YES," should amount deposited in any such bank account be limited?
☐ YES ☐ NO Safely operate a motor vehicle
☐ YES ☐ NO Vote in a public election
☐ YES ☐ NO Make decisions regarding marriage
☐ YES ☐ NO Determine the Proposed Ward's own residence
☐ YES ☐ NO Administer own medications on a daily basis
☐ YES ☐ NO Attend to basic activities of daily living (ADLs) (e.g., bathing, grooming, dressing, walking,
toileting) without supports and services
-
☐ YES ☐ NO Attend to basic activities of daily living (ADLs) (e.g., bathing, grooming, dressing, walking,
toileting) with supports and services
☐ YES ☐ NO Attend to instrumental activities of daily living (e.g., shopping, cooking, traveling, cleaning)
☐ YES ☐ NO Consent to medical and dental treatment at this point going forward
☐ YES ☐ NO Consent to psychological and psychiatric treatment at this point going forward
6. <u>Developmental Disability</u>
☐ YES ☐ NO Does the Proposed Ward have developmental disability?
If "NO," skip to number 7 on page 4.
If "YES," answer the following question and look at the next page.
Is the disability a result of the following? (Check all that apply)
☐ YES ☐ NO Intellectual Disability?
☐ YES ☐ NO Autism?
☐ YES ☐ NO Static Encephalopathy?
☐ YES ☐ NO Cerebral Palsy?
☐ YES ☐ NO Down Syndrome?
☐ YES ☐ NO Other? Please explain
Please answer the questions in the box below only if both of the following are true:
(1) The basis of a proposed ward's alleged incapacity is intellectual disability.
and

If you are not making such a determination, please skip to number 7 on the next page.

(2) You are making a "Determination of Intellectual Disability" in accordance with rules of the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission governing examinations of that kind.

"D	ETERMINATION OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY"
An	nong other requirements, a Determination of Intellectual Disability must be based on an interview with the Proposed
W	ard and on a professional assessment that includes the following:
	1) a measure of the Proposed Ward's intellectual functioning;
	2) a determination of the Proposed Ward's adaptive behavior level; and
	3) evidence of origination during the Proposed Ward's developmental period.
Δς	a physician, you may use a previous assessment, social history, or relevant record from a school district, another
	ysician, a psychologist, a public agency, or a private agency if you determine that the previous assessment, social
	story, or record is valid.
	Check the appropriate statement below. If neither statement is true, skip to number 7 on the next page.
Τ.	
	·
	Human Services Commission governing Intellectual Disability examinations, and my written findings and
	recommendations include a determination of an intellectual disability.
	☐ I am updating or endorsing in writing a prior determination of an intellectual disability for the proposed ward
	made in accordance with rules of the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission by
	a physician or psychologist licensed in this state or certified by the Department of Aging and Disability Services
	to perform the examination.
2.	What is your assessment of the Proposed Ward's level of intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior?
	☐ Mild (IQ of 50-55 to approx. 70) ☐ Moderate (IQ of 35-40 to 50-55)
	☐ Severe (IQ of 20-25 to 35-40) ☐ Profound (IQ below 20-25)
3.	☐ Yes ☐ No Is there evidence that the intellectual disability originated during the Proposed Ward's
	developmental period?
	Note to attorneys: If the above box is filled out because a determination of intellectual disability has been made in accordance with rules of the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission governing examinations of that kind, a Court may
	grant a guardianship application if (1) the examination is made not earlier than 24 months before the date of the hearing or (2) a
	prior determination of an intellectual disability was updated or endorsed in writing not earlier than 24 months before the hearing
	date. If a physician's diagnosis of intellectual disability is <u>not</u> made in accordance with rules of the executive commissioner — and
	the above box is not filled out — the court may grant a guardianship application only if the Physician's Certificate of Medical
	Examination is based on an examination the physician performed within 120 days of the date the application for guardianship was
	filed. See Texas Estates Code § 1101.104(1).
7	Definition of Inconscitu
/.	<u>Definition of Incapacity</u> For purposes of this certificate of medical examination, the following definition of incapacity applies:
	An "Incapacitated Person" is an adult who, because of a physical or mental condition, is substantially unable to:
	(a) provide food, clothing, or shelter for himself or herself; (b) care for the person's own physical health; or (c)
	manage the person's own financial affairs. Texas Estates Code § 1002.017.
0	Evaluation of Conscitu
ð.	Evaluation of Capacity
	☐ YES ☐ NO Based upon my last examination and observations of the Proposed Ward, it is my opinion that the
	Proposed Ward is incapacitated according to the legal definition in section 1002.017 of the Texas
	Estates Code, set out in the box above.
	If you indicated that the Proposed Ward is incapacitated, indicate the level of incapacity:
	☐ Total The Proposed Ward is totally without capacity (1) to care for himself or herself and (2) to manage
	his or her property.
	☐ PartialThe Proposed Ward lacks the capacity to do some, but not all, of the tasks necessary to care for
	himself or herself or to manage his or her property.
	If you indicated the Proposed Ward's incapacity is partial, what specific powers or duties of the guardian should be
	limited if the Proposed Ward receives supports and services?

· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		aking in Section 5 (on page 2) and yet still believe
		naking in Section 5 (on page 2) and yet still believe
9. Ability to Attend Court Hearing		
☐ YES ☐ NO The Proposed Ward wou	ld he able to attend iii	nderstand, and narticinate in the hearing
		recommend that the Proposed Ward <u>not</u> appear at
<u> </u>	-	osed Ward affect the demeanor of the Proposed court proceeding?
10. What is the least restrictive placement	that you consider is	appropriate for the Proposed Ward:
☐ Nursing home level of care		
☐ Memory care unit		
□ Other		
-	aware of or other con	dditional information concerning the Proposed cerns about the Proposed Ward that are not
Physician's Signature		Date
Physician's Name Printed		License Number
	Page 4 of 4	Revised Sentember 2015

LESS RESTRICTIVE ALTERNATIVES TO GUARDIANSHIP

In addition to the policy statement contained in TEX. EST. CODE §1001.001 mandating the use of a less restrictive alternative, there is now a statutory definition of "Alternatives to Guardianship" TEX. EST. CODE §1002.0015, which offers a non-exclusive list of alternatives:

- 1. medical power of attorney (14 below);
- 2. durable power of attorney(18 below);
- 3. declaration for mental health treatment (46 below);
- 4. representative payee (37, 38 below);
- 5. joint bank accounts (convenience accounts) (19 below);
- 6. guardianship management trust(24 below);
- 7. special needs trust (26 below);
- 8. pre-need designation of guardian(45 below); and
- 9. person-centered decision-making (6 below).

The alternatives suggested herein are, in some instances, designed to provoke further thought. They are certainly not an exclusive list.

Closely allied to the concept of less restrictive alternatives is the idea of Supports and Services, addressed in Appendix D-1.

I. AVOIDING GUARDIANSHIP OF THE PERSON

1. Emergency Protective Order ("EPO") or Emergency Order for Protective Services ("EOP") TEX. HUM. RES. CODE § 48.208 - A procedure to remove a person lacking capacity to consent to medical services from a situation posing an immediate threat to life or physical safety. Adult Protective Services files a verified petition and an Attorney Ad Litem is appointed. On a finding of probable cause by the probate court of the threat and lack of capacity, the person is removed to treatment and examined within 72 hours. The removal may last no longer than 72 hours unless extended by the court for up to 30 days. An application for temporary and permanent guardianship usually follows.

2. Surrogate Decision -Making ("SDM") – TEX. HLTH. & SAF. CODE § 313.001-.007 – For **non-emergency** medical decisions to be made for incapacitated individuals who are either in a hospital or nursing home without the necessity of a guardianship.

Decision–Maker Priority: 1) the patient's spouse; 2) an adult child of the patient with the waiver and consent of all other qualified adult children of the patient to act as the sole decision-maker; 3) a majority of the patient's reasonably available adult children; 4) the patient's parents; or 5) the individual clearly identified to act for the patient by the patient before the patient became incapacitated, the patient's nearest living relative, or a member of the clergy.

Limitations on consent: Surrogate decision-maker cannot consent to: 1) voluntary inpatient mental health services; 2)

electro-convulsive treatment; 3) the appointment of another surrogate decision-maker; 4) emergency decisions; or 5) end-of-life decisions (extending or withdrawing life support).

SDM does not: 1) replace the authority of a guardian nor an agent under a medical power of attorney; 2) authorize treatment decisions for a minor unless the disabilities of minority have been judicially removed; 3) authorize patient transfers under Chapter 241 of the Health and Safety Code.

Withdrawal of Life Support: for provisions concerning withdrawal of life support where no Directive to Physicians has been executed, and in situations where there is no guardian, see TEX. HLTH. & SAF. CODE § 166.039.

3. Surrogate Decision Making for Intellectually Disabled (MR) - TEX. HLTH. & SAF. CODE § 597.041 – A more specialized form of surrogate decision-making, this statute allows SDM Committees to act for MR persons who reside in an intermediate care facility for the mentally retarded (ICF/MR) – Allows medical and non-medical decisions to be made by the committee.

4. Surrogate Decision Making for Minors When Parent Unavailable TEX. FAM. CODE § 32.001ff - consent to dental, medical, psychological, and surgical treatment of a child by persons authorized in statute.

5. Authorization Agreement for Non-Parent Relative — TEX. FAM. CODE Ch. 34 - A parent may authorize a grandparent, adult sibling or adult aunt or uncle to have decision-making authority for a minor child for: healthcare, insurance coverage, school enrollment, school activities, driver's education, employment and application for public benefits. This essentially authorizes the designee to do anything a guardian of the person could do.

The official form, promulgated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and identified as "Form 2638", can be accessed at: www.dfps.state.tx.us/documents/Child_Protection/2638.pdf

6. Supported Decision-Making Agreements - TEX. EST. CODE Ch. 1357 - Somewhat similar to a Power of Attorney, it is an agreement between 1) an adult with disabilities regarding his or her Activities of Daily Living ("ADLs"), but who is not incapacitated and 2) a "Supporter" who is willing to assist in: 1) understanding the options, responsibilities, and consequences of the life decisions, without actually making those decisions for the disabled adult and without impeding the adult's self-determination; 2) obtaining the relevant information necessary (health, financial, or educational - the adult may execute HIPAA or similar releases to facilitate the information gathering); 3) understanding the information gathered; and 4) communicating those decisions to the appropriate persons.

The "life decisions" could include decisions regarding obtaining food, clothing, and residence and cohabitation choices; the supports, services, and medical care to be received; financial management assistance; and workplace choices.

Such an agreement extends until terminated by either party or by the terms of the agreement or if the Department of Family and Protective Services validates findings of abuse, neglect, or exploitation by the Supporter against the adult or the Supporter is found criminally liable for such actions.

A permissive form is supplied in the statute. The agreement must be signed by both the disabled adult and the Supporter either in the presence of two or more subscribing witnesses (above age 14) or a notary public.

7. Emergency Medical Treatment Act - TEX. HLTH. & SAF. CODE § 773.008 - In certain limited circumstances involving emergency situations, consent to medical treatment does not have to be given, it is implied. Hospital emergency rooms could not function if consent had to be secured beforehand.

Emergency treatment of minors - Consent is also implied for the treatment of a minor who is suffering from what reasonably appears to be a life-threatening injury or illness (even if they can communicate) if the minor's parents, conservator, or guardian is not present. TEX. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 773.008(3).

8. Managing Conservatorships TEX. FAM. CODE Ch. 153 - Functional equivalent to Guardian of the Person Especially for families involved in a divorce context, a conservatorship may be used in place of a guardianship of the

conservatorship may be used in place of a guardianship of the person for a minor, but only when there is no issue of assets belonging to the minor children.

Check the small print - The divorce decree, if there is one, should be carefully examined regarding any management powers granted either spouse regarding property of the children. TEX. FAM. CODE §153.132 grants a parent appointed sole managing conservator essentially the full rights of a guardian of the person and in TEX. FAM. CODE §153.073, the right to manage the property of the child "to the extent that the estate has been created by the parent or the parent's family." The Family Code provides no monitoring mechanism for property management.

9. School Admission Procedures - TEX. EDUC. CODE \$25.001(d) - Under \$25.001(d) of the Education Code, a school district may adopt guidelines to allow admission of non-resident children to school without the need for a guardianship. You may want to find out who in the school district administration possesses this information before you need it.

10. School Admission Procedures (Grandparents) - TEX. EDUC. CODE § 25.001(b)(9) – A school district may adopt guidelines to allow admission of non-resident children to school if a grandparent of the child resides in the school district and the grandparent provides "a substantial amount"

of after-school care for the child. The local school board is to adopt guidelines to implement this provision. No cases yet as to how this might square with TEX. EDUC. CODE § 25.001(d) if there is a guardian, but the child wants to live with the grandparent.

11. Court-Ordered Mental Health Services - TEX. HLTH. & SAF. CODE §§ 462.001, 571.001, 574.001 – In the case of a chronically mentally ill person, a temporary involuntary commitment may well be preferable to a guardianship. A guardianship, with its attendant removal of functional rights, might well be much more restrictive once the patient/ward has become stabilized on medication. Commitment provisions for the chemically dependent, mentally retarded, persons with AIDS and tuberculosis are also available in limited circumstances.

12. Driving Issues: Katie's Law and the Re-Test Request -

Effective September, 1, 2007, Texas drivers aged 79 or older can no longer renew a driver's license by mail or electronic means, but must renew the license in person at an authorized license renewal station. In addition, drivers aged 85 and older will now have to renew every two years, rather than every six years. TEX. TRANSPORT. CODE § 521.2711

"Re-Test Request" A potential ward who refuses to stop driving may be reported to the DPS by a physician, a family member, or even a stranger, if the person's driving capability is impaired. Although physicians are somewhat reticent to report their patients because of the physician-patient privilege and HIPAA, it is possible for the applicant in a guardianship or the ad litem to request the court to make a request to the Department of Public Safety for the proposed ward to be retested under DPS regulations to determine the proposed ward's suitability to continue to drive.

A relatively new concept is the "Family Driving Agreement" a type of advance directive for driving decisions. The driver agrees in writing to designate someone to advise him or her when it is time to "give up the keys." For more information, see keepingussafe.org.

13. Mental Illness Diversion Programs (Criminal Courts)

Persons with mental health issues are often jailed for crimes over which they had little or no control.

In a mental illness diversion program, individuals with a documented mental health problem are treated as patients, not criminals.

In the program, individuals are placed on a strict, supervised probation with regular court check-in dates to document and receive progress updates. Psychiatrists and other professionals develop a mental health treatment program, customized to meet the specific needs of the participants.

Following completion of the program, the charges are dismissed and may be eligible for expunction.

II. ADVANCED MEDICAL DIRECTIVES

The Federal Patient Self-Determination Act 42 USCA § 1395cc(f) requires health care providers, to be eligible for Medicare and Medicaid payments, to supply patients with

information regarding Medical Powers of Attorney as well as Directives to Physicians. Patients are to be given information regarding their rights under Texas law to make decisions regarding medical care (including the right to accept or refuse treatment) and the right to formulate advance directives. TEX. HLTH. & SAF. CODE Ch. 166 consolidates the location of the law regarding the 1) the Medical Power of Attorney, 2) and the Directive to Physicians. and 3) the "Out of Hospital Do Not Resuscitate" form. The chapter also provides common definitions to be used among all three documents

14. Medical Power of Attorney - TEX. HLTH. & SAF. CODE § 166.151 The most commonly used tool to avoid guardianship, the Medical Power of Attorney (formerly the Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care) is a creature of statute and should be prepared and executed with close attention to the statutory scheme set out in the Health & Safety Code. Most prudent estate planners will include the Medical Power of Attorney along with a Will and Durable Power of Attorney in a basic estate plan.

The Medical Power of Attorney is not automatically revoked upon the appointment of a guardian. The court may choose to suspend or revoke the power of the agent or to leave the Medical Power of Attorney in place as a less restrictive alternative.

CAVEAT: Nursing homes and hospitals may be reluctant to accept Medical Powers of Attorney which are executed made close to the time they are needed, particularly if the patient's capacity is questionable.

15. Directive to Physicians and Family or Surrogates ("Living Will") – TEX. HLTH. & SAF. CODE § 166.031

The newly revised and renamed form also now requires a disclosure statement (much like in the medical power of attorney), a place to indicate a choice between two treatment options, and a place for designation of an agent. The Directive interrelates to the Medical Power of Attorney in that it instructs the principal not to designate an agent on the Directive if a Medical Power has been executed. The new Directive form is **permissive**.

Intractable Pain Treatment Act. - TEX. REV CIV. STATS Art. 4495c. This act, adopted in 1995, was the first state statute in the nation designed to protect doctors for prescribing morphine to terminal patients for pain management during end-stage treatments without fear of professional disciplinary action for addicting the patients. See www.medsch.wisc.edu/painpolicy. the website for the Pain & Policy Studies Group of the University of Wisconsin Medical School for additional information and discussion on pain management policy.

16. Out-of Hospital DNR ("EMT-DNR")- TEX. HLTH. & SAF. CODE § 166.081 – requires the ambulance personnel to let you die if that is your expressed wish. The tricky thing is having the right document or indicator available. This is one form that you cannot prepare. The forms are actually

printed by the Texas Department of Health. Only the officially printed forms (with red ink in the right places) will be honored by the EMTs. The Texas Department of Health has information on ordering the forms and necessary identifying bracelets at

http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/hcqs/ems/index.htm#EMSRESOURCES.

17. End-Stage Planning: The Patient's Intent, If Known

With or without legal assistance, a person may express his or her wishes and desires as to treatment decisions as disability or death approach. The oldest and most widespread of these is the "Five Wishes," a pamphlet developed in Florida and used in 33 states. It combines 1) surrogate decision making, 2) a medical power of attorney and 3) palliative care choices, many of which are sufficiently thought-provoking to promote some discussion on the topic with the one considering such choices.

CAVEAT: Because of the stringent witnessing requirements under the Advanced Medical Directives Act (TEX. HLTH. & SAF. CODE Ch. 166) and the mandatory nature of the form of the Texas Medical Power of Attorney, the universal *Five Wishes*TM pamphlet has not been implemented in Texas, however, Texas law does require that the patient's wishes, if known, are to be followed, (e.g.: TEX. HLTH. & SAF. CODE § 166.152(e)(1)). As a result, the Five Wishes may still function as a statement of the patient's intent. www.agingwithdignity.com

III. AVOIDING GUARDIANSHIP OF THE ESTATE

18. Durable Power of Attorney - TEX. EST. CODE § 751.001ff – provides for all acts done by the attorney in fact (agent) to have the same effect, inure to the benefit of, and bind the principal and the principal's successors in interest as if the principal were not disabled. The statutory form allows the grant of broad authority. **If** the Proposed Ward still has enough capacity to grant the power, this is virtually a "nobrainer".

Will the Bank accept it? If you have a client who is planning to use a durable power of attorney and you have some special provisions that have been requested, it is really a good idea to check with your client's banker, stockbroker and other people who are gatekeepers with respect to the client's assets. If they are not prepared to accept those special provisions, you probably want to go a different direction.

Other drawbacks – Because there are no real checks-and-balances on the attorney-in-fact, anecdotal evidence of fraud and abuse often comes "too little, too late" for effective relief. Amendments in 2001 impose a duty on the agent to inform and account to the principal of actions taken under the power and to maintain complete records of actions taken. TEX. EST. CODE § 751.101.

Patriot Act – **Know Your Customer** – A further complication hampering the use of Durable Powers of Attorney comes as a result of the "Know Your Customer" provisions of the "Patriot Act" (Public Law 107-56 – Oct. 26, 2001). Because the bank must aggressively verify identities,

if the attorney in fact presents the power of attorney in question after the incapacity of the principal, there will most likely be insurmountable problems.

19. Convenience Accounts - TEX. EST. CODE § 113.102

- allows a depositor to name a co-signer on his or her account without giving the co-signer ownership rights before or after the depositor's death.
- creates a straightforward agency relationship for a potential ward to allow a family member or friend to help them pay bills and handle other banking business.
- a Convenience Signer cannot pledge the assets of the account. TEX. EST. CODE § 113.251.

Convenience Signer On Other Accounts TEX. EST. CODE § 113.106 — Account owner may designate "Convenience Signers" on other types of multi-party accounts such as joint tenancy with right of survivorship, pay-on-death and trust accounts.

Beware of unintended consequences.

20. Sophisticated Tax Planning

This alternative is included by way of issue recognition, rather than as an attempted exposition. Non-tax-planners might consult their tax planning brethren if a situation presents itself where there is a potential to employ tax planning as a part of disability planning/guardianship avoidance.

21. Inter Vivos ("Living") Trusts - TEX. PROP. CODE §§ 111-115 — Like any tool in the toolbox, a revocable inter vivos trusts has its particular applications. It is an excellent and highly flexible tool when drafted by a knowledgeable, competent estate planning lawyer, working with a full understanding of the client's needs, objectives, and circumstances, and when coordinated with other appropriate estate planning tools and techniques. The trustee can be given much more freedom that a guardian would enjoy, especially in such areas as investments and distributions.

Scam Trusts - IRS - The See IRS Pamphlet 2193 for the attempts of the IRS to educate the public about trust scams. It gives consumers some simple ways to help decide if the trust they are contemplating is "too good to be true."

<u>Irrevocable Trusts</u> – To protect clients from themselves.

22. §142 Trusts - TEX. PROP. CODE § 142.005

In a suit in which a minor who has no legal guardian or an incapacitated person is represented by a next friend or an appointed Guardian Ad Litem, the court may, on application by the next friend or the Guardian Ad Litem and on a finding that the creation of a trust would be in the best interests of the minor or incapacitated person, order the clerk to deliver any funds accruing under the judgment to a trust company or a state or national bank with trust powers. TEX. PROP. CODE § 142.005.

Drawback: These trusts generally fail to provide for any accountability on the part of the trustee. A burgeoning number of fiduciary breach suits are being brought as a result.

Advance Planning: If the suit in question has not already

gone to judgment, consider instituting a guardianship proceeding and requesting that the suit be transferred into the probate court.

If you are not in a statutory probate court, ask for a Statutory Probate Judge to be appointed under TEX. GOVT CODE § 25.0022. The Statutory Probate Judge brings with him or her all of the jurisdiction of a statutory probate court, including the transfer power under TEX. EST. CODE § 1022.007. TEX. GOVT CODE § 25.0022(n).

Once you are in the probate court, a Guardianship Management Trust may be created without the necessity of also creating a guardianship. TEX. EST. CODE § 1301.051.

23. Testamentary Trusts

Testamentary trusts can be used to avoid a guardianship for the Testator's spouse, any family members with special needs and children and grandchildren of the Testator. When combined with traditional disability and tax planning, the potential for avoiding guardianship (and most of probate altogether) is great. As always, getting the client in to start the planning process is the hardest part.

- **24.** Guardianship Management Trusts TEX. EST. CODE § 1301.051 An effective property management tool while protecting the property from malfeasance.
- may be established whether a guardian is ultimately appointed or not.
- Applicants can include a guardian, an Attorney Ad Litem, a Guardian Ad Litem or a person interested in the welfare of the ward.

The ability to continue the administration of the trust until age 25 (TEX. EST. CODE § 1301.203) can be particularly advantageous to provide a few more years of professional money management during an extended "training wheels" period for the ward/beneficiary.

- Distribution to Pooled Trust Subaccount In light of the global economic downturn since 2008, the Guardianship Management Trust assets can be transferred to a subaccount of a Master Pooled Trust for more economic management of assets that might otherwise be too modest for a bank trust department. TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1302.001ff. See *infra*.
- **25. Pooled Trust Subaccounts** TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1302.001ff As an alternative to a Guardianship Management Trust, funds otherwise appropriate for a Management Trust to be transferred to a pooled trust, such as that operated by the Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC). It will preserve Medicaid qualification. It requires that an annual report be filed, but not a guardianship-style accounting. The trustee may assess its standard fees against the subaccount.

26. Special Needs/ Medicaid Qualification Trusts - 42 USC 1396p (1)(d)(4)(A)

Medicaid is a federal, means-tested program health program for eligible individuals and families with low incomes and resources. It is jointly funded by the state and federal governments, and is managed by the states. In Texas, an individual whose resources or income exceed certain limits cannot qualify for Medicaid benefits. However, certain resources, or assets, do not count for Medicaid eligibility purposes.

The enabling statute, "OBRA 93", allows the use of very specific trusts which may be established with an individual's own assets, but which will not count against the resource limit for that individual for Medicaid purposes.

Although there are three types of such trusts, it is the trust for disabled persons under age 65, authorized pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1396p(d)(4)(A) which typically involves the courts. These are most often called "Special Needs Trusts" or "Supplemental Needs Trusts."

Personal injury attorneys are only recently appreciating the utility of these trusts in preserving assets for the permanently disabled client who will remain institutionalized.

Be aware of the potential exposure for an Attorney Ad Litem in a P.I. case who fails to consider the appropriate use of the supplemental needs trust, resulting in a much smaller net benefit for the disabled client.

27. Trusts for Intellectually Disabled (MR) Persons TEX. HLTH. & SAF. CODE § 593.081 - Up to \$250,000 may be placed in a trust for the benefit of MR individuals in certain residential-care facilities without disqualifying them from receiving state benefits and without the need for a guardianship.

A copy of the trust must be provided to Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services.

DADS may request current financial statements.

Guardianship funds - Ch. 142 trusts, patient's trust fund's in a residential-care facility, child support, an interest in a decedent's estate, and funds in the registry of the court are not considered trusts and are not entitled to the exemption.

28. Community Administrator - TEX. EST. CODE § 1353.002 - Upon a declaration of incapacity of one spouse, the other spouse, in the capacity of "community administrator" (no the decedent's estates kind) has the power to manage, control and dispose of the entire community estate without the necessity of a guardianship upon a finding by the Probate Court that: 1) it is in the best interest of the ward for the capacitated spouse to mange the community property, and 2) the capacitated spouse would not be disqualified to be appointed as guardian of the estate under §1104.351ff.

An ad litem may be appointed, the administrator required to return an inventory and accountings and a guardian of the estate may retain management rights over some specified varieties of real and personal property. These matters are considered in the context of a guardianship application and are not freestanding applications.

TEX. FAM. CODE § 3.301ff (the corollary provision to TEX. EST. CODE § 1353.002) was drastically amended in 2001. It is no longer possible to have the capacitated spouse manage or sell the community property under the Family Code, absent highly unusual circumstances.

29. Court Registry - TEX. EST. CODE § 1355.001 - This

provision is often viewed as simply an administrative deposit mechanism and is often overlooked as an opportunity to avoid administration of a minor's or other incapacitated person's guardianship estate. Up to \$100,000 may be deposited into the court's registry during the period of incapacity. The clerk is to bring the matter to the judge's attention and the funds are to be ordered invested in an interest-bearing account.

"Mini-administration:" Certain specified persons are permitted to withdraw all or a portion of the funds in the registry under bond to be expended for the benefit of the incapacitated person. After an accounting to the court, the bond may be released. This provides a very simple alternative to guardianship, particularly in a rural county. Upon attaining majority, minors are able to withdraw the funds upon proof of age and an order of the court. TEX. EST. CODE § 1355.105.

CAVEAT: TEX. LOC. GOVT. CODE §§ 117.054 & 117.055 authorize the county clerk to charge investment management fees on funds in the court's registry: a) 10% of any interest earned on interest-bearing accounts and b) 5% (but not to exceed \$50.00) on non interest bearing accounts.

Where funds are interplead because of a settlement but no probate case is pending, make sure the order specifies that the funds are to be deposited in an interest-bearing account.

Institutionalized incapacitated individuals: TEX. EST. CODE § 1355.151ff allow funds being held for an incapacitated individual who is institutionalized by the State of Texas to be paid to the institution for a trust account for the benefit of the individual, up to a maximum of \$10,000.

30. Payment to Non-Resident Creditor TEX. EST. CODE § 1355.002 Permits money payable to a non-resident minor, a non-resident adult ward or a non-resident former ward of a terminated Texas guardianship ("non-resident creditor") to be paid either to the guardian of the non-resident creditor in the domiciliary jurisdiction or to the county clerk where the non-resident creditor owns property or in the county of the debtor's residence.

31. Sale of Minor's Interest in Property - TEX. EST. CODE § 1351.001- This relatively simple procedure allows the interest of a minor in realty to be sold and deposited into the court's registry if the minor's interest is less than \$100,000. The minor's interest needs to be cash only, so it sometimes is necessary to do a bit of structuring to "cash out" a minor's undivided interest.

The sworn application, which must contain the name of the minor and a legal description of the property, is filed and then is supposed to sit for five days. Citation is optional with the court. Most courts will want to see some indication of value beyond a contract and tax statement. Venue for this procedure is the same as for a guardianship. Court approval is subject to a 'best interest' test on behalf of the minor.

Upon approval by the court (check your local practice as to whether a hearing is actually required), the sale is closed and the proceeds deposited into the court's registry. The funds are available for withdrawal as described above.

If the minor is not a ward and does not have a parent or managing conservator willing or able to file the application, the court may appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to act on the minor's behalf for the limited purpose of applying for an order to sell the minor's interest in the property.

32. Sale of Adult Incapacitated Ward's Interest in Property - TEX. EST. CODE § 1351.051

Until this section was enacted, adult incapacitated individuals with meager personal property but with undivided interests in real property were often required to have somewhat meaningless guardianships of the estate. This provision allows adult incapacitated individuals to proceed with a guardian of the person only where their interest in real property is valued at less than \$100,000.

This provision is now also available for a ward of a guardian appointed by a foreign court.

33. Mortgage of Minor Interest/ Minor Ward's Interest in Property - TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1352.051, 1352.101

These provisions allow the parents, managing conservator or guardian of the person (as applicable), to obtain a home equity loan secured by the minor's interest in homestead property for the payment of education and medical expenses, for repairs to the homestead property, and for repayment of the loan.

A bond set in twice the amount of the loan amount is required, as well as a hearing on the front end and annual accountings while the loan is being paid off.

34. Uniform Transfers to Minors Act - TEX. PROP. CODE § 141.001 et. seq. - The ability of a donor to make transfers of various types of assets to a minor by the donor's appointment of a custodian has broad coverage and farreaching implications. The custodian has authority to invest and expend the transferred assets – without court order – for the support, education, maintenance and benefit of the minor.

Again, the lack of supervision may dictate against this as a vehicle of choice unless the custodian is sophisticated enough to really understand fiduciary responsibility.

35. Receivership TEX. EST. CODE § 1354.001, TEX. CIV. PRAC. & REM. CODE §§ 64.001ff, - Of particular interest is where the incapacitated person owns an interest in a going business or commercial property which is in danger of injury. The court may appoint a receiver, who is subject to the same compensation and bonding provisions under the Estates Code as a personal representative. The Receiver administers the property until the need for the receivership is over.

In 1999, the provisions for guardianship for missing persons were repealed. Receivers are now to be appointed for missing persons.

36. Order of No Administration TEX. EST. CODE §§ 451.001ff

If your object is simply to transfer title to estate assets to a disabled surviving spouse or minor children and your facts meet the criteria specified, this somewhat archaic procedure, sort of an amalgamation of a small estate affidavit and an application for family allowance, may be employed if there is otherwise no necessity for administration. The court may dispense with notice or may prescribe the quality and quantity of notice required. TEX. EST. CODE § 451.002.

The court's order reads like the "facilitation of payment" language in a muniment of title proceeding and acts as authority to effect the transfer of the property involved. TEX. EST. CODE § 451.003. Such an order may be "undone" within one year if other information comes to light showing a necessity for administration. TEX. EST. CODE § 451.004.

37. Representative Payee 42 USC § 1383(a)(2)

A Representative Payee may be appointed by the Social Security Administration to manage Social Security benefits without the appointment of a guardian. Potentially available to all of the 50 million individuals receiving some sort of Social Security benefits, close to 7 million people currently receive Social Security benefits under the representative payee program. This is approximately ten times greater than all active court-supervised guardianships in the United States.

38. Veteran's Benefits Fiduciary - 38 USC § 5502(a)(1) Very similar to the Social Security rep payee program, the Department of Veteran's Affairs allows the appointment of a person to handle the administration of veteran's pension benefits without the appointment of a guardian. www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Fiduciary/index.htm

- **39.** Payment of Employees Retirement System Funds to Parent of Minor Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. No. H-1214 a parent may receive and manage a minor child's Texas Employees Retirement System (ERS) benefits without guardianship. This opinion relies on two propositions:
- a parent has authority to manage the estate of a minor child without court appointment of a guardian. TEX. FAM. CODE § 151.001(a)(4).
- A parent may also receive, hold, and disburse funds for the minor's benefit. TEX. FAM. CODE § 151.001(a)(8).

40. International Treaty

There is at least one international treaty between Mexico and the united States that provides for judgments benefitting minors who are Mexican Nationals to be paid to the Mexican Government to as trustee. E-mail from Judge Guy Herman, April 12, 2002 to Texas Probate Listserve www.texasprobate.net

Similarly, Memoranda of Understanding are frequently executed between governmental agencies providing for international cooperation regarding minors in cross-border situations. See Memorandum of Understanding Between the Monterey County Department of Social and Employment Services, Family and Children Services and the Consulate General of México in San José, California Regarding Consular Involvement in Cases Involving Minors www.f2f.ca.gov/res/pdf/Monterey

MOUMexicanconsulate.pdf Accessed February 16, 2011 **41. Suit by Next Friend** - TEX. RULES CIV. PROC. 44

A minor without a legal guardian may sue by next friend. A next friend has the same rights concerning such suits as guardians have. These rights include seeing that the funds or other property recovered is placed in the court's registry, placed in a § 142 Trust under the Property Code or a Guardianship Management Trust under the Estates Code.

Under no circumstances should a non-parent next friend be allowed to seeks to manage the funds personally, as neither the Property Code nor the Rules of Civil Procedure provide for any oversight mechanism for next friend management of a minor's property.

CAVEAT: Next Friends are subject to the same restrictions as guardians re contingent fee agreements. *Massey v. Galvan* 822 S.W.2d 309 (Tex. App. – Houston – [14th District] 1992, wr. den.) In *Stern v. Wonzer* 846 S.W.2d 939 (Tex. App. – Houston – [1st District] 1993, no pet.).

CAVEAT #2: When a P.I. case settles and little or no thought is given to the allocation of the award between the survival cause of action and the wrongful death cause of action, some sticky tax issues and angry creditors (and probate judges) may have to be faced. *Texas Health Insurance Risk Pool v. Sigmundik*, 315 S.W.3d 12 (Tex. 2010); *Elliott v. Hollingshead*, 327 S.W.3d 824 (Tex. App. Eastland, 2010, no pet.).

42. Social Service Agencies - Many social services agencies provide a variety of services specifically tailored to the needs of children, the disabled and elderly. A quick check of the yellow page listings under "social service agencies," will reflect literally dozens of organizations existing to this purpose. Many will have a particular emphasis toward a target group: veterans, the elderly, intellectually disabled, etc.

Beyond the Order for Emergency Protection (*supra*) the ability of either Adult Protective Services or Child Protective Services to investigate a potential exploitation or neglect situation is vital.

43. Geriatric Care Manager

A Geriatric Care Manager (GCM) is a health and human services professional, such as a gerontologist, social worker, counselor, or nurse, with a specialized body of knowledge and experience on issues related to aging and elder care issues.

GCMs are able to coordinate and manage eldercare services, which often includes conducting an assessment to identify problems, eligibility for assistance and need for services; coordinating medical services, including physician contacts, home health services and other necessary medical services; screening, arranging and monitoring in-home help or other services; reviewing financial, legal, or medical issues and offering appropriate referrals to community resources; providing crisis intervention; ensuring everything is going well with an elder person and alerting families to problems; and assisting with moving an older person to or from a retirement complex, care home, or nursing home.

While California has developed a state registry of Geriatric Care Managers, Texas does not yet have any central registry. The National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers, the non-profit association of these professional practitioners, has promulgated a Pledge of Ethics and Standards of Practice. Their website has a locator database. www.caremanager.org

IV. LIMITING THE EFFECT OF THE GUARDIANSHIP

44. Pre-Need Designation of Guardian For Self – TEX. EST. CODE § 1104ff

An adult with capacity may, by written declaration designate those persons whom the declarant wishes to serve as guardian of the person or of the estate of the declarant in the event of later incapacity. The declaration may be in any form adequate to clearly indicate the declarant's intention to designate a guardian for the declarant's self in the event of the declarant's incapacity. The designation may be holographic, acknowledged before a notary or attested to by two witnesses, age 14 years of age or older and who are not designees to be guardian. In the case of attestation, a self-proving affidavit should be executed and attached.

A declaration that is not written wholly in the handwriting of the declarant may be signed by another person for the declarant under the direction of and in the presence of the declarant.

The court is required to follow the designations in the declaration, unless the court finds such designee to be disqualified or their appointment not to be in the ward's best interest.

A new form to allow simultaneous execution, attestation, and making the designation self-proving a is available Tex. Est. Code § 1104.205(a).

Pre-Need Disqualification - Perhaps more importantly, the declarant may also indicate those persons who are to be specifically <u>disqualified</u> from serving as guardian, either of the person or estate. Such a disqualification is binding on the court and is among the listed reasons for disqualification under TEX. EST. CODE § 1104.202.

Revocation/Nullification - The designation may be revoked by execution of another designation or by following the same formalities as revoking a will. Divorce will serve to nullify a designation of a former spouse.

45. Pre-Need Designation of Guardian by Parent - TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1104.103, 1104.151

Similarly, a parent may designate, either in by separate written declaration or in the parent's will, those persons (in preferential order) whom they desire to be guardian of the person and/or estate of their child or children. The designation may specify that the court waive bond as to a guardian of the person, but not as to a guardian of the estate. This designation may be for either minor children or for adult incapacitated children.

Like the designation for one's self, the designation for a child may be in any form adequate to clearly indicate the declarant's intention to designate a guardian for the declarant's child in the event of the declarant's death or incapacity.

Unlike the Pre-Need Designation for Self, the Pre-Need Designation of Guardian by Parent does not contain the provision to expressly disqualify others as guardian.

A new form to allow simultaneous execution, attestation, and making the designation self-proving a is available Tex. Est. Code § 1104.154(a).

46. Pre-Need Declaration for Mental Health Treatment - TEX. CIV. PRAC & REM. CODE § 137.007

A capacitated adult may, by written declaration, indicate his or her preferences or instructions for mental health treatment, including the right to refuse such treatment. Such a declaration is effective on execution and expires on the third anniversary of its execution or when revoked, whichever is earlier.

Witnesses - The declaration is to be witnessed by two qualified witnesses (similar to other advanced directives). Physicians or other health care provider are to follow such declaration, however, as long as the declarant is capable for giving informed consent, such informed consent is to be sought.

Does not apply – The declaration is ineffective if the declarant, at the time of making the designation, is under a temporary or extended commitment and treatment is authorized under the Mental Health Code or in the case of an emergency when the declarant's instructions have not been effective in reducing the severity of the behavior that has caused the emergency.

47. Safekeeping or "Freeze" Agreements - TEX. EST. CODE § 1105.155 - Where the personal representative deposits estate cash or other assets in a state or national bank, trust company, savings and loan association, or other domestic corporate depository, to be held under an agreement that the depository will not allow withdrawal or transfer of the principal of the assets and/or interest on the deposit except on written court order. (See example in Appendix Ad.) The amount of the bond of the personal representative may then be reduced in proportion to the cash or other assets placed in safekeeping.

48. Restoration of Ward - TEX. EST. CODE § 1202.051 - A Guardian Ad Litem must be appointed and everyone noticed similar to the original grant of guardianship.

49. Annual Determination - TEX. EST. CODE § 1201.052 - Each year, the probate judge is required to review each guardianship file created after September 1, 1993, and may review annually any other guardianship files to determine whether the guardianship should be continued, modified, or terminated. This provision appears fairly innocuous, but is in reality very powerful. It was recently used in a very large guardianship with massive pending litigation to restore the ward's capacity and terminate the guardianship. Because the standards for the court are somewhat of a blank slate (i.e. discretionary), especially in courts other than statutory probate courts, this provision could be employed in a number of creative ways. Even though the procedure and standards

for modification under § 1202.051 are fairly restrictive (see above), the annual determination under § 1201.052 contains no such procedural requirements.

50. Emancipation of Minor Ward - TEX. FAM. CODE § 31.01ff - Where a minor who is over 16, self-supporting (or married) and living apart from parents, a conservator or guardian may ask the court to legally remove the disabilities of minority for either limited or general purposes. The petition is decided on a "best interest" standard and the order is to specify whether the removal of disabilities is limited or general in scope and the purposes for which disabilities are removed.

51. Enumeration of Powers in Guardianship Order TEX. EST. CODE § 1101.151ff - If the guardianship is to be a plenary guardianship, it is perhaps best to simply reflect in the order that "The guardian is to be granted all power and authority allowed under Texas law and the rights of the ward are limited to the extent not inconsistent therewith." Otherwise, attempting to cover everything by an exhaustive listing may leave the guardian with specific deficits. Some attorneys feel that a listing of eight or ten powers is complete, while others can go on for pages.

However, if the ward is partially capacitated, a careful enumeration of those areas in which the ward's rights are not to be limited can have a great effect on the ward's functioning ability and self-esteem.

- **52.** Interstate Guardianships TEX. EST. CODE § 1253.001ff Where a guardianship exists in another state and the ward has been moved to this state, it can be advisable to allow a part of the guardianship to remain in the other state until affairs (pending litigation, etc) are resolved before all of the remnant is transferred.
- 53. Negligible Estate TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1204.001 When the ward's estate is exhausted or when the foreseeable income accruing to a ward or his estate is so negligible that maintaining the guardianship would be a burden, the court may authorize the income to be paid to a parent or other person acting as guardian, to assist as far as possible in the maintenance of the ward, and without any liability for future accountings as to the income.

54. Minor Ward's Estate <\$100,000 TEX. EST. CODE §§ 1204.001(d) & 1355.102 - Unlike the adult ward's estate, which is needed for the upkeep and maintenance of the ward, a minor ward's guardianship estate is less likely to be called upon for day-to-day living expenses. If the guardian of the estate is a parent of the ward, the court is usually going to want to see some proof that the guardian/parent cannot make the expenditures out of his/her own pocket rather than out of guardianship assets. The mindset here is more of asset preservation and maybe some college planning, assuming of course that the minor ward has no special needs to deplete the estate. If the estate cash falls below \$100,000 (up from \$50,000 in 2001), the guardianship of the estate may be

closed and the remaining funds paid into the court registry. Withdrawals are then possible under the procedure set out under TEX. EST. CODE § 1355.102 above.

55. Mediation and Family Settlement Agreements TEX. EST. CODE § 1055.151 - Rarely on a guardianship contest is issue of incapacity the real issue. Most often, decades of unresolved conflict among the family members of the proposed ward spark the contests. Perceived favoritism, sibling rivalry, jealousy of a stepparent or step-children or step-siblings, unresolved grief, etc. are all manifested in the guardianship arena.

While resolution of a guardianship contest might remove the procedural obstruction in granting a guardianship, it rarely resolves the family disputes and wounded relationships which led to the contest. Mediation can provide a level playing field for the family to resolve those issues behind the guardianship fight. The long-standing "burrs under the saddle" that so often give rise to fights in the probate arena can be aired and often resolved. TEX. EST. CODE § 1055.151 allows those settlements to be made irrevocable.

"A family settlement agreement is a favorite of the law." *Shepherd v Ledford*, 962 S.W.2d 28 (Tex. 1998).

56. Mother Nature and Father Time -

Spontaneous Remission - It is not unusual - once a person gets adequate nutrition/ hydration/ socialization / therapy/ medication for a few weeks or months - for many symptoms of delirium/ confusion/ diabetic conditions to clear up. In some instances, it is a question of employing successive alternatives in an effort to forestay the inevitable, whether a guardianship or death.

It is rarely in the best interest of a terminally-ill proposed ward to go through successive independent medical examinations and for extensive litigation to exhaust an already beleaguered estate, only to have the ward die the day after letters are granted.

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Supports and Services

Examples of Entities or Organization providing Supports or Services:

Adult Protective Services

Agency Guardianship Providers:

Family Eldercare

Friends for Life

Guardianship Services

Area Agency on Aging

Area food banks

Association of Retarded Citizens of Texas

DADS (Texas Department of Aging and Disability

Services)

Ombudsman programs

Mental Health Association

Mental Health Mental Retardation Centers

Network of Care ("Tarrant Cares")

Organizations/ Support groups regarding specific

diseases or conditions

Alzheimer's Association

Goodrich Center for the Deaf

Lighthouse for the Blind

Public Charities

United Way

Resource Connection

Religiously-Affiliated Charities

Buckner International

Catholic Charities

Lutheran Social Services

The Service Connection

Volunteers of America

Food, Clothing, or Shelter TEX. EST. CODE § 1002.031(1)

Adult Day Care

Adult Foster Care

Assisted Living Facilities / Apartment-Like Settings or

Private Residences

Case Management

Church Groups - Organized Provision of Food

Dietary Services/ Meals (Noon Meal and Snacks

Home Management: Housekeeping Activities to Support

Health & Safety

Cleaning

Laundry

Shopping

Other Household Tasks.

In-Home Attendant Services - Assistance in ADLs

Meals on Wheels

Residential Assistance

Respite Care

Physical or Mental Health; TEX. EST. CODE § 1002.031(2)

Adaptive Aids (Eye Glasses, Hearing Aids, Orthotics)

Behavioral Support Services

Rehabilitation Therapy (Cognitive, Occupational, Physical

Dental Treatment

Health-Related Tasks Prescribed by a Physician

Personal Care: Physical Health

Bathing

Dressing

Grooming

Hair & Skin Care

Feeding

Exercising

Self-Administered Meal Preparation Assistance

Medication

Toileting

Transferring/Ambulating

Medical Services

Audiology

Dental

Nursing

Physicians

Speech & Language Pathology

Medical Supplies/ Prescription Drug Assistance

Therapy

Occupational

Physical

Speech

Hearing

Language

Manage Financial Affairs TEX. EST. CODE § 1002.031(3)

Bill Paying Programs

Employment Assistance

Homebound School Instruction

Supported Employment

Utility Bill Assistance

Personal Decisions: Residence, Voting, Operating a Motor Vehicle, & Marriage TEX. EST. CODE § 1002.031(4)

Assisted Living (licensed up to six beds)

Benefits Counseling/Legal Assistance

Chore Provider

Court Visitor Programs

Day Care Services

Orientation & Mobility / Assisted Transportation & Escort

Mobility Impaired Transportation Services

Minor Home Modifications

Intervention/ Ombudsman Program

Social, Educational & Recreational Activities

Transition Assistance Services

Organized Friendly Visits

Investigator's Checklist

1. <u>Basic Identification</u>: - Get as complete a **name** as possible (court records, Government ID, SS Card, etc.)

<u>**Build a Dossier**</u>: - Gather any available documents: Birth Certificate, Social Security Number, School Records, Old Driver's License

- **2.** <u>Telephone Number:</u> Call and see who answers. Is the telephone number contained in the court records?
 - A. Check current phone listings for ward & guardian.
 - B. 411 operator for directory assistance
- C. Internet listings: www.peoplesmart.com (old addresses); www.anywho.com (people and businesses); infospace.com; peoplesearch.lycos.com; switchboard.com and www.yp.com (yellow pages); www.yp.com (address, phone and e-mail); people.yahoo.com/

3. Address

- A. Current telephone directory
- B. City directory or criss-cross directory
- 1. See how long subject was at that address (look back every 4 to 5 years until they are no longer listed, then come forward year by year until they appear again).
- 2. When subject disappears from listings, check the Death Certificate Index (see below) for the year <u>previous</u> to the last directory listing and succeeding years.
- 3. See if the neighbors listed in the old directories are currently listed in the telephone directory. They might have kept up with your subject. (Same with ex-in-laws.)

4. Government Records: A Potpourri

A. Municipal: Birth & death records (also county & state)/
court records, citations, tickets / medical examiner, autopsy records/
doctor's records/ funeral home records / police accident reports /
dog, cat, exotic animal licenses/ health dept. food handling records/
public library fortworthlibrary.org - "Online Databases," use your
library card for Heritage Quest Online to search U.S. Census
Records; local history dept.

<u>B. County:</u> **JP court**: (especially citations and returns)/ **Co.Clerk**: deed records (including heirship affidavits); birth and death records (unincorporated areas); marriage records, assumed name records; power of attorney filings; UCC filings; court registry records; voter registration records / ad valorem tax records/ appraisal district website / / **County Court**: (citations and returns, especially) / **County Court at Law & Probate Court** (ditto); **District Clerk**: civil and criminal court records (citations and returns); child support decrees (contain Social Security Numbers); **District Attorney's office**, District Attorney's Investigator

- C. School Districts: alumni associations and directories / school records / relatives / former neighbors/ classmates / school clubs
- D. State: Birth and death records http://vitals.rootsweb.com/tx/death/search.cgi 2. Abandoned property records Tex Comptroller of Public Accounts: http://window.state.tx.us/up/ 3. State-Licensed Occupational Agencies 4. State Associations (legal/medical/banker/pest control/ barber/etc.) 5. TX Sec of State: Corporate records/ Unincorp'd Assocs/ Notary Public records 6. Vehicle-related: Car/Boat/Trailer/ Airplane Registration / Auto Body Histories 7. Driver's License/Driving Record www.txdps.state.tx.us 8. Worker's Comp records 9. Concealed Handgun permits 10. TP&W/ Hunting licenses 11.Texas State Library: Confederate Pension Index: tsl.state.tx.us/arc/pensions/

E. Federal 1. Social Security Death ssdi.genealogy.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/ssdi.cgi; SSA Forwarding Letter www.ssa.gov/foia/html/ltrfwding.htm \$25.00 will get a letter forwarded to the last known employer; 2. Federal Court records, Bankruptcy records 3. Peace Corps 4. FAA: pilot's licenses/ medical records 5. ICC (truckers) 6. Passport applications 7. Civil Service records on govt personnel 8. USPO business address (physical address FOIA request - USPS Publication 549) 9. Military/Armed Services Child Support Locator / military records / active duty locator 10. VA locator service 11. National Archives www.nara.gov free help on Genealogy/ Indians/ land records/ naturalization records/ immigrant ship passenger lists/ Passport records/ Fed personnel records before 1940/ National Cemetery System 12. Fed Empl Child Support Enforcement (fed and state) IRS will assist) 13. Foreign Consular Offices

5. Private Records

A. Newspapers – Articles about the subject individual, Obituary Index card file, Obituaries (watch for several days after death date to pick up info on survivors)

- B. Salvation Army (\$10.00)
- C. Credit Bureaus: order a credit history
- D. Historical/Genealogical Societies.
- E. Service clubs/Fraternal Associations
- F. Funeral Homes/Cemeteries Who made the arrangements for Mama when she died?

6. The Web

- A. Social Networking Sites www.facebook.com; www.linkedin.com (for professionals); www.myspace.com; https://plus.google.com/ (brand new and growing fast); www.friendster.com (transitioning to gaming site); www.bebo.com; www.hi5.com (youth-oriented)
- B. Genealogy Sites: www.cyndislist.com (over 300,000 links); www.familysearch.org (Mormon database); Rootsweb (above); www.ancestry.com/
- C. Search Sites (may be a fee): The Last One Online Investigative Systems: www.tlo.com; www.courthousedirect.com; www.publicdata.com; www.kadima.com; www.peoplesearch.com; adoptees.adoption.com; www.unclaimedpersons.com (San Bernadino CA Coroner); www.genlookups.com/ (volunteers)
- 7. <u>Finding Aids</u>: Search firms: heirsearch.com; heirfinder.com; searchint.com; Accurint.com; Heritage Quest Online (public library); WorldConnectProject; findersusa.com; www.intl-research.com; www.joshbutler.com; <u>globaltracing.com/homecontent.htm</u>; <u>blakeandblake.com</u>; Board certified genealogists: <u>www.bcgcertification.org/</u>; <u>www.three-legged-willie.org</u>

Judge Steve M. King, Tarrant County Probate Court One *Rev 8/23/12*

Appendix F:	Waiver of Citation,	No		Request for	Notification
Guardianship of		§			te Court
	 ,	§ § §			er One
An Incapacitated Perso	on	§		Tarrai	nt County, Texas
	Consent to Ap	tion & Right to oplicant's Appor Request for Not	intment as Gu		
STATE OF TEXAS COUNTY OF		§ §			
 3. I am related to 4. I have read the 5. I hereby waive receive notice 6. Additionally, I appointment of 	Application for Appo Proposed Ward in that aforementioned Applithe service of citation from the Court or any waive my right to be af	intment of a Gua osed Ward, filed t I am his (her) _ ication for Appo in this matter ar party to this action appointed Guard	ardian of the Fall by intment of Gund, except as non of any furthian of Propose_as Guardian	Person (and Enardian. noted below, Inher proceeding ded Ward and of Proposed V	state) of do not wish to gs herein. I consent to the Ward."
arrangements a medical facility changes; or D) more than one 8. I wish to be no	I wish to be notified by and the location of the by for acute care for a potthe ward is staying at week. Itified: at the following telephore	ward's final rest eriod of three da a location other ring address	ing place; B) i ys or more; C than the ward	f the ward is) if the ward's 's residence for	admitted to a s residence or a period of
	the following telephore the following e-mail a				
	at it is my responsibility		uardian if my	contact infor	mation changes.
		.			
My name is		<u>Declarati</u>	<u>on</u>		
<u>-</u>	(First Name)	(Middle Na	me) ((Last Name)	·
My date of birth is	(Month)				
M	(Month)	(Day)	((Year)	
My address is	(Street & Apt #)	(City)	(State) (Zip Code)	(Country)
	nalty of perjury, that th				· •
Executed in	County, Sta	te of	, on the _	day of_	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
		Dec	larant		
		Prin	ted Name of I	Declarant	

Appendix G:	Affidavit Regarding Noti	ce Under § 10:	
Guardianship of		§ 8	Probate Court
	,	\$ \$ \$	Number One of
An Incapacitated Person		§ §	Tarrant County, Texas
AFFII	DAVIT REGARDING NO	TICE UNDEF	R SECTION 1051.104
BEFORE ME, the u after being duly sworn, declar		onally appeared	, who,
	d they are true and correct.		have personal knowledge of the material facts affidavit to comply with the requirements of
"I sent notice of this of the notice sent and proof			sted below. Attached to this affidavit is a copy
LIST OF PERSON	S TO WHOM NOTICE SE	ENT	
"Further, Affiant say	yeth not."		
		AFFIANT	
SUBSCRIBED AND SWO	RN TO BEFORE ME by		on
		Notary	

Appendix H: Affidavit of Inability to Pay Costs	No	
Guardianship of	\$ \$ \$ \$	Probate Court
,	§	Number One of
An Incapacitated Person	§ §	Tarrant County, Texas
Affidavit	of Inability to Pay	Costs
The person who signed this affidavit appeared, in	person, before me,	the undersigned notary, and stated under oath:
"My name is	My phoi	ne number is:
"My mailing address is" "I am above the age of eighteen (18) years, and I a	C 11	
am above the age of eighteen (18) years, and I a costs. The nature and amount of my income, resou		
costs. The nature and amount of my meome, resou	ices, debts, and ex	penses are described in this form.
"I receive these public benefits that are based on i	ndigency:	
□ SSI □ WIC		Food Stamps/SNAP
☐ TANF ☐ Medicaid		CHIP
□ AABD □ Public Housing □ Emergency Assistance □ Community Car □ Needs-Based VA Pension □ County Assistan	L DADS oire or	Low-Income Energy Assistance
Needs-Based VA Pension	e via DADS 💢 🗀	LIS III Medicare Extra Help Pare or General Assistance (GA)
☐ Child Care Assistance under Child Care and Develo	pmental Block Gran	t
☐ (other):	ch proof and label it	"Exhibit: Proof of Public Benefits"
My income sources are stated below: ☐ Unemployed since:(date)		
()r		
□ Wages: I work as a	for	
Job Title)	E	mployer
☐ Child/Spousal Support ☐ My Spouse's income or i		
☐ Tips, bonuses ☐ Military Housing ☐	☐ Worker's Comp ☐ Detinance t/Densis	☐ Disability
☐ Unemployment ☐ Social Security ☐ 2^{nd} job or other income:	(describe)	on \square Dividends, interest, royalties
2 Job of other meome.	(describe)	
"My income amounts are stated below:		
(A) My monthly gross income before deductions a		\$
(B) The amount I receive each month in public ber		\$
(C) The amount of income from other people in m	y household is:	\$
(If they contribute to your household income) (D) The amount I receive from other sources is:		\$
(E) My TOTAL monthly income:		= \$
()		·
About my dependents:		
"The people who depend on me financially are listed be		D.I.C. I. C.M.
Name	Age	Relationship to Me
1		
2. 3.		
4		
5		

"My property includes:	Value*	My monthly expenses are:	
Cash	\$	Rent/house payments and maintenance	\$
Bank Accounts, other financial assets		Food and household supplies	\$
	\$	Utilities and telephone	\$
	\$	Clothing and laundry	\$
	\$	Medical and dental expenses	\$
Vehicles (cars, boats) (make & year)		Insurance (life, health, auto, etc.)	\$
	\$	School and child care	\$
		Transportation, auto repair, gas	\$
	\$	Child/spousal support	\$
Real estate (house and land) (Address or de	scription)	Wages withheld by court order	\$
	\$	Debt payments to: (list)	\$
	\$		_ \$
Other property (jewelry, stocks, etc.)			¢.
	\$		_ \$
Total value of property	\$	Total Monthly Expenses	_ \$
Total value of property * The value is the amount the item would sell for le	= \$	Total Monthly Expenses	= \$
"I am unable to pay court costs. I verify the ☐ Check here if add another page of proof. Do not sign until you are in front of a notary		e in this affidavit are true and correct."	
Signature of Person Signing Affidavit		D.//-	
Signature of Person Signing Affidavit		Date	
State of Texas			
County of			
Sworn to and subscribed before me, the	undersigned no	otary, on this date/ at _	:m. by
(Name of Person Signing Affidavit)	·		
		Notes 2- Constant	_
		Notary's Signature	

Appendix I:	Application for Tempora	ry Guardiansh	nip and Fiat for Hearing
		No.	
Guardianship of		8	Probate Court
у или изильта		\$ \$	
		\$	Number One of
	,	§	
An Incapacitated Po	erson	 	Tarrant County, Texas
	Application for App	ointment of Te	mporary Guardian
incapacitated persor			pointment of a temporary guardian of the alleged cation, would show the court as follows:
1. PROPOSE	D INCAPACITATED PERSON	_	("Proposed Ward") is an adult female
who resides at	. P	roposed Ward's	("Proposed Ward") is an adult female s date of birth is Proposed Ward is
an incapacitated per	rson as defined by Texas Estates &	§ 1002.017 and	may be served with notice of this proceeding at the
above-stated address		,	
		lieves that a tem	porary guardian are necessary for the protection and
			ntity be appointed temporary guardian to handle the
	ial affairs of the Proposed Ward.	Р	,
	_	Ward is an inc	apacitated person as evidenced by the statement of
			"A". Proposed Ward's memory and judgment are
			sed. Applicant believes that the appointment of a
			promote and protect the Proposed Ward's well-being
	aging the Proposed Ward's estate		and the second of the second o
			xists should a Temporary Guardian not be appointed.
(814114 1141141115)			
·			
* *	1 3 0		e safety of the Proposed Ward and secure her assets.
	nds that the Court appoint suitable		
			anship and available supports and services to avoid
	<u> </u>		supports and services are available to the Proposed
	e to avoid the need for a tempora		
			le person or entity be appointed Temporary Guardian
			Guardian with powers over the Estate of Proposed
	n managing her estate and person		
6. <u>EXISTING</u>	POWERS OF ATTORNEY O	<u>R GUARDIAN</u>	ISHIPS. An application for the appointment of a
permanent guardian	is on file herein, as well as a conte	est thereto. Proj	posed Ward has executed powers of attorney in favor
of	_, which are attached to Applicant	's application fo	or permanent guardianship, but should be suspended
upon the appointme	nt of a temporary guardian.		
7. <u>CARE AN</u>	D CUSTODY OF THE WARD	. The Propose	d Ward is currently under the care and custody of
8. Proposed W	 Vard has the following relatives w	vho are entitled	to be appointed guardian:
NAME	<u> </u>		
ADDR			
	ΓΙΟΝSHIP:		
	t as Necessary)		
(IXCPCa	i as i tecessaiy		

However, due to the past behavior of the Proposed Ward's family members, Applicant does not believe it would be in her best interest for any family members to be appointed. Due to the contest herein, Applicant recommends that a third party be appointed as temporary guardian.

- 9. VENUE. This Court has venue of this proceeding because Proposed Ward resides in this county.
- 10. <u>DUTIES AND POWERS OF GUARDIAN</u>. Applicant requests that the Temporary Guardian with powers over the Estate of the Proposed Ward be granted the following powers: (*List only as applicable*)
 - A. To possess and manage the properties of the Proposed Ward, including all bank accounts, securities accounts, annuities, and other investments of the Proposed Ward, and to have possession and management of the Proposed Ward's home, Proposed Ward's personal possessions, and any other property owned by the Proposed Ward. To have total access to all records and past transactions of Proposed Ward and her attorney-in-fact with respect to such properties.
 - B. To take possession of the Proposed Ward's cash on hand or on deposit, the Proposed Ward's stocks, bonds or other securities, and the Proposed Ward's accounts at financial institutions or at stock or brokerage firms and to open new accounts and to be the authorized signatory on such accounts.
 - C. To collect debts, rentals, wages or other claims due the Proposed Ward.
 - D. To pay, compromise, or defend claims against the Proposed Ward, subject to court approval.
 - E. To represent the Proposed Ward in any legal action, subject to court approval.
 - F. To contract and to incur other obligations on the Proposed Ward's behalf and to renew and extend any obligations, subject to court approval.
 - G. To collect and give receipt for any monies, rents, dividends, interest, trust proceeds, and any and all other types of income payable to or receivable by the Proposed Ward.
 - H. To apply for and to receive funds from governmental sources for the Proposed Ward, including: Social Security, Medicare, Supplemental Security Income Benefits (SSI), HUD Section 8 Rent Subsidies, Childhood Disability Benefits under the Old-Age Survivors and Disability, Insurance Program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and Veteran's benefits.
 - I. To apply for and to consent to governmental services on the Proposed Ward's behalf including: Vocational Rehabilitation Programs, Medicaid Services, Food Stamps, Veteran's benefits.
 - J. To apply for and to secure insurance on the Proposed Ward's behalf for the Proposed Ward's property and the Proposed Ward's person.
 - K. To file a federal income tax return on the Proposed Ward's behalf and to pay federal, state and local taxes of the Proposed Ward.
 - L. To review, to take possession of and to consent to the disclosure of the Proposed Ward's legal, financial or other confidential books, documents or other records, including the power to enter into the Proposed Ward's safe deposit box
 - M. To meet the Proposed Ward's housing needs by renting real property for the Proposed Ward's residence.
 - N. To employ and to discharge from employment attorneys, accountants, appraisers and other persons necessary in the administration of the estate of the Proposed Ward.
 - O. To employ and to discharge from employment nurses, sitters, caregivers, tutors, therapists and other persons engaged to assist the Proposed Ward.
 - P. To do such other and further acts concerning the property and interests of the ward and the Proposed Ward's estate as the Court may from time to time direct by express authorization through written order of the Court.

Applicant requests that the Temporary Guardian with powers over the Person of the Proposed Ward be granted the following specific powers and duties:

- A. To review, to take possession of and to consent to the disclosure of the Proposed Ward's medical or dental records.
- B. To apply for, arrange for, and consent to any and all psychological, psychiatric or medical examinations, tests or evaluations for the Proposed Ward.
- C. To consent to or object to medical and dental treatment for the ward, including surgery, but not the power or authority to consent to a sterilization or abortion for the Proposed Ward.
- D. To apply for, to consent to, and to enroll the Proposed Ward in non-residential aging or Alzheimer's programs and services which are reasonably required and needed by the ward and which are operated by public and private agencies and facilities.
- E. The duty to live with the Proposed Ward or, alternatively, the power and authority to make application for, to consent to, and to enroll the Proposed Ward in private and public residential care facilities.
- F. To make application for, to consent to, and to place the Proposed Ward in private and public 24 hour care facilities or nursing home facilities.
- G. To apply for and to secure an identification card, social security card or other identification documents for the

	Proposed Ward.				
H.	To apply for, to consent to, and to enroll the Proposed Ward in appropriate educational, vocational, and				
	recreational services.				
I.	To have possession and control of the Proposed Ward and to deny anyone access to the Proposed Ward if such is				
	in the best interest of Proposed Ward, and including the power and authority to obtain the services of the				
	County Sheriff's Department, a Constable, a municipal Police Department or any peace officer,				
	and/or Ambulance Service or other similar ambulance service, to forcibly, if necessary, remove				
	Proposed Ward from Proposed Ward's place of residence or wherever Proposed Ward may be found, restrain,				
	and transport Proposed Ward to a private home, group home, hospital, residential care facility, nursing home or				
T	such other place as the Temporary Guardian directs, with or without Ward's consent				
J.	To do such other and further acts concerning the Proposed Ward as the Court may from time to time direct by				
V	express authorization through written order of the Court.				
K.	For such other and further powers which the Court may deem necessary for the Protection of the Proposed Ward.				
	PROPERTY OF PROPOSED WARD. The Proposed Ward receives the following monthly compensation and				
ıncome	per month for Proposed Ward's estate consists of real property, cash, and uivalents in excess of \$ Applicant knows of no other assets of the Proposed Ward.				
cash eq	uivalents in excess of \$ Applicant knows of no other assets of the Proposed Ward.				
	e Ward and Temporary Guardian with powers over the Estate of Proposed Ward with the powers and duties set erein; and that Applicant have such other and further relief to which she may be entitled. Respectfully submitted, State Bar No				
	Address Block				
	GUARDIAN AD LITEM				
STATE	E OF TEXAS §				
COUN	TY OF TARRANT §				
	, being first duly sworn, upon her oath, deposes and says that: "I am the Applicant in the entitled and numbered cause. I have read and examined the foregoing Application for Appointment of Temporary an which is to be filed in this cause and all the allegations contained therein are true and correct."				
	SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME by				
	on this day of				
	Notary Public, State of Texas				

INSERT CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

	No	
Guardianship of	§	Probate Court
,	§ §	Number One of
An Incapacitated Person	§ §	Tarrant County, Texas
Order Setting He	earing on Application for Temp (Fiat)	oorary Guardianship
A hearing on the Motion for Appoints Attorney Ad Litem for Proposed Ward, is 20 at o'clock m.		
Signed on this		
	JUDO	GE PRESIDING

Appendix J:	No			
Guardianship of	§	Probate Court		
	, , , 	Number of		
An Incapacitated Person	n §	County, Texas		
	Order Appointing Temporary	y Guardian		
On this date, the Court heard and considered the Application for Appointment of Temporary Guardian filed in this cause. The Court, having heard the evidence and arguments of counsel makes the following findings and orders:				
court; 2. There is substantial 3. There exists an immand that the Propos 4. There is an immedi 5. Alternatives to guar considered and dete 6. Supports and service guardian have been 7. The Proposed Ward 8. All prerequisites of 9. It would be in the Proposed Ward; an	evidence that is an incaparation in the physical health or safe ed Ward's estate will be seriously damaged ate need for the appointment of a temporary radianship that would avoid the need for the ermined not to be feasible; sees available to the Proposed Ward that would a considered and determined not to be feasible that been personally served with notice of a law have been met; best interest of the Proposed Ward that a definition of the proposed ward that a definition in the proposed ward that a definition in the proposed ward that a definition is an incaparation in the proposed ward that would be proposed ward that a definition is an incaparation in the proposed ward that a definition is an incaparation in the proposed ward that a definition is an incaparation and incaparation is an incaparation and incaparation is an incaparation and incaparation is an incaparation in the proposed ward that would be proposed ward that a definition is an incaparation in the proposed ward that a definition is an incaparation in the proposed ward that a definition is an incaparation in the proposed ward that a definition is an incaparation in the proposed ward that a definition is an incaparation in the proposed ward that a definition is an incaparation in the proposed ward that a definition is an incaparation in the proposed ward that would be proposed ward tha	ty of the Proposed Ward will be seriously impaired or dissipated unless immediate action is taken; y guardian; appointment of a Temporary Guardian have been d avoid the need for the appointment of a temporary		
 The Court further finds by substantial evidence: 11. There is an imminent danger and likelihood the Proposed Ward will resist by force any attempt to remove him from wherever he may be found. 12. It will be necessary in order to give effect to the powers and authority of the Temporary Guardian and that it would be in the best interest of the Proposed Ward, and for the protection of the Proposed Ward and others, that the Tarrant County Sheriffs Department, any other peace officer, and/or MedStar Ambulance Service be ordered to remove the Proposed Ward from wherever he may be found and transport the Proposed Ward to such place as the Temporary Guardian directs. IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that is appointed Temporary Guardian of for a period of sixty (60) days from the date of this 				
appointment. IT IS FURTHER Companies and many bonds, securities ach be the authorized single Proposed Ward's pertake reasonable me	PRDERED that Temporary Guardian shall hage the properties of the Proposed Ward, in counts, annuities, and other investments of the gnatory on such accounts; to have possessions are properties or per asures to safeguard the same pending the appropriate to the same pending the appropriate to the same pending the approximation.	ave the following specific powers over the estate: ncluding all cash on hand, bank accounts, stocks, he Proposed Ward and to open new accounts and to n and management of the Proposed Ward's home, sonal property owned by the Proposed Ward and to pointment of a permanent guardian; and to have ard and his attorney-in-fact with respect to such		

- 2. To collect debts, rentals, wages or other claims due the Proposed Ward;
- 3. To pay, compromise, or defend claims against the Proposed Ward, subject to court approval;
- 4. To represent the Proposed Ward in any legal action, subject to court approval;

- 5. To contract and to incur other obligations on the Proposed Ward's behalf and to renew and extend any obligations, subject to court approval;
- 6. To collect and give receipt for any monies, rents, dividends, interest, trust proceeds, and any and all other types of income payable to or receivable by the Proposed Ward;
- 7. To apply for and to receive funds from governmental sources for the Proposed Ward, including: Social Security, Medicare, Supplemental Security Income Benefits (SSI), HUD Section 8 Rent Subsidies, Childhood Disability Benefits under the Old-Age Survivors and Disability Insurance Program Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Veteran's benefits, and Federal Pension received from the Office of Personnel Management;
- 8. To apply for and to consent to governmental services on the Proposed Ward's behalf including: Vocational Rehabilitation Programs, Medicaid Services, Food Stamps, and Veteran's benefits;
- 9. To apply for and to secure insurance on the Proposed Ward's behalf for the Proposed Ward's property and the Proposed Ward's person;
- 10. To file a federal income tax return on the Proposed Ward's behalf and to pay federal, state and local taxes of the Proposed Ward;
- 11. To review, to lake possession of and to consent to the disclosure of the Proposed Ward's legal, financial or other confidential books, documents or other records/including the power to enter into the Proposed Ward's safe deposit box:
- 12. To meet the Proposed Ward's housing needs by renting real property for the Proposed Ward's residence;
- 13. To employ and to discharge from employment attorneys, accountants, appraisers and other persons necessary in the administration of the estate of the Proposed Ward;
- 14. To employ and to discharge from employment nurses, sitters, caregivers, tutors, therapists and other persons engaged to assist the Proposed Ward; and
- 15. To do such other and further acts concerning the property and interests of the ward and the Proposed Ward's estate as the Court may from time to time direct by express authorization through written order of the Court.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Temporary Guardian shall have the following specific powers over the person:

- 1. The power and authority to take charge and control of the person of the Ward, including having physical possession of the Ward, and to establish Ward's legal domicile and place of residence, and including the power and authority to obtain the services of the ______ County Sheriff's Department, a Constable, a municipal Police Department or any peace officer, and/or _____ Ambulance Service or other similar ambulance service, to forcibly, if necessary, remove Ward from Ward's place of residence or wherever Ward may be found, restrain, and transport Ward to a private home, group home, hospital, residential care facility, nursing home or such other place as the Guardian of the Person directs, with or without Ward's consent;
- 2. To review, to take possession of and to consent to the disclosure of the Proposed Ward's medical, psychological and intellectual testing records pursuant to 45 CFR 164.512(e)(1)(i), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act;
- 3. To apply for, arrange for, and consent to any and all psychological, psychiatric or medical examinations, tests or evaluations for the Proposed Ward, but not the power or authority to consent to a voluntary placement in a mental health facility.
- 4. To consent to or object to medical and dental treatment for the Proposed Ward, including surgery, but not the power or authority to consent to a sterilization or abortion for the Proposed Ward;
- 5. To apply for, to consent to, and to enroll the Proposed Ward in nonresidential aging or Alzheimer's programs and services which are reasonably required and needed by the Proposed Ward and which are operated by public and private agencies and facilities;
- 6. The duty to live with the Proposed Ward or, alternatively, the power and authority to make application for, to consent to, and to enroll the Proposed Ward in private and public residential care facilities;
- 7. To make application for, to consent to, and to place the Proposed Ward in private and public 24 hour care facilities or nursing home facilities;
- 8. To apply for and to secure an identification card, social security card or other identification documents for the Proposed Ward;
- 9. To have possession and control of the Proposed Ward and to deny anyone access to the Proposed Ward if such is in the best interest of Proposed Ward; and
- 10. To do such other and further acts concerning the Proposed Ward as the Court may from time to time direct by express authorization through written order of the Court.

"Notice to any peace officer of the State of Texas: you may use reasonable efforts to enforce the right of a guardian of the person of a ward to have physical possession of the ward or to establish the ward's legal domicile as specified in this order. A peace officer who relies on the terms of a court order and the officer's agency are entitled to the applicable immunity against any civil or other claim regarding the officer's good faith acts performed in the scope of the officer's duties in enforcing the terms of this order that relate to the above-mentioned rights of the court-appointed guardian of the person of the ward. Any person who knowingly presents for enforcement an order that is invalid or no longer in effect commits an offense that may be punishable by confinement in jail for as long as two years and a fine of as much as \$10,000."

Revised June 21, 2013

Appendix K: No		
Guardianship of	§ 8	Probate Court
	\$ \$ \$ \$	Number One of
An Incapacitated Person	§	Tarrant County, Texas
	Application for the Appointme of a Guardian of the Person (And Fursuant To § 1102.001, Texas Estat	Estate)
TO THE HONORABLE JUDGE OF	SAID COURT:	
		Ad Litem, and pursuant to §683 of the able person to serve as Guardian of the ad, in support thereof, represents to the
(fe)male whose date of birth is	, and whose Driver's Licens a § 1002.017, Texas Estates Co where (s)he can be served. Fedress is mail, return receipt requested. Applicant requests that the Court of Proposed Ward. The names, ad my, are listed immediately below: attionship to Proposed Ward Addre	a year old, (race), adult/minor se number is (S)he is an ode. Proposed Ward is located at Proposed Ward is in the care and custody and to whom Applicant has mailed a appoint a suitable person to serve as Idresses and telephone numbers of the less Telephone number
Applicant recommends that	, Proposed Guardi	an, as a suitable person to be appointed Proposed Ward, address and telephone
3. NATURE OF THE INCAPA the Motion to Appoint Guardian Ad L this Application and is based upon an ethis Application was filed. A developing diagnosis of incapacity. (If a development the physician's diagnosis, then Deterring uidelines, must be attached to the Physician's diagnosis.)	citem filed previously in this cause, examination the physician performe opmental disability is (not) the base mental disability such as intellectual mination of Intellectual Disability, hysician's Certificate.).	of Dr is attached to is dated within 120 days of the filing of ed not earlier than 120 days from the date sis, at least in part, of the physician's all disability or autism forms the basis for conducted in accordance with MHMR
avoid guardianship were considered. No Proposed Ward or are feasible to avoid 5. SPECIFIC AREAS OF PROPOSED Guardian be granted the full	No alternatives to guardianship or suid the need for a guardianship; OTECTION AND ASSISTANCE powers allowed under the Texas Estimates	and available supports and services to upports and services are available to the E REQUESTED. Applicant requests states Code. (If a Limited Guardianship those specific powers or duties of the
	** *	e supports and services and those that

7

6. <u>LIMITATION OF RIGHTS REQUESTED</u>. Applicant requests the rights of Proposed Ward be fully limited. In addition, the Applicant herein seeks to take away the right of the Proposed Ward to vote in a public election, to hold or obtain a license to operate a motor vehicle and to make personal decisions regarding residence; (If a Limited Guardianship is sought, limit only those rights which are appropriate. If the Proposed Ward's right to drive is being removed, provide the Proposed Ward's Driver's License number to the Court Investigator

should be limited if the Proposed Ward does receive supports and services.

and provide the redacted number here.)

7. <u>ESTATE</u> . Proposed War	d owns the following real and p	personal property:
Property	%Interest Owned	\$Value
-	following income each month:	A 1 T
Income Source	\$Monthly Income	\$Annual Income
		security benefits are the sole source of revenue,
	• •	epresentative payee or fiduciary for Veteran's
benefits, set forth the name and a	*	
		guardianship to be not less than one year. To the
		Proposed Ward in this or any other state. (If the
		ervatorship proceedings within a 2-year period
<u> </u>	0 1 1 0	enabling the Ward to establish residency for
		not otherwise eligible for enrollment".) To the
		ver of Attorney signed by Proposed Ward. (If a the type of POA and the date on which it was
		d was located (resided/had his principal estate)
here at the time this Application v	-	d was located (resided/liad lits principal estate)
* *		e to the conclusion that a guardianship was
		of include a request for attorney's fees with this
		plication which is presented to the Court at the
hearing.)		produced which is presented to the court of the
	-	ve as Guardian of the Person (and Estate) of ein and for such further relief as the Court may Respectfully submitted,
		Applicant and Guardian Ad Litem
CTATE OF TEVAC	e	(Attorney Information)
STATE OF TEXAS	§ §	
COUNTY OF TARRANT	8	
	Applicant and Guardian Ad I	item, first being duly sworn, upon his (her)
oath, deposes and says:	, rippirount und Guardian rid E	mem, mor deing dary dworn, apon mo (ner)
"My name is	and I am the An	plicant and Court-appointed Guardian Ad
	Land numbered cause. I have re	ead and examined the foregoing Application
		this cause and all allegations contained
therein are true and corre	ect to the best of my knowledge.	,, .
	, ,	
		A 1: //G 1: A 1 T :
		Applicant/Guardian Ad Litem
SWORN TO AND SUB	SCRIBED BEFORE ME on	Applicant/Guardian Ad Litem

Appendix L:		No	_
Guardianship of		§ 8	Probate Court
:	,	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$	Number One of
An Incapacitated Person		§ §	Tarrant County, Texas
	Original	Answer of Propo	osed Ward
TO THE HONORABLE JU	DGE OF THIS CO	URT:	
Texas, having been appointed	ed by this Court as A is his Original Answ	ttorney Ad Liten	, a practicing attorney in Tarrant County, n pursuant to § 1054.001 of the Texas Estates ion for Guardianship of the Person/and Estate
•	•		requests that the Court require the Applicant to vidence as required by the laws of the State of
2. Proposed Ward authorized by the Texas Rul			wer further in this proceeding in the manner
WHEREFORE, PRocests be adjudged against the			Vard prays that the Applicant take nothing, that shout day.
Dated:			
			Respectfully submitted,
			[Attorney Information]
			Attorney Ad Litem for Proposed Ward
	Cert	tificate of Servic	e
I hereby certify that a true are counsel by certified mail and			ument was served upon the following
	Name:	-	
	Address: CMRRR #: Fax #:		
	(R	epeat as Necessa	ury)
			[Attorney Name]

Appendix M:		No	_	
Guardianship of		§ 8	Proba	ite Court
,		\$ \$ \$ \$	Numb	per One of
An Incapacitated Person		§ §	Tarra	nt County, Texas
	Original	Answer of Propo (Contest)	sed Ward	
TO THE HONORABLE JUD	GE OF THIS CO	URT:		
Proposed Ward, proposed application for appointment of following:				es this Original Answer to the etfully shows the Court the
proof thereof by clear and con 2. P.W. would show that s she has the ability to care for he companion. P.W. is able to m 3. P.W. would further sho 4. P.W. would further sho of a guardian to act on her bel 5. P.W. hereby objects to , and specifically	vincing evidence as the is not an "incaperself and to manage the her day to day to we that it is not in her that she has the analf. the certificate of my objects to his fin	as required by the pacitated person" up the pacitated person" up the person of the property. Purple of the person of the property of the person of the perso	laws of the State of Teander § 1002.017 of the W. currently resides wide for her person and rethe court to appoint a ter own rights and does ion of Dr.	e Texas Estates Code in that rith G. Golow, her friend and
granted any other relief to whi		KED, I Toposed W	ard prays that the appr	leation be defined and she be
			Respectfully submitted	d,
			[Attorney Information]
			Attorney Ad Litem for Proposed Ward	f
	Cert	tificate of Service	;	
I hereby certify that a true and counsel by certified mail and/o				
	Name:			
	Address: CMRRR #:			
	Fax #:			
	(R	epeat as Necessa	ry)	

[Attorney Name]

Appendix N:			No					
Guardianship of				§		Probate Court		
				_,		\$ \$ \$ \$		Number One of
An Inc	apaci	tated	Person			§ §		Tarrant County, Texas
					tion for Author Appointee's		ize Attorneys for Legal Serv	ices
To the	Hono	orabl	e Judge of	Said Court:				
		Lav	Firm for I	Ward"), makes Legal Services a	s this Applica and respectful	tion for Au ly shows th	thority to Util e following:	d Attorney Ad Litem for ize Attorneys and Staff of
1.			_, 2010, to	represent Prop	osed Ward in	this guardi	anship procee	
2.	Appropriate Approversity Approv	pose 4, no ize at dire olicar rall o	nt in perford Ward, pure pet.) Appropertion and settion and settion are settion and settion are setting are setting as setting are setting are setting are setting as setting are setting are setting as setting are setting a	rming legal servirsuant to <i>Goody</i> , blicant believes to distaff of Applications of legal assistants blicant's services.	vices related to ear Dunlop v. that it is in the cant's law firm your appoint and paralegal	to Applican Gamez, 151 best interes in, including ee, in provise to provide	at's duties as A I S.W.3d 574 (st of Proposed legal assistant iding legal se e some legal se	Attorney Ad Litem for Tex. App. San Antonio Ward for Applicant to as and paralegals under crvices. In particular, ervices will reduce the Ward and will result in
3.	The Ad	foll Liter	owing spec	ial circumstance details of specie			_	el to assist the Attorney persons billing to file on
4.	App in T atto	olica arra rney	nt is familiant County, sand staff	nr with the reason Texas, for work at the rates set for	in guardians forth below, w	hip cases. A	applicant requalsonable for ea	gals, and legal assistants ests authority to utilize ach person based upon
5.	App a)	olica join	ed the firm	that the Court a was admitted t	nuthorize the uto the bar and as Board Cert	use of the for I licensed a ified in Esta	ollowing perso as an attorney ate Planning a	ns by Applicant; in Texas in He nd Probate Law by the
		The as rewr. (a rates 1)	Legal assis equired by of denied) are s, subject to of Legal Spfield) and hearing with the denied and hearing at members a members are selected as the denied and hearing at the denied are selected as the denied	stants and parale Gill Sav. Ass'n to listed below. Representation in From the process of the Parale Association Requestry, working in the authorized from the Parale Association Requestry.	egals of the law v. Int'l Supply Lequest is here proval by the tigation/trial n Personal Injury red as a litigation areas of guard of 25 years of legal Division uested Rate: See employed as the areas of guard	v firm and a v, 759 S.W by made fo Court upon paralegal Colle y Trial Law ion/trial paralianship, pr litigation an of the Stat per ho a paralega ardianship,	brief summary 2d 697, 702 (T r approval for a actual applica with an A ge. She is certific ("inactive" du alegal with Ap- robate, estate d trial experier e Bar of Texa our. al with Appli probate, estate	y of their qualifications, ex. App. Dallas 1988, billing at the following ation for payment. Associate Degree in fied by the Texas Board to change in specialty plicant's law firm since planning, and probate as a paralegal. She as and the Fort Worth cant's law firm since a planning, and probate in gexperience in estate

1 0	reral paralegal courses, including a Probate Law course at She is also a member of the Fort Worth Paralegal Association.
Requested Rate: \$ per he	our.
assistants, and paralegals of Applicant's law f Attorney Ad Litem for Proposed Ward, that tl	requests that the Court authorize Applicant's use of attorneys, legalizm as described above to assist Applicant in his/her appointed duties as the Court approve the hourly rates for each legal assistant or paralegal as upon actual application for payment, and that Applicant have such other justly entitled.
Dated:	Respectfully submitted,
	[Attorney Information]
	Attorney Ad Litem for Proposed Ward

Insert Certificate of Conference

	No	
Guardianship of	§ 8	Probate Court
,	\$ \$ \$ \$	Number One of
An Incapacitated Person	§ §	Tarrant County, Texas
	er Authorizing Utilization of Att of Appointee's Law Firm for L	
On this day, the Court considered the Firm for Legal Services (the "Applicati Litem for ("Proposed	e Application for Authority to Ution") filed by Ward"), and the Court finds	ilize Attorneys and Staff of Appointee's Law ("Applicant"), duly appointed Attorney Ad
_	h justify the use of additional pe	rsonnel to assist the Attorney Ad Litem
cost of Applicant's services as services. 3. It is in the best interest of Propos law firm in providing legal serv IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, Al	appointee representing Propose sed Ward to authorize the utilization ices. DJUDGED, AND DECREED the	ne legal services may reduce the overall d Ward and will result in more timely on of additional personnel of Applicant's at Applicant is authorized to utilize attorneys as Attorney Ad Litem for Proposed Ward, as
Attorneys of Applicant's law firm, a order of the Court upon application a. b.	for payment.	tes to be reviewed and approved by separate
 Legal assistants and paralegals of Apart approved by separate order of the Canalassis. 	ourt upon application for payment	elow, at reasonable rates to be reviewed and nt.
SIGNED	_	
	JUDGE PRES	IDING

Appendix O: Motion for Appointment of Guardian Ad Litem and Order

	No	
Guardianship of	§	Probate Court
	\$ \$ \$ \$	Number One of
An Incapacitated Person	§ §	Tarrant County, Texas
Motio	on for Appointment of Guardian A	Ad Litem
TO THE HONORABLE JUDGE OF S.	AID COURT:	
 Movant is the court-appointed At Movant respectfully requests that 	ttorney Ad Litem for t the court appoint a Guardian Ac	d Litem for the Proposed Ward pursuant to
TEX. EST. CODE § 1054.051 to repres 3. Good cause exists for the appoint		f the Proposed Ward in this matter.
WHEREFORE, Movant prays that t in law and in equity to which Movant m		Motion, and for such other and further relief
Dated:		
	Respectfully su	ıbmitted,
	[Attorney Infor	rmation]
	Attorney Ad Li Proposed Ward	

	No		
Guardianship of	§	Probate Court	
	\$ \$ \$ \$	Number One of	
An Incapacitated Person	§ §	Tarrant County, Texas	
	APPOINTING GUARDIAN A PURSUANT TO § 1054.051 F THE TEXAS ESTATES CO	1	
On this day, the Court finds it necessar incapacitated person in this guardianship p will enable the Court to determine what a	proceeding pursuant to § 1054.0		that
obtain a Proposed Guardian if necessary; c. to file a written report with the Collater than one week prior to a hearing dat Guardian is filed); d. to file an Application for the Appois determined to be in the best interest of le. to obtain a hearing date and Lette	duties: sed Ward; sointment of a Guardian of the curt concerning the best interest te (or within a reasonable time cointment of a Guardian of the P Proposed Ward; ers of Guardianship in due course	Person and/or Estate for Proposed Ward at of Proposed Ward as soon as possible but if no Application for the Appointment of Person and/or Estate of Proposed Ward if s	and at no of a such
medical, psychological and intellectual to Health Insurance Portability and Accoun information in the course of any judicial of	esting records. This Order is i ntability Act which authorizes o	issued pursuant to 45 CFR 164.512(e)(1 covered entities to disclose protected hea	l)(i) alth
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a he entitled and numbered case on		es Code § 1101.051 is scheduled in the about o'clock,m.	ove
SIGNED			

JUDGE PRESIDING

Appendix P:	No	
Guardianship of	§	Probate Court
	§ 8	Number One of
·	§ §	Number One of
An Incapacitated Person	§	Tarrant County, Texas
1	Entry of Appearance	
TO THE HONORABLE JUDGE OF THIS CO	URT:	
The Undersigned, having been appointe as Guardian Ad Litem to represent and to act in the and files this Entry of Appearance on behalf of the all orders, notices and pleadings be served on his	he best interests of the he Proposed Ward in t	his proceeding and requests that copies of
Signed	Respectfull	y Submitted
	(Attorney E	Block)

App	pend	ix Q	No	
Gua	ardia	nship of	\$ \$ \$ \$	Probate Court
		,	§	Number One of
A 12	Inaa	nagitated Dargan		Torrent County Toyon
AII	mea	pacitated Person	§	Tarrant County, Texas
			Report of Guardian Ad	<u>Litem</u>
ТО	THI	E HONORABLE JUD	GE OF SAID COURT:	
gua	Guar Irdiai	dian Ad Litem to repre	esent the Proposed Ward, to investiga	rsuant to § 1054.051 of the Texas Estates Code te the need for establishing a regular, permanent is proceeding, makes and files this report to the
			of Applicant that the Proposed Wa	rd cannot manage his/her financial affairs nor f the Person/Estate.
(or)	I dis			Proposed Ward can manage his/her financial of a Guardian of the Person/Estate.
 2. 	furn App pers Inveneed with	nished by the Court and plicant/Proposed Guard sonal history, family be estigation: During my id for a guardianship or n:	d any available medical information a dian/Contestant, requesting further in ackground and estate. investigation regarding the mental an r other less restrictive alternative and	formation concerning the Proposed Ward's d physical condition of the Proposed Ward, the the best interests of the Proposed Ward, I spoke
	A.	The <u>Proposed Ward:</u> (On	, at his/her current place of residence or other
	B.	Treating Physician: D	r.	 , on
	C.	Proposed Guardian:		, on
	D.	Other Persons:		0.00
				, on , on
3.	Esta	ate of Proposed Ward:	The ward owns □ no property (or) □	, on The following described property: (describe).
			following income: (describe monthly	and annual)
4.		nclusion and Recomme	endations: lowing actions would be in the best in	ntaragt of the Branged Word:
		· -	lowing actions would be in the best in	_
		3.		
Sig				
			(Attorney Blo	ock)

Appendix R: Motion for Security for Costs &	& Order: No	
Guardianship of	§ 8	Probate Court
	\$ \$ \$	Number One of
An Incapacitated Person	\$ §	Tarrant County, Texas
N	Motion for Security for	Costs
TO THE HONORABLE JUDGE OF SAID	COURT:	
, Guardian Ad Lit	tem for	("Movant"), files this Motion for Security for
Costs, and in support thereof would show the	is Court as follows:	("Movant"), files this Motion for Security for
1. Movant is the court-appointed Guardi	an Ad Litem for	, Proposed Ward herein.
2("Respondent") has	filed a contest to the ap	oplication of seeking appointment
		as answered the contest, and denies the allegations
made in such contest.		
requests that Respondent be ordered to give	security for the probab	
_ · ·	_	this Motion for Security Costs and that, after a
		e costs of this proceeding in accordance with Texas
ŭ		Procedure, and for such other and further relief in
law and in equity to which Movant may be e	ntitled.	
Dated:	Respectf	fully submitted,
	[Attorne	y Information]
	Guardiar Proposed	n Ad Litem for I Ward

Insert Certificate of Conference

	No		
Guardianship of	§ 8	Probate Court	
,	§	Number One of	
An Incapacitated Person	\$ \$ \$ \$	Tarrant County,	Гexas
	Order Granting Security for C	Costs	
On the date shown below, the court c Ad Litem for, Proportion The Court, having examined the pleat makes the following findings and orders 1. Citation and notice have issued as 2. Movant is the duly appointed and 3. The Motion is well taken and shown	osed Ward. adings and having heard the east follows: required by law; qualified Guardian of the war	evidence presented and argum	
It is, therefore, ORDERED, ADJUDCO ordered to give security for the probable cor before:00m.,, be given pursuant to Rule 146 of the Tex, be given pursuant to Rule 146 of the Tex, be given pursuant to Rule 146 of the Tex, be given pursuant to Rule 146 of the Tex, be given pursuant to Rule 146 of the Tex, be given pursuant to Rule 146 of the Tex, be given pursuant to Rule 146 of the Tex, be given pursuant to Rule 146 of the Tex, be given pursuant to Rule 146 of the Court, and attachment on appropriate proprocedure, or, and open bond to secure payment of Court, conditioned that Respondent as propredated in this proceeding. It is, further, ORDERED, ADJUDGE fail to be deposited with the Clerk of this Court, including compensation for Movar Respondent, said costs to be paid by Respondent, said costs to be paid by Respondent.	costs of this proceeding, which (which date is 20 days after as Rules of Civil Procedure, I desum with the Clerk of this ion that Applicant will deposit the probable costs in this proceed operty of Respondent, pursual of the probable costs of this principal and his sureties will principal and DECREED that should Court on or before the date stated that an amount to be set by further than the court of the probable costs of this principal and his sureties will principal and that the court on or before the date stated that an amount to be set by further than the court of the probable costs of this principal and that the court of the probable costs of the probable costs of this principal and the probable costs of th	is hereby determined to be \$ re the date of this Order), and the by, at Respondent's option, Court and such security will any additional sum as the Court to Rule 592ff of the Texas proceeding, made payable to the bay all such costs as may be any additional sum as the Court, shall representation of the proceedings as departed above, Respondent's Applications of the proceedings as departed above, shall representations are the costs of the proceedings as departed above, shall representations are the costs of the proceedings as departed above, shall representations are the costs of the proceedings as departed above.	, on hat such security be accepted as ourt from time to s Rules of Civil he Judge of this djudged against able to this Court cation/Contest is etermined by the be taxed against
	Judge Presid	ling	_

Appendix S: Motion to Show Authority		
	No	
Guardianship of	§ 8	Probate Court
	\$ \$ \$ \$	Number One of
An Incapacitated Person	§ §	Tarrant County, Texas
	Motion to Show Authority	7
TO THE HONORABLE JUDGE OF SA	AID COURT:	
Authority, and in support thereof, under 1. Movant is the court-appointed At 2("Respondent") counsel and filed a contest to the applica Estate of Proposed Ward. Movant has a 3. Movant believes that such contest sufficient to retain counsel. 4. In accordance with Rule 12 of the requests that Respondent be caused to ap WHEREFORE, Movant prays that a hea show his authority to act on behalf of Pro of Civil Procedure, and that upon hearing	oath, does swear or affirm as formey Ad Litem for	, Proposed Ward herein. behalf of Proposed Ward as privately-retained g appointment as Guardian of the Person and is the allegations made in such contest. hority in that Proposed Ward lacks the capacity re and TEX. EST. CODE 1054.006, Movant
Dated:		
	[Attorney Inf Address Bloc Attorney Ad Proposed Wa	ck and Signature] Litem for
a person whose identity is known to me.	After I administered an oath to	, the affiant and Movant herein, o affiant, affiant testified: erification. I read the Motion to Show dge and are true and correct."
	Name of affic	ant
SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED befo	ore me by Affiant on	
	Notary	

Insert Certificate of Conference

SHOW CAUSE CITATION

No. 2014-GD12345-1

THE STATE OF TEXAS) (COUNTY OF TARRANT)	IN THE PROBATE COURT NUMBER ONE OF TARRANT COUNTY, TEXAS
To Any Sheriff or Any Constable Within the State of	of Texas, GREETING:
YOU ARE HEREBY COMMANDED to summon who may be served at	H. Lee Lamar, Attorney 1434 Tallahatchee Bridge St., Fort Worth, Texas 76102
regarding the guardianship of	Billie Jo McAlister, an Incapacitated Person
if to be found in your County, to be and appear bed County, at 100 West Weatherford, in the City of Formal 1999 at 4:00 O'clock p.m. and show his authority to represent Billie Jo M proceeding.	ort Worth, Texas on the 21st day of June A. D.
Herein fail not, and make due return of this Writ. B	By Order of the Honorable Probate Court.
Witness, MARY LOUISE GARCIA, Clerk, and sea on this 20 th day of May A. D. 2014	al of said Court, at my office in Fort Worth, Texas
	MARY LOUISE GARCIA, Clerk of the Probate Courts of Tarrant County 100 West Weatherford Street Fort Worth, Texas 76196-0401

Dosey Doates, Deputy

		No	
Guardianship of		§	Probate Court
	.	\$ \$ \$ \$	Number One of
An Incapacitated Person		\$ \$	Tarrant County, Texas
		Order [Granting/Denying] Motion	n to Show Authority
On this dat Ward in th in this prod 1054.006;	te, the Court, consists matter, requiring the eeding, in according	sidered the Motion filed herein by to appear and shance with Rule 12 of the Texas Rule	, Attorney Ad Litem for the Proposed ow his authority to act on behalf of Proposed Ward es of Civil Procedure and TEX. EST. CODE
Option A and it appearing to the Court that Respondent has failed to show such authority;		iled to show such authority;	
		d that Respondent is hereby refused p	by Respondent on behalf of Proposed Ward be permission to appear on half of and represent
Option B	ion B and it appearing to the Court that Respondent has adequately demonstrated such authority,		
	Ward in this ma		nitted to appear on half of and represent Proposed, Attorney Ad Litem herein, be, and he is n this matter.
SIGNED_			
		JUDG	E PRESIDING

Appendix T:	No	
Guardianship of	§	Probate Court
	§	
,	§	Number One of
	§	
An Incapacitated Person	8	Tarrant County Texas

Motion in Limine and to Dismiss Application

TO THE HONORABLE JUDGE OF SAID COURT:

Interested Person ("Movant") files this motion in limine and to dismiss the application for appointment of a permanent guardian of the person and estate of Proposed Ward filed by Applicant and would how the court as follows:

- 1. Applicant has filed an application for appointment of a permanent guardian of the person and estate of Proposed Ward. Interested Person has filed a contest to this application and has filed his own application for appointment of a permanent guardian of the person and estate of Proposed Ward.
- 2. Applicant has an interest adverse to that of Proposed Ward, in violation of § 1055.001 of the Texas Estates Code. Applicant is therefore prohibited from filing an application to create a guardianship for the proposed ward or contesting the appointment of a person as guardian of the person or estate, or both, of the proposed ward.
- 3. Further, Applicant is disqualified and ineligible to serve as guardian of the person or estate of Proposed Ward pursuant to TEX. EST. CODE § 1055.001. Movant would show Applicant is one whom the proposed ward has expressly disqualified by prior designation under TEX. EST. CODE § 1104.202(b) and attached hereto as Exhibit "A."
- 4. Applicant lacks standing to either prosecute his application for appointment of a permanent guardian of the person and estate of Proposed Ward or to contest the application filed by Movant herein.

WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, Movant prays that the Court dismiss Applicant's application and for such other relief to which Movant may be entitled.

Dated:	
	Respectfully submitted,
	[Attorney Information]
	Attorney Ad Litem for Proposed Ward

Insert Certificate of Conference

Appendix U:	No	
Guardianship of	§	Probate Court
	§	
,	§	Number One of
	§	
An Incapacitated Person	8	Tarrant County Texas

Motion for Independent Medical Examination

TO THE HONORABLE JUDGE OF SAID COURT:

Movant, Attorney Ad Litem for Proposed Ward, files this Motion for Independent Medical Examination and in support respectfully shows the court as follows:

- 1. Movant believes it is in the best interests of Proposed Ward pursuant to § 1101.103 of the Texas Estates Code and Rule 167a of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure for the Court to order a complete independent medical examination of Proposed Ward, to be conducted by a court-appointed psychiatrist, for the purpose of determining the present mental state of Proposed Ward and for assessment of her current care needs.
- 2. Movant has filed a contest to the application to create a guardianship for the proposed ward, denying that Proposed Ward is incapacitated. Based on these facts, Movant believes it would be in the best interest of Proposed Ward to have an independent medical examination.
- 3. Movant therefore moves the Court to designate the time, place, manner, conditions, and scope of the examination to be conducted by the psychiatrist named by the Court to make such examination of Proposed Ward. It is further requested that the report of the examining psychiatrist be provided to the Court and all counsel of record.
- 4. Movant requests that the expenses of said examination be paid out the estate of Proposed Ward as it is beneficial to the ward and her estate to have the facts of her mental status determined.

WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, Movant prays that the Court order Proposed Ward to appear before a psychiatrist to be designated by the Court for the purpose of undergoing an independent medical examination pursuant to § 1101.103 of the Texas Estates Code and Rule 167a of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure to determine her mental status and that the Court order such examination to be paid out the estate of Proposed Ward; and for such other and further relief to which Movant may show himself to be justly entitled..

Dated:	
	Respectfully submitted,
	[Attorney Information]
	Attorney Ad Litem for Proposed Ward

Insert Certificate of Conference

	No	
Guardianship of	§ §	Probate Court
,		Number One of
An Incapacitated Person	\$ \$ \$	Tarrant County, Texas
Order Setting Heari	ing on Application for Independent	nt Medical Examination
A hearing on the Motion for Indep	pendent Medical Examination, file	ed herein by
, Attorne	ey Ad Litem for Proposed Ward, i	s scheduled to be heard before the
Court on	at o	clock m.
Signed		
	JUDO	GE PRESIDING

	No	
Guardianship of	§	Probate Court
	\$ \$ \$ \$	
	§	Number One of
A. In compositate d Danson	§ .	Townset Country Towns
An Incapacitated Person	8	Tarrant County, Texas
Order Gr	ranting Independent Medical Exami	ination
On this day, the Court considered, Attorney Ad Litem for and the applicable law and having heard t	or Proposed Ward, and the Court, a	fter having considered the motion
good cause has been shown for the granti	ing of such motion.	-
IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, A	ADJUDGED AND DECREED that	t is hereby
appointed by the Court to make a medical	l examination of Proposed Ward put	rsuant to § 1101.103 of the Texas
Estates Code, to determine the present me		
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that suc	ch psychiatrist shall render his or her	findings in a written report to this
Court and all counsel of record.		1 0
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that suc	h examination shall be conducted on	or before
that the report of the psychiatrist be filed that the expenses of said examination and	I report be poid out the estate of Pro	days of the examination, and
that the expenses of said examination and	report be paid out the estate of Fro	posed ward.
Dated:		
	JUDGE PI	RESIDING

Appendix V: Setting Confirmation

From: H. Louis Dewey [hugheylouiedewey@pmail.com]

Sent: Friday, January 24, 2014 4:23 PM

To: Heather Beyer

Cc: Marge Inovera; Atticus Finch, Esq.

Subject: Re: Setting Confirmation: # No. 2013-GD00210-1; Guardianship of Natalie

Attired

This is to confirm the above-referenced matter is set for hearing on the Application for Letters of Guardianship on Monday, April 1, 2014 at 3:00 p.m.

By copy of this e-mail, all counsel of record and pro se parties, if any, are being notified of this hearing.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

H. Louis Dewey Dewey, Cheatham & Howe (817) 000-0000 fax: (817) 000-0000 [hugheylouiedewey@pmail.com]

From: Heather Beyer

Sent: Friday, January 24, 2014 4:15 PM

To: H. Louis Dewey

Subject: Settling Confirmation: # No. 2013-GD00210-1; Guardianship of Natalie Attired

I have Monday, April 1, 2014 at 3:00 p.m. available for a hearing on letters of guardianship.

Heather Beyer, Coordinator, Tarrant County Probate Court One

App	bendix W:	No	
Guardianship of		\$ \$ \$ \$	Probate Court
	,	§ 8	Number One of
An l	Incapacitated Person	\$ \$	Tarrant County, Texas
		Proof of Facts (Guardianship)	
duly	On this day, the undersigned A sworn, upon oath deposes and say		sonally in open court and, after being
1. "	My name and residence address ar	re:	
i: a b	is an incapacitated person as defined by § 1002.017 of the Texas Estates Code and is a(n): a. □ adult □ minor □ male □ female aged years and. b. □ resident of this County; or □ has an estate located principally in this county; or □ located in this county at the time of the filing of the Guardianship Application. c. □ totally incapacitated; or □ partially incapacitated as reflected in the Physician's Certificate filed herein in accordance with § 1101.103 of the Texas Estates Code; or □ incapacitated by virtue of minority only.		
b			n court as it is not in Proposed Ward's materially participate in the hearing if
(Possible testimony regarding Supp	ports and Services.)	
i I F	"Proposed Guardian,, is a suitable person to be appointed Guardian, is not disqualified by law from serving in that capacity or from accepting Letters of Guardianship, is entitled to Letters of Guardianship, and it is in Proposed Ward's best interest and is necessary to promote and protect Proposed Ward's well-being for Proposed Guardian to be appointed to assist Proposed Ward in managing his/her estate.		
5. "	"There are no guardianships of any kind existing for Proposed Ward in this, or any other, state.		
	Minors only) "This guardianship is o establish residency for enrollment		ose of enabling minor Proposed Ward
S	Signed		
		Affiant	
SW	ORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED be	fore me by Affiant on	·

Appendix X:	No		
Guardianship of	§	Probate Cour	t
,	§ § §	Number One	of
An Incapacitated Person	\$ \$	Tarrant Coun	ty, Texas
Evidence in Su	pport of Requested Bond		
	Monthly Income	Annualized Incom	ne
Income			
Social Security	\$	\$	
Annuity Pension	(after taxes)		
Total Income	(after taxes)		\$
Bondable Property			
Checking Account (approximate balance)		\$	
Credit Union Account (approximate balance)		*	
2006 Chrysler 300			
Total Bondable Property			\$
Debts (Unsecured)			
Unsecured Demand Note		\$	
Credit Card Accounts			
Total Debts			\$
Total Annual Income, Bondable Property & Debts			\$
plus 10% of the above total			
Indicated Bond Amount (Rounded Up to Nearest	Γhousand)		\$

Appendix Y	Y: No		
Guardiansh			Probate Court
			Number One of
An Incapaci	tated Person §		Tarrant County, Texas
	Evidence in Support of Requested Month	ly Al	lowance
A.	Care Facility:	\$	
C.	Residence		
	- Utilities		
	- Lawn Maintenance		
	- Tax & Insurance (prorated)		
D.	Medical Expenses and Prescriptions		
	Water for Property		
	Miscellaneous items		
	including, but not limited to, newspaper subscription,		
	taxi fare, medical, personal care items and dining out		
	TOTAL:	\$	

Appendix Z: Suggested Cross-Examination Questions for the Ad Litem

Guardianship

DON'T DO THIS: "If I asked you the same questions that you were just asked, would your answers be any different?

If you are directly examining a corroborative (second) witness, then it saves time to ask:

"You have just heard the questions that were asked of the other witness. If I asked you
the same questions that I just asked the first witness, would your answers be the same?"

Unless you are doing a comedy routine (see Abbott & Costello, "Who's on First?" www.baseball-almanac.com/humor4.shtml), it makes *little or no sense* to listen to a direct examination by another attorney and then ask the witness if they could manage to answer the same questions the same way a second time.

Appropriate Topics:

- 1. Do you remember when I spoke with you about the guardianship for ______?
- 2. Do you remember when we discussed suitability/ incapacity/ living arrangements
- 3. Ward's presence in courtroom would not be of any assistance to court.
- 4. This guardianship for minor not just for qualification for school
- 5. Explanation of family dynamics that judge needs to know about
 - discuss any sore spots that might be a problem later
 - visitation money management by spouse/sibling
 - medication issues / driving / voting / marriage
 - property disputes you anticipate will crop up

Have you fully disclosed all of the assets of the ward?

- 6. Standing (adverse interest) "a position that does not promote the well-being of the ward."
- 7. Disqualification issues of other family members ("driving nails in the coffin lid") minors / notoriously bad conduct / incapacity / party to a lawsuit affecting proposed ward's welfare / indebted to proposed ward / having a claim adverse to the property or person of the proposed ward / incapable of prudently managing estate (lack of experience, education, or other good reason) / one found unsuitable by the court / one expressly disqualified under §679 / a nonresident without a designation of resident agent.

Sometimes an oblique question will get a more nearly honest answer:

Instead of asking: Have you ever been convicted of a felony involving moral turpitude?

Ask: *Have you ever been in trouble with the law?*

- 8. Cross-examination of proposed Guardian when you still have doubts that money or property will be managed correctly **commit future guardian to course of action** while under oath and in front of judge.
- 9. Less Restrictive Alternatives & Supports and Services (Appendices D, D-1)- Have you considered?
- 10. Changed Circumstances: Is there anything that has changed since I last spoke to you?

Heirship See **DON'T DO THIS**: (supra)

Appropriate Topics:

- 1. Are you aware of any relationships the Deceased had for more than one year?
- 2. Do you know if any of these relationships resulted in the birth of a child?
- 3. Are you aware of any claims of paternity or paternity actions brought in court against the Deceased?
- 4. Are you aware of any legitimation claims / court proceedings for legitimation brought against the Deceased?
- 5. Do you have any direct knowledge of paternity / of marriage / of children?
- 6. Do you recall any discussions/ have any direct knowledge regarding deceased siblings / nieces / nephews?
- 7. Do you recall any discussions/ have any direct knowledge of the Deceased admitting to being the father of
- 8. Since we last spoke, is there anything that you recall regarding the Decedent that you did not tell me at that time?

Appendix A	a	N.T.	
Guardianshij	p of	No§	Probate Court
	,	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$	Number One of
An Incapacit	cated Person	§ §	Tarrant County, Texas
	Order Appointing	Guardian of the P	erson (and Estate)
, an I Litem, cause Application a all evidence, advised in th finds that: 1 This 2. Due 3. Cita 4. The appe	incapacitated Person (hereinafter refered to be filed pursuant to § 1102.0 and the Physicians' Certificate as require testimony and arguments of witnesse premises, no contest or opposition. Court has jurisdiction and venue of notice of said Application has been tion has been personally served upon Ward was/was not present in Court as	erred to as "the War 001 of the Texas quired under § 110 esses and counsel in thereto being asset of this cause; a given to those per on the Ward in account of the ward of the ward in account of the ward of the ward in account of	ented by <i>his</i> Attorney Ad Litem; The personal advisable because the Ward's incapacities are
5. Purs or to capa	tuant to § 1101.151 of the Texas Esta o manage <i>his</i> property; <u>or</u> Pursuant	ntes Code, the Ward to § 1101.152 of asks necessary to co	d is totally without capacity to care for himself the Texas Estates Code, the Ward lacks the are for himself or to manage his property; or
Gua 7. The enro 8. ALT avoid guardi	rdian and is entitled to be appointed guardianship is not created for the pollment in a school or school district <u>FERNATIVES CONSIDERED</u> . Alte	I Guardian of the Forimary purpose of t for which the Wa ernatives to guardia ives to guardianshi	"the Guardian") is eligible to be appointed as Person and Estate of, the Ward. "enabling the Ward to establish residency for rrd is not otherwise eligible for enrollment. anship and available supports and services to p or supports and services are available to the
9. <u>SPE</u> Proposed Gu is sought, lis guardian the should be lin	CIFIC AREAS OF PROTECTION ardian be granted the full powers allows the strong those powers which are appart should be limited if the Proposed mited if the Proposed Ward does reconstituted.	N AND ASSIST owed under the Te propriate and ind Ward does not recive supports and	ANCE REQUESTED. Applicant requests xas Estates Code. (If a Limited Guardianship licate those specific powers or duties of the eceive supports and services and those that

Further, the Court finds by clear and convincing evidence that:

and provide the redacted number here.)

8. The Ward is an incapacitated person as defined by § 1002.017 of the Texas Estates Code, who has no legal Guardian of *his* person *and estate*; The incapacity is evidenced by recurring acts or occurrences within the preceding six (6)-month period and not by isolated instances of negligence or bad judgment;

limited. In addition, the Applicant herein seeks to take away the right of the Proposed Ward to vote in a public election, to hold or obtain a license to operate a motor vehicle and to make personal decisions regarding residence; (If a Limited Guardianship is sought, limit only those rights which are appropriate. If the Proposed Ward's right to drive is being removed, provide the Proposed Ward's Driver's License number to the Court Investigator

- 9. It is in the best interest of the Ward to have the Court appoint a person as his Guardian;
- 10. The rights of the Ward and his property will be protected by the appointment of a Guardian.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that:

1.	(Guardianship with Full Authority) is hereby appointed Guardian of the Person (and Estate) of, the Ward, and is hereby granted full authority over the Ward with all powers to act on the Ward's behalf as authorized under the Texas Estates Code and to do such other and further acts concerning the Ward as the Court may, from time to time, direct by express authorization through written order of the Court and specifically including the ability to apply for a passport on behalf of the ward, and the rights of the Ward are limited to the extent not inconsistent herewith, including the right to hold or obtain a license to operate a motor vehicle, the right to vote in a public election and the right to make personal decisions regarding residence. or
1.	(Guardianship with Limited Authority) is hereby appointed Guardian of the Person (and Estate) of, the Ward, and is hereby granted authority over the
	the Person (and Estate) of, the Ward, and is hereby granted authority over the
	Ward with the following powers to act on the Ward's behalf as authorized under the Texas Estates Code: (specify powers of the Guardian)
	The following powers of duties of the Guardian shall be limited if the Ward does not receive supports and services:
	The following powers or duties of the Guardian shall be limited if the Ward <u>does</u> receive supports and services:
	The rights of the Ward are limited to the extent not inconsistent herewith, including the right to hold or obtain a license to operate a motor vehicle, the right to vote in a public election and the right to make
	personal decisions regarding residence.
2.	The Guardian appointed is hereby ordered to swear and subscribe to an oath that <i>she</i> will faithfully discharge the duties of Guardian of the Person <i>and Estate</i> of the Ward;
3.	The Guardian shall give good and adequate bond in the amount of \$, conditioned as required by law;
4.	Upon the filing of the Guardian's Oath and approval of the Guardian's Bond as required herein, the Clerk of the Court shall issue Letters of Guardianship to the Guardian;
5.	A petition for adjudication that a guardianship is no longer needed by the Ward may not be filed within a period of one (1) year from the date of the signing of this order without special leave of the Court <i>or</i> The Physician's Certificate of Medical Examination submitted herein has stated that improvement in the
	Ward's physical condition or mental functioning is possible and has specified a period of less than a year after which the Ward should be reevaluated to determine continued necessity for the guardianship. The
	Guardian is hereby ORDERED to submit to the Court an updated Physician's Certificate of Medical Examination by
	Examination by
SIGNE	ED on
	Judge Presiding
	Judge i residing

"Notice to any peace officer of the State of Texas: you may use reasonable efforts to enforce the right of a guardian of the person of a ward to have physical possession of the ward or to establish the ward's legal domicile as specified in this order. A peace officer who relies on the terms of a court order and the officer's agency are entitled to the applicable immunity against any civil or other claim regarding the officer's good faith acts performed in the scope of the officer's duties in enforcing the terms of this order that relate to the above-mentioned rights of the court-appointed guardian of the person of the ward. Any person who knowingly presents for enforcement an order that is invalid or no longer in effect commits an offense that may be punishable by confinement in jail for as long as two years and a fine of as much as \$10,000."

Appendix Ab:			
		No	
Guardianship of		§	Probate Court
		\$ \$ \$ \$ \$	Number One of
An Incapacitated Person		§ §	Tarrant County, Texas
		NAL SURETY BO DIAN OF THE PERSO	
STATE OF TEXAS COUNTY OF	}		
severally, and our heirs and	d successors, to the Judge, IN THE SUM OF \$10	e of Probate Court N 0.00, conditioned th	O HEREBY BIND OURSELVES, jointly a Number, County, Texas, a said Guardian shall well and truly perform
Date:		PRIN	CIDAL
	PRINTED NAME:		CIPAL
	ADDRESS:		
Date:			
	PRINTED NAME:	SURE	TTY
	ADDRESS:		
	CITY, STATE, ZIP		
Date:		SURE	TV
	ADDRESS:		
APPROVED on			
		JUDGE PR	ESIDING

Appendix Ac:			
	No		
Guardianship of	§ 8		Probate Court
,	§		Number One of
An Incapacitated Person	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$		Tarrant County, Texas
	OATH OF GU	ARDIAN	
That I,	, do so	olemnly swear th	nat I will faithfully
perform and discharge	the duties of	Guardian of	the Person of
	, an Incapa	citated Person, a	according to law.
	Gu	ıardian	
SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO	D BEFORE ME o	n	·

Appendix Ad:	No	
Guardianship of	§	Probate Court
,	\$ \$ \$ \$	Number One of
An Incapacitated Person	§ §	Tarrant County, Texas
	Safekeeping ("Freeze") Agreem (Pre-Appointment)	<u>eent</u>
duly affixed below, and does hereby cer above-captioned Estate ("Guardian"), ha funds belonging to said Estate with a ba Further, BANK certifies that it will	(BANK) by and through an office rtify that, App as deposited with such institution alance as of this date of \$ not deliver to the said Guardian posits to the account or any interest Judge of Probate Court Number	or any other person, any of said funds so est or dividends credited to such account
Witness the signature and seal of	(Bank), on	
	By	BANK
APPROVED on		
	JUDGE PRES	GIDING

Appendix Ae:	No	
Guardianship of		Probate Court
An Incompaidated Donner	\$ \$ \$	Number One of
An Incapacitated Person	8	Tarrant County, Texas
Sworn Statement of Service	es and Expenses by Appoin	ntee in Court-Initiated Guardianship
On this day personally appearedduly sworn upon oath to tell the truth, depo		("Appointee"), known to me, who first being
"I am an attorney licensed to practinature of services rendered in this action Guardian Ad Litem a. personally interviewed Proposed b. interviewed party who filed the let c. filed Application for Guardianship return of citation on Proposed Wad. located a person to serve as Guar members as required by Texas Est e. consulted with Attorney Ad Litem f. set and attended hearing on Applig. assisted Guardian in obtaining his Attorney Ad Litem a. reviewed application for guardian relevant medical, psychological at b. personally interviewed Proposed legal options and grounds on white c. ascertained whether the Proposed with copy of the report to the Could. consulted with Guardian Ad Litem e. appeared on behalf of Proposed V.	ice law in the State of Texas on on behalf of my client by Ward; tter concerning Proposed if p and a written report prior ard; rdian or coordinated with it tates Code § 1051.104; concerning Application; is or her bond and letters. Inship, certificates of physic and intellectual testing record in the lectual testing record ward and discussed the lectual description in the lectual testing record ward wishes to oppose the lectual testing is sought; it was wishes to oppose the lectual testing to contain the learn or Court Investigator contains and the hearing;	aws and facts of the case, Proposed Ward's are proceedings and filed appropriate Answer,
☐ Expenses and reimbursement - parking charges, long distant	1,000.00 ☐ Attorrequested. (Please check)	rney Ad Litem fee \$ 500.00 appropriate line and attach proof and explanation) \$
Signature :	,	Taxpayer ID/SS#:
Address:	1	Bar Card #:
		Phone Number:
SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before	me by the aforesaid attorn	ey on
	-	Notary
	ORDER	Notary
On this day, the Court considered fore behalf of the Proposed Ward, that such fee It is therefore ORDERED that said Appoin funds held in the registry of this Court for	egoing, and finds that said a es and expenses are reasona ntee be immediately paid t	he total sum of \$ from from
County] within thirty (30) days of the dat	te hereof.	
It is further ORDERED that the appoint discharged as ad litem in this cause.	ntment of Appointee is teri	minated and that the Appointee named herein is
Signed this		

Judge Presiding

Appendix Af:	No.	•	_	
Guardianship of		\$ \$ \$ \$ \$		Probate Court
		§ s]	Number One of
An Incapacitated Person		§ §	,	Γarrant County, Texas
	Application for Paymen ("Private Pay or Co			
TO THE HONORABLE	JUDGE OF SAID COUR	Т:		
as set forth i purposes. 3. A Guardian was apportune 4. Applicant is familial which is based upon customary fee for the representing the best where the such purpose, with any bound is such purpose, with any bound is such purpose.	ointed for the Ward/ The A ar with the reasonable Ad Litem in Probate Courty and experience, education	pplication for Cand customar and training, the this Court away paid from function from function from function from function from function function from function func	as Exhibit A and Guardianship wa y fees charged s in Tarrant Cou he amount of \$ l such fee is neces ard attorney's fee disheld in the reg lable in the Ward	by attorneys serving as nty, Texas. In my opinion, is a reasonable and ssary and was incurred while es and expenses in the distry of this Court for d's estate; [or by the
Submitted this	mus of Turrum County Wi	um umrty (50)	days of the date	nereor.
				SBOTID
		Applicant/A Address		
		Phone	F	ax
	(Certific	ate of Service))	
	e and correct copy of the for			upon the following
	Name e-mail Add (Repeat as Necessary)	dress		
		- I	Attorney Name	

	No	
Guardianship of	§	Probate Court
,	\$ \$ \$ \$	Number One of
An Incapacitated Person	§	Tarrant County, Texas
Order Approving	Ad Litem Fees and Authoriz (Private Pay)	ing Payment
On this day, the Court considered to	he Application for Payment o , Guardian/Attorney Ad Li	of Attorney's Fees filed by tem in this cause, and finds as
follows:		
 the time expended and expenses ad below. 	vanced are reasonable and ju	st and should be paid as ordered
2. the Court finds that such fees and e	xpenses shall be paid out of	the guardianship estate
(or)		
3. based upon the recommendation of herein should be and has been den		
IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, ADJUDO should be immediately paid to the aforement such fees and expenses shall be taxed as couthis Court for such purpose, with any balant [or by the Applicant] within thirty (30) day	ntioned Ad Litem in the amounts in this case to be paid from the function to be paid from the function.	unt of \$ and that m from funds held in the registry of
SIGNED this	<u>_</u> .	
	Judge Presidir	ng

Appendix Ag:

Practice Tips from The Court Investigators of Probate Court Number One

- 1. Read the Ad Litem Manual.
- 2. Read the Texas Estates Code.
- 3. If you are notified of an appointment, promptly pick up your paperwork.
- 4. Check the Order Appointing Ad Litem for a hearing date.
- 5. Review the Physician's Certificate to verify that it meets the requirements of TEX. EST. CODE § 1101.103.
- 6. If you are a Guardian Ad Litem, either file a report or an Application for Guardianship within 14 days of your appointment.
- 7. Check the physician's evaluation is it still timely?
- 8. If you are an Attorney Ad Litem, file an answer. It's hard to convince the judge to appoint a guardian when the proposed ward has not been represented by counsel.
- 9. Calling the Court Investigator is not a substitute for action (and you don't get paid for it).
- 10. If you have a contested case, please do not call the Court Investigator to talk about facts or for advice as to how to proceed. Ex parte communications are prohibited.
- 11. All Guardian Ad Litems and TEX. EST. CODE § 1101.001 applicants must comply with all of the requirements of § 1051. Make sure the affidavit is filed at least 1 week prior to the scheduled hearing, and any necessary waivers, etc. are obtained.
- 12. No TEX. EST. CODE § 1051.104 affidavit is required if there are no waivers or notices.
- 13. Make sure your application contains an itemized listing of income and assets of the proposed ward, including the value of the assets, (and any trust accounts for the ward at a nursing home) sufficient to allow the court to set a bond and a monthly allowance beneficial interest in trusts?
- 14. If the description or value of income or assets are unknown, let the investigator know they are unknown.
- 15. The Court Investigator's office is open during regular Court hours; however, the Court Investigator may be out of the office conducting an investigation, attending meetings, etc.... You are always welcome to stop by, but you might want to make sure the Court Investigator will be in the office before making a special trip to the courthouse.
- 16. Turn your fee application in to the clerk not at the bench
- 17. Don't bother to 'cc' the Judge on everything.

BARRIE ALLEN 817-884-2189
Court Investigator
ballen@tarrantcounty.com

MARY CAROE 817-884-1897 Assistant Court Investigator mecaroe@tarrantcounty.com

Probate Court Number One 100 W. Weatherford, Rm. 260A Fort Worth, TX 76196

Fax: 884-3178

Appendix Ah:

Roster: Texas Court Investigators:

Statutory Probate Courts

Bexar: Probate Court 1

Robert Augsburger, Ct Inv 210-335-2583 <u>robert.augsburger@bexar.org</u>

100 Dolorosa, Room 123, San Ant, TX 78205

Probate Court 2

Sue Bean, Ct Inv 210-335-2279 sbean@bexar.org

100 Dolorosa, Room 117, San Ant, TX 78205

Collin: Michael L. Vaughan, Ct Inv 972-548-6463 mvaughan@co.collin.tx.us

Collin County Courthouse

2100 Bloomdale Rd., Suite 12360

McKinney, TX 75071

Dallas: Myra Kirkland 214-653-6446 <u>myra.kirkland@dallascounty.org</u> Elizabeth Hart 214-653-6446 elizabeth.hart@dallascounty.org

Elizabeth Hart 214-653-6446 <u>elizabeth.hart@dallascounty.org</u>
Drew Dixon 214-653-6446 <u>drew.dixon@dallascounty.org</u>
Patricia McArdle 214-653-6446 <u>patricia.mcardle@dallascounty.org</u>
Murad Campbell 214-653-6446 <u>murad.campbell@dallascounty.org</u>

Probate Courts of Dallas County

501 Main Street, #217 Dallas, TX 75202

Denton: Carol Dabner, Ct Inv 940-349-2148 <u>carol.dabner@dentoncounty.com</u>

Missy Rainey, Asst Ct Inv 940-349-2149 missy.rainey@dentoncounty.com

Denton County Probate Court, 1450 E. McKinney St., Suite 2412

Denton, TX 76209

El Paso: Probate Court 1

Beth Parsons, Ct Inv 915-546-2161 eparsons@epcounty.com

500 E. San Antonio, Suite 803

El Paso, TX 79901 Probate Court 2

Raquel Lauretano, Ct Inv 915-546-8183 <u>rlauretano@epcounty.com</u> Alma Calderon, Ct Inv 915-546-8183 <u>rlauretano@epcounty.com</u>

500 E. San Antonio, Suite 422

El Paso, TX 79901

Galveston: Debbie Diaz, Grdn Inv 409-770-5188 <u>debbie.diaz@co.galveston.tx.us</u>

Probate Court of Galveston County

600 59th Street, Suite 2305 Galveston, TX 77551

Harris: Probate Court 1

Anthi Pavlicek, Ct Inv 713-368-6701 anthi.pavlicek@prob.hctx.net

201 Caroline, 6th Floor Houston, TX 77002 Probate Court 2

Dawn King, Ct Inv 713-368-6715 dawn.king@prob.hctx.net

201 Caroline, Suite 680 Houston, TX 77002 Probate Court 3

Tara Zinn, Ct Inv 713-368-6736 <u>tara.zinn@prob.hctx.net</u>

201 Caroline, 7th Floor Houston, TX 77002

Probate Court 4

Ray Sullins, Ct Inv 713-368-6767 <u>ray.sullins@prob.hctx.net</u>

201 Caroline, 7th Floor Houston, TX 77002

Hidalgo: David T. Marroquin, Ct Inv 956-318-2385

100 N. Closner Blvd., 3rd Floor

Edinburg, TX 78539

Tarrant: Probate Court 1

Barrie Allen, Ct Inv 817-884-2189 <u>ballen@tarrantcounty.com</u>
Mary E. Little Caroe, Asst Ct Inv 817-884-1897 <u>mecaroe@tarrantcounty.com</u>

100 Weatherford, Rm 128A Fort Worth, TX 76196 Probate Court 2

Jeff Arnier, Ct Inv 817-884-3395 <u>jcarnier@tarrantcounty.com</u> Arlene Shorter, Asst Ct Inv 817-884-2719 <u>ashorter@tarrantcounty.com</u>

100 Weatherford, Rm 367 Fort Worth, TX 76196

Travis:

Tom Ruffner, Ct Inv 512-854-4978 <u>tom.ruffner@travis.tx.us</u>

Michael P. Gianotti, Asst Ct Inv 512-854-4359 <u>michael.gianotti@co.travis.tx.us</u>

1000 Guadalupe, Room 217

Austin, TX 78701

County Courts at Law

Brazoria: County Courts at Law 1,2,3 & 4

Barbara "BB" Brannan, Grdn Inv 979-864-1252 bb@brazoria-county.com

Brazoria County Courthouse 111 East Locust St., Suite 106

Angleton, TX 77515

Lubbock: (Position Vacant) , Ct Inv 806-775-1723

Office of Dispute Resolution 916 Main St., Suite 800 Lubbock, TX 79401

Montgomery: County Court at Law 2

Jacqueline Ullom, Ct Inv 936-760-6915 <u>jacqueline.ullom@mctx.org</u>

210 West Davis Conroe, TX 77301

COURT INSTRUCTIONS: GUARDIAN OF THE PERSON INSTRUCCIONES DE LA CORTE PARA EL GUARDIAN DE LA PERSONA

(Revised July 2015// Revisado Julio 2015)

As a duly-appointed Guardian of the Person, you are hereby advised by the Court that you <u>must</u> do the following: (All section references are to the Texas Estates Code unless otherwise indicated.)

Como El Guardián designado con la responsabilidad de la persona, La Corte se le notifica que usted <u>debe</u> hacer lo siguiente: (Todas las referencias a las secciones son del Código Estates de Texas [Texas Estates Code] a menos que hay otras indicaciones al contrario.)

Steve M. King, Judge/ Juez Probate Court #1 Tarrant County, Texas

Corte Testamentaria #1 Condado de Tarrant, Texas

	I acknowledge	receipt of a	copy of these
instructi	ons		

I further acknowledge that I attended the Court's guardianship training class on _______, 20___.

Yo, guardián de la persona de esta tutela, afirmo que he leído y entiendo lo anterior y he recibido una copia de estas instrucciones.

Yo reconoso que assiste la clase de entrenamineto el ______, 20___.

Name/	Nom	bre:
-------	-----	------

Guardian/ Guardián	Date/ Fecha
Name Printed/ Nombr	e en letra de molde

A. Qualify as Guardian: Within twenty (20) days of receiving the order appointing you as guardian:

- 1. Take and file an oath;
- 2. File the required bond, and
- 3. Obtain *Letters of Guardianship* from the probate clerk's office.

B. Expectations of the Guardian of the Person: (§ 1163.101)

- 1. See that the ward is **appropriately housed**,
- 2. Have frequent and meaningful personal visits with the Ward.
- 3. Make every effort to insure the Ward is receiving all available benefits for which he/she may be eligible and entitled.
- 4. Obtain psychological, social services, training, educational, social and vocational opportunities for the Ward as needed and appropriate.

- **A.** Para Calificar Como Guardián: Dentro de (20) días de recibir la orden que le designa como guardián usted debe:
 - 1. Juramentarse y registrar el juramento;
 - 2. Registrar la *fianza* designada, y
 - 3. Obtener Las Cartas de Custodia de la oficina.

B. Expectativas del Guardián de la Persona: (§ 1163.101)

- 1. Asegurar que el sujeto de la custodia tiene **alojamiento apropiado**.
- 2. Tener visitas personales con el sujeto de la custodia que son frecuentes y significantes.
- 3. Hacer todo lo posible para asegurar que el sujeto de la custodia recibe todos los beneficios que tiene el derecho de recibir.
- 4. Obtener oportunidades para el sujeto de la custodia cuando es necesario y apropiado de: la psicología, servicios sociales, la capacitación; obtener atención psicológica, servicios sociales,

5. Authorize and arrange any needed medical, dental, ophthalmological and surgical treatment.

B. Powers: Guardian of the Person (§ 1151.051)

- 1. The right to have physical possession of the ward and to establish the ward's legal domicile.
- 2. The right to have visitation privileges of an inmate ward.
- 3. The power to consent to medical, psychiatric, and surgical treatment other than the in-patient psychiatric commitment of the ward, but including the right to make end-of-life decisions regarding the withdrawing of life support, hydration and nutrition (§166.039 Texas Health & Safety Code).
- 4. The power, on application and order, to establish a Special Needs Trust for the ward.
- 5. The power to transport the ward for a preliminary psychiatric examination pursuant to TEX. HLTH & SAF. CODE Ch. 573.
- 6. Any other powers specified granted in the order appointing the guardian.

B. Duties: Guardian of the Person (§ 1151.051)

- 1. The duty of care, control, and protection of the ward:
- 2. The duty to provide the ward with clothing, food, medical care, and shelter;
- 3. The duty to provide access to the Ward by relatives of the Ward. If such access is denied, it shall be provided upon order of the court.
- 4. The duty to advise the court immediately of any address changes of the guardian or the ward. Failure to do so is cause for removal of the guardian and cancellation of all Letters of Guardianship; (TEX. EST. CODE § 1203.051)
- 5. The duty to immediately advise the Court and any relatives of the Ward who have elected to receive notice if:
 - a) the ward dies, any funeral arrangements and the ward's final resting place;
 - b) the ward turns eighteen;
 - c) the ward is admitted to an acute care medical facility for three days or more;
 - d) the ward's residence has changed; or the ward is

entrenamiento educacional y oportunidades sociales v vocacionales.

5. Autorizar y arreglar cualquier necesidad medica, dental, oftalmologica y tratamiento quirurgico.

B. Los Poderes del Guardián de la Persona (§ 1151.051)

- 1. El derecho de tener posesión física del sujeto de la custodia y stablecer el domicilio legal del sujeto de la custodia;
- 2. El derecho a tener privilegios de visita de una sala de recluso.
- 3. El poder de aprobar el tratamiento medico, psiquiátrico y quirúrgico, pero no incluye el poder de ingresar el sujeto de la custodia a tratamiento psiquiátrico. Este poder incluye el derecho de tomar decisiones del fin de vida que se tratan de quitar aparatos que prolongan la vida, la hidratación y la nutrición (§166.039 Texas Health & Safety Code).
- 4. El poder, después de la aplicación y el orden, a establecer un Fideicomiso para Necesidades Especiales para el pupilo.
- 5. El poder para el transporte el sujeto para un examen psiquiátrico preliminar. TEX. HLTH & SAF. CODE Ch. 573.
- 6. Cualquier otro poder especificado en la orden designando el guardián.

B. Los Deberes del Guardián de la Persona (§ 1151.051)

- 1. La obligación del cuido, control y la protección del sujeto de la custodia;
- 2. La obligación de proveer la ropa, la comida, el cuido medico y el albergue al sujeto de la custodia;
- 3. La obligación de facilitar el acceso a la sala de los familiares de la Ward. Si se le niega el acceso, que será suministrada a orden de la corte.
- 4. La obligación de informar al juzgado inmediatamente de cualquier cambio de dirección del guardián o del sujeto de la custodia. La falta de actuar así es razón para quitar el guardián y cancelar todas Las Cartas de La Custodia; (TEX. EST. CODE § 1203.051)
- 5. La obligación de informar inmediatamente a la Corte y los familiares de los Ward, que hayan optado por recibir aviso si:
 - a) el pupilo muere, los arreglos funerarios y lugar de descanso final de la sala;
 - b) el pupilo cumpla dieciocho años:
 - c) la sala es admitido en un centro médico de atención aguda durante tres días o más:
 - d) la residencia del tutela ha cambiado; o la sala se

staying at a location other than the ward's residence for a period that exceeds one calendar week.

- e) if you or any other person or entity has been appointed the conservator of the ward or if adoption has occurred.
- 6. The duty to cooperate with the Court Visitor assigned annually, or at more frequent intervals, to assess the condition of the Ward.
- 7. The duty, upon appointment and annually, to explain to the Ward the "Ward's Bill of Rights" (attached) in the Ward's native language or preferred mode of communication and in a manner accessible to the ward.
- 8. The duty to file an **annual report** setting forth specific information regarding the condition of the ward from a medical and social standpoint. It should be filed within 30 days after receipt. (TEX. EST. CODE § 1163.101)

WARNING: Letters of Guardianship EXPIRE one year and four months after the date of issuance unless renewed. (§ 1106.002) The clerk cannot renew the letters until the guardian has filed the required annual report for the guardian of the person (TEX. EST. CODE § 1106.003(b).

- queda en un lugar distinto de la residencia de la sala por un período que exceda de una semana calendario.
- e) si usted o cualquier otra persona o entidad ha sido nombrado el conservador del tutela o si se ha producido la adopción.
- 6. El deber de cooperar con el Visitador Corte asignado anualmente, o con mayor frecuencia, para evaluar la condición del tutela.
- 7. El deber, al nombramiento y al año, para explicar a la sala de la "Carta de Derechos de Tutela" (que se anexo) en el idioma nativo de la sala o en el modo preferido de comunicación y de una manera accesible para el tutela.
- 8. La obligación de registrar un **reportaje anual** estipulando información especifica de la condición del sujeto de la custodia del punto de vista médica y social. Se debe registrar el reportaje dentro de 30 días después de recibirlo. (TEX. EST. CODE § 1163.101)

AVISO: Las Cartas de la Custodia SE VENCEN un año y cuatro meses después de la fecha de emisión a menos que las cartas estén renovadas. (§ 1106.002) La secretaria del juzgado no puede renovar las cartas hasta que el guardián registre los reportes anuales necesarios para el guardián de la persona. (TEX. EST. CODE § 1106.003(b).

Cause No. / No. de Causa

COURT INSTRUCTIONS: GUARDIAN OF THE ESTATE INSTRUCCIONES DE LA CORTE PARA EL GUARDIAN DE LA HEREDAD

(Revised July 2015// Revisado Julio 2015)

As a duly-appointed Guardian of the Estate, you are hereby advised by the Court that you <u>must</u> do the following: (All section references are to the Texas Estates Code unless otherwise indicated.)

Como El Guardián designado con la responsabilidad de la heredad, La Corte se le notifica que usted <u>debe</u> hacer lo siguiente: (Todas las referencias a las secciones son del Código Estates de Texas [Texas Estates Code] a menos que hay otras indicaciones al contrario.)

Steve M. King, Judge / Juez Probate Court #1 Tarrant County, Texas

Corte Testamentaria #1 Condado de Tarrant, Texas

I acknowledge receipt of a copy of these instructions.

I further acknowledge that I attended the Court's guardianship training class on ______, 20___.

A. Fiduciary Responsibility: (§§ 1151ff) As a guardian, you are a <u>fiduciary</u>, a position of the highest trust and responsibility with respect to the ward, keeping all affairs confidential; maintaining accurate and complete financial records and ensuring that all dealings undertaken on behalf of the ward, such as the purchase of goods and services, are properly completed.

Avoid **conflicts of interest** (and potential removal and personal liability) by: 1) **not** commingling your personal funds with the funds of the ward; 2) **not** borrowing money from or lending money to the ward; 3) **not** selling or encumbering real or personal property, or any interest therein, to yourself, a relative, friend or business acquaintance.

As a fiduciary, you and your bond surety may be held <u>liable</u> for any breach of your fiduciary duties. The requirements of the Estates Code are clear regarding your responsibilities.

Yo, guardián del sujeto de esta custodia, afirmo que he leído y entiendo lo anterior y he recibido una copia de estas instrucciones.

Yo reconoso que assiste la clase de entrenamineto el , 20 .

Name/Nombre:
Guardian/ Guardián Date/ Fecha

Name Printed/ Nombre en letra de molde

A. Responsabilidad Fiduciaria: (§§ 1151ff) Como guardián usted esta en una fiduciaria. Es una posición que lleva un alto grado de confianza y responsabilidad al sujeto de la custodia. Los deberes del guardián incluyen: mantener todos los asuntos confidenciales; mantener los archivos financieros en una forma completa y precisa; asegurar que todos los tratos hechos por parte del sujeto de la custodia como la compra de bienes y servicios, se completan en una forma apropiada.

Para evitar **conflictos de interés** (y deposición y riesgo personal potencial): 1) **no** se mezcla sus fondos personales con los fondos del pupilo; 2) **no** pide prestado ni prestar dinero a el pupilo; 3) **no** vende ni endeuda bienes o propiedad personal o cualquier interés similar a usted mismo, un pariente, un amigo o un conocido de negocios.

Con el poder fiduciario usted y su fianza pueden ser <u>responsables</u> por cualquier violación de sus deberes fiduciarios. Los requisitos del Código Testamentario son claros en cuanto a sus responsabilidades.

- **B.** Qualify as Guardian: Within twenty (20) days of receiving the order appointing you as guardian (§ 1105.002):
 - 1. Take and file an oath (§ 1105.051);
 - 2. File the required *bond*, (§ 1105.101), and
- 3. Obtain *Letters of Guardianship* from the probate clerk's office (§ 1106.001).
- C. Limited Power of Guardian to Act Without Court Authority (§ 1151.103) Without prior authorization by the court, the guardian may only: 1. Purchase liability and property insurance; 2.Pay taxes, court costs, & bond premiums; 3.Release liens upon final payment; 4.Vote stocks; 5.Pay calls and assessments.

You are not authorized or empowered to do <u>any other</u> <u>actions</u> without **prior approval** of the court or **ratification** by the court upon your application. You and your bond surety can be held liable for failure to get court approval before taking action or spending estate money. If in doubt, ask your attorney.

- **D. Take Possession of all Property** of the Ward Immediately upon receiving Letters of Guardian-ship, collect and take possession of all personal property and business records of the estate. (§ 1151.152) This may include, as necessary:
- 1. Security Change the locks on real property;
- **2.** <u>Storage</u> Place non-perishable personal property in insured storage;
- **3.** <u>Perishable Property</u> Obtain permission to sell perishable personal property (§ 1158.051) <u>after</u> the Inventory has been filed and approved;
- **4.** Accounts and Investments Set up appropriate accounts for the Guardianship funds. (All Guardianship funds must be deposited in insured accounts in the name of the Guardianship. Retain in a checking account only such funds reasonably necessary for the current support and maintenance of the Ward. You are required to invest all additional funds in insured, interest-bearing accounts. (Do not commingle Social Security Benefits with other estate accounts and non-probate assets. You need only to account to the Social Security Administration for the use of these funds);
- 5. <u>Cancel Credit Cards</u> issued in the Ward's name and send written notice to credit reporting agencies that the Ward has been declared incapacitated and will not be making any loans or accepting "pre-approved" credit

- **B.** Calificarse como Guardián: Dentro de veinte (20) días de recibir la orden que le designa a usted como guardián usted debe (§ 1105.002):
- 1. Juramentarse y archivar el juramento (§ 1105.051);
 - 2. Archivar la *fianza* designada, (§ 1105.101), y
- 3. Obtener *Cartas de Custodia* de la oficina de la secretaria del juzgado (§ 1106.001).
- C. El Poder del Guardián Limitado para Actuar sin Autoridad de la Corte (§ 1151.103) Sin autorización previo de la corte el guardián solo puede: 1. Comprar seguro de riesgo y de propiedad; 2. Pagar impuestos, costos de corte y primas de fianza; 3. Liberar deudas al hacer el pago; 4. Votar acciones; 5. Visitar y opinar sobre el sujeto de la custodia.

<u>Cualquier otra acción</u> del guardián debe ser con la **autorización previa** de la corte o ser **ratificado** por la corte. Usted y su fianza pueden ser responsables por la falta de conseguir aprobación de la corte antes de actuar o gastar el dinero de la heredad. Si usted tiene dudas pregúntale a su abogado.

- **D. Poseer Toda La Propiedad** del sujeto de la custodia inmediatamente después de recibir Cartas de la Custodia, <u>reunir y poseer toda la propiedad personal y documentos de negocio de la heredad</u>. (§ 1151.152) Este puede incluir cuando sea necesario:
- 1. Seguridad Cambie las cerraduras en los bienes;
- **2.** <u>Almacenaje</u> Ponga propiedad personal no corruptible en almacenaje asegurado;
- **3.** <u>Propiedad Perecedero</u> Obtenga permiso para vender propiedad personal corruptible (§ 1158.051) <u>después</u> de que el inventario ha sido archivado y aprobado;
- 4. <u>Cuentas e Inversiones</u> Establezca <u>cuentas</u> apropiadas para los fondos de la Custodia. (Todos los fondos de la Custodia deben ser depositados in cuentas aseguradas con el nombre de la Custodia. Retenga en una cuenta de cheques solamente los fondos necesarios para el apoyo y mantenimiento actual del pupilo. Debe invertir todos los fondos adicionales en cuentas aseguradas que ganan interés. (No se mezcla los beneficios de Seguridad Social con otras cuentas de la heredad y posesiones no testamentarias. Su responsabilidad es a la Administración de Seguro Social para el uso de estos fondos);
- **5.** <u>Cancela Tarjetas de Crédito</u> distribuidas con el nombre del pupilo. Envié notificación escrita a las agencias de reportaje de crédito que ha sido declarado que el sujeto de la custodia esta incapacitado

cards.

- **E.** Manage the Property of the Ward as a "prudent person would manage one's own property." (§ 1151.151)
- 1. Spending Money Obtain a written order of this Court authorizing any expenditure of Guardianship funds **before** any such expenditure is made. Get an order for a monthly allowance for the maintenance and support of the Ward.
- **2.** Expenditures for Support A parent of a minor ward has a legal duty to support the child from his own resources. Absent a showing that the parent is unable to support the child, the parent has no authority as guardian to invade either the income or corpus of the child's estate. (§ 1156.051)
- **3.** Sales and Leases Obtain a written order of this Court before attempting to sell, lease, transfer or otherwise dispose of any non-cash asset of the Guardianship;
- **4. Insurance** Obtain adequate health for the ward, if possible; obtain adequate property insurance on all noncash assets and, when funds are available, make appropriate funeral and burial arrangements.
- **5.** Collect all debts, rentals, or claims due to the ward, and, if necessary, with court permission, litigate on behalf of the ward.
- **6. Creditor's Claims** must be very carefully handled. Consult your attorney. Your improper approval of a claim or your failure to timely act on a claim can result in your <u>personal</u> liability.
- 7. Loans Under certain circumstances, the court may authorize a guardian to mortgage or pledge estate property as security on a loan: (§ 1161.051) or sale of estate property (§ 1158)
- **8. Gifts** The guardian has <u>no authority to make a gift</u>, absent specific authorization
- **F. Filing an Inventory** Within 30 days after qualification, the guardian must file a sworn inventory, appraisement and list of claims due the estate of the ward. (§ 1154.001)

- y no pedirá prestamos ni aceptara tarjetas de crédito "pre-aprobadas."
- E. Administra la Propiedad del pupilo en la misma manera que "una persona prudente administraría su propia propiedad." (§ 1151.151)
- 1. **Desembolsar Dinero** Obtenga una orden escrita de esta Corte autorizando <u>cualquier desembolso</u> de fondos de la Custodia **antes** de realizar tal desembolso. Obtenga una orden para <u>la concesión mensual</u> para el mantenimiento y apoyo del pupilo.
- 2. Desembolsos de Apoyo Un padre de un sujeto de la custodia menor de edad tiene el deber legal para apoyar el menor de los recursos del padre. El padre no tiene la autoridad como guardián para invadir a los ingresos o el valor principal de la heredad del menor a menos que el padre muestra que no es capaz de apoyar al menor. (§ 1156.051)
- 3. Venta y Contratos de Arrendamiento Obtenga una orden escrita de esta Corte antes de intentar vender, arrendar, transferir o disponer de cualquier posesión no al contado de la Custodia.;
- **4. Seguro** Obtenga seguro de salud adecuado para el pupilo cuando posible; obtenga seguro de propiedad adecuado en todas las posesiones no al contado y realiza planes apropiados para el funeral y entierro cuando los fondos estén disponibles.
- **5. Cobra** todas las deudas, alquileres, o peticiones que se debe pagar al sujeto de la custodia y cuando es necesario litiga por parte del sujeto de la custodia con permiso de la corte.;
- **6. Peticiones de Acreedores** se debe manejar con mucho cuidado. Consulte a su abogado. Su aprobación no apropiada de la petición o su falta de actuar a tiempo con una petición puede resultar en su responsabilidad personal.
- 7. **Prestamos** En ciertas circunstancias la corte puede autorizar una guardián para <u>hipotecar</u> o <u>comprometer</u> propiedad de la heredad como fianza de una persona: (§ 1161.051) o venta de la propiedad de la heredad (§ 1158)
- **8. Donaciones** El guardián <u>no tiene la autoridad para hacer una donación</u> sin autorización específica.
- F. Registrar un Inventario Dentro de 30 días de calificar, el guardián debe registrar un inventario, valoración y una lista de las peticiones que se deben entregar a la heredad del sujeto de la custodia bajo juramento. (§ 1154.001)

G. Notice to Creditors Within one month after qualification, the guardian (through an attorney) must publish a notice to creditors in a newspaper of general circulation in the county and file a copy of the notice and the publisher's affidavit. (§ 1153.001) Within four months after qualification, the guardian must give notice by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, to all secured creditors (§ 1153.003) and any general claimants if the guardian has actual knowledge of the debt or claim.

H. Accountings

- 1. Maintain an accurate record of all expenditures and receipts of Guardianship funds.
- 2. Within 60 days of the anniversary of your qualification, file your <u>Annual Account</u> in the form prescribed by the Court.

WARNING: Your Letters of Guardianship will EXPIRE one year and four months after the date of issuance unless they are renewed. The Probate Clerk cannot renew the letters until you have filed the required annual account for the guardian of the estate (§ 1106.002, 1106.003(b).

- 3. File your <u>Final Account</u> when the Guardianship is ready to be closed due to the death of the Ward, the Ward regaining capacity or (if Guardian of a Minor) the Ward reaches 18 years of age;
- **I.** Address Changes Notify the Court <u>at once</u> if your address or the address of the Ward changes. Failure to do so is a cause for your removal. (§ 1203.051)
- **J.** Attorney's Fees Attorney's fees and expenses may be paid upon application and order, as any other expenditure, subject to the guidelines of the court for billing procedures
- **K.** Additional Rights and Obligations: the Guardian of the Estate has:
- 1. the right to have visitation privileges of an inmate ward.
- 2. The duty to immediately advise the Court and any relatives of the Ward who have elected to receive notice if:
 - a) the ward dies, any funeral arrangements and the

G. Notificación a Acreedores Dentro de un mes de calificar el guardián (a través de un abogado) debe publicar una notificación a los acreedores en un periódico de circulación general en el condado y registrar una copia de la notificación y la declaración del editor. (§ 1153.001) Dentro de cuatro meses después de calificar el guardián debe dar una notificación por correo certificado o registrado y pedir el regreso del recibo de todos los acreedores asegurados (§ 1153.003) y cualquier otra persona con quien el sujeto de la custodia tiene una deuda y tiene conocimiento actual de la deuda.

H. Contabilidad

- 1. Mantenga un archivo preciso de todos los desembolsos y recibos de los fondos de la Custodia.
- 2. Dentro de 60 días del aniversario de su calificación registre su <u>Contabilidad Anual</u> en la forma designada por la Corte.

AVISO: Sus Cartas de Custodia SE VENCERAN en un año y cuatro meses después de la fecha de emisión a menos que sean renovadas. La Secretaria de la Corte Testamentaria no puede renovar las cartas hasta que usted ha registrado la contabilidad anual designada para el guardián de la heredad (§ 1106.002, 1106.003(b).

- 3. Registre su <u>Contabilidad Final</u> cuando La Custodia este lista para cerrar debido a la muerte del sujecto de la custodia, cuando el pupilo recobra la capacidad o (si El Guardián de un Menor) el sujeto de la custodia cumpla 18 años:
- **I.** Cambios de Dirección Notifique a la Corte inmediatamente si su dirección o la dirección del pupilo cambien. La falta de notificar es causa para su disposición. (§ 1203.051)
- **J. Gastos para el Abogado** Los gastos y desembolsos para el abogado se deben pagar a solicitud y orden como cualquier otro desembolso, según las reglas de la corte por procedimientos de facturación.
- K. **Derechos y Obligaciones Adicionales**: el Guardián de la heredad tiene:
- 1. El derecho a tener privilegios de visita de un pupilo de recluso.
- 2. La obligación de informar inmediatamente a la Corte y los familiares de los pupilo, que hayan optado por recibir aviso si:
 - a) el pupilo muere, los arreglos funerarios y lugar

- ward's final resting place;
- b) the ward turns eighteen;
- c) the ward is admitted to an acute care medical facility for three days or more;
- d) the ward's residence has changed; or the ward is staying at a location other than the ward's residence for a period that exceeds one calendar week; and
- e) if you or any other person or entity has been appointed the conservator of the ward or if adoption has occurred.
- **L. Questions?** Consult with your attorney (not the Court) on any matter regarding this Guardianship that you do not understand.

de descanso final de la sala;

- b) el pupilo cumpla dieciocho años;
- c) el pupilo es admitido en un centro médico de atención aguda durante tres días o más;
- d) la residencia del tutela ha cambiado; o la sala se queda en un lugar distinto de la residencia de la tutela por un período que exceda de una semana calendario; y
- e) si usted o cualquier otra persona o entidad ha sido nombrado el conservador del tutela o si se ha producido la adopción.
- **L. Preguntas?** Consulta su abogado (no con la Corte) por cualquier asunto de esta Custodia que usted no entiende.

Ward's Bill of Rights

Texas Estates Code § 1151.351

A ward has all the rights, benefits, responsibilities, and privileges granted by the constitution and laws of this state and the United States, except where specifically limited by a court-ordered guardianship or where otherwise lawfully restricted. Unless a right is limited by a court or otherwise restricted by law, a ward has the right:

- 1. to have a copy of the guardianship order and letters of guardianship and contact information for the probate court that issued the order and letters;
- 2. to have a guardianship that encourages the development or maintenance of maximum self-reliance and independence in the ward with the eventual goal, if possible, of self-sufficiency;
- 3. to be treated with respect, consideration, and recognition of the ward's dignity and individuality;
- 4. to reside and receive support services in the most integrated setting, including home-based or other community-based settings, as required by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. Section 12131 et seq.);
- 5. to consideration of the ward's current and previously stated personal preferences, desires, medical and psychiatric treatment preferences, religious beliefs, living arrangements, and other preferences and opinions;
- 6. to financial self-determination for all public benefits after essential living expenses and health needs are met and to have access to a monthly personal allowance;
- 7. to receive timely and appropriate health care and medical treatment that does not violate the ward's rights granted by the constitution and laws of this state and the United States;
- 8. to exercise full control of all aspects of life not specifically granted by the court to the guardian;
- 9. to control the ward's personal environment based on the ward's preferences;
- 10. to complain or raise concerns regarding the guardian or guardianship to the court, including living arrangements, retaliation by the guardian, conflicts of interest between the guardian and service providers, or a violation of any rights under this section;
- 11. to receive notice in the ward's native language, or preferred mode of communication, and in a manner accessible to the ward, of a court proceeding to continue, modify, or terminate the guardianship and the opportunity to appear before the court to express the ward's preferences and concerns regarding whether the guardianship should be continued, modified, or terminated;
- 12. to have a court investigator, guardian ad litem, or attorney ad litem appointed by the court to investigate a complaint received by the court from the ward or any person about the guardianship;
- 13. to participate in social, religious, and recreational activities, training, employment, education, habilitation, and rehabilitation of the ward's choice in the most integrated setting;
 - 14. to self-determination in the substantial maintenance,

- disposition, and management of real and personal property after essential living expenses and health needs are met, including the right to receive notice and object about the substantial maintenance, disposition, or management of clothing, furniture, vehicles, and other personal effects;
- 15. to personal privacy and confidentiality in personal matters, subject to state and federal law;
- 16. to unimpeded, private, and uncensored communication and visitation with persons of the ward's choice, except that if the guardian determines that certain communication or visitation causes substantial harm to the ward:
 - A. the guardian may limit, supervise, or restrict communication or visitation, but only to the extent necessary to protect the ward from substantial harm; and
 - B. the ward may request a hearing to remove any restrictions on communication or visitation imposed by the guardian under Paragraph (A);
- 17. to petition the court and retain counsel of the ward's choice who holds a certificate required by Subchapter E, Chapter 1054, to represent the ward's interest for capacity restoration, modification of the guardianship, the appointment of a different guardian, or for other appropriate relief under this subchapter, including a transition to a supported decision-making agreement, except as limited by Section 1054.006;
- 18. to vote in a public election, marry, and retain a license to operate a motor vehicle, unless restricted by the court;
- 19. to personal visits from the guardian or the guardian's designee at least once every three months, but more often, if necessary, unless the court orders otherwise;
- 20. to be informed of the name, address, phone number, and purpose of Disability Rights Texas, an organization whose mission is to protect the rights of, and advocate for, persons with disabilities, and to communicate and meet with representatives of that organization;
- 21. to be informed of the name, address, phone number, and purpose of an independent living center, an area agency on aging, an aging and disability resource center, and the local mental health and intellectual and developmental disability center, and to communicate and meet with representatives from these agencies and organizations;
- 22. to be informed of the name, address, phone number, and purpose of the Judicial Branch Certification Commission and the procedure for filing a complaint against a certified guardian;
- 23. to contact the Department of Family and Protective Services to report abuse, neglect, exploitation, or violation of personal rights without fear of punishment, interference, coercion, or retaliation; and
- 24. to have the guardian, on appointment and on annual renewal of the guardianship, explain the rights delineated in this subsection in the ward's native language, or preferred mode of communication, and in a manner accessible to the ward.

Declaración de Derechos de Pupilo

Tejas Estates Código § 1151.351

Un pupilo cuenta con todos los derechos, beneficios, responsabilidades y privilegios otorgados por la Constitución y las leyes de este estado y los Estados Unidos, excepto en los casos específicamente limitado por una tutela ordenada por la corte, o cuando de otro modo legalmente restringido.

A menos que el derecho está limitado por un tribunal o de otra manera restringido por la ley, bajo la tutela tiene derecho a:

- 1. para tener una copia de la orden de tutela y cartas de tutela y la información de la corte testamentaria que emitió la orden y en contacto con las cartas;
- 2. tener una tutela que fomenta el desarrollo o mantenimiento de la máxima autonomía e independencia en la sala con el objetivo final, si es posible, de la autosuficiencia;
- 3. a ser tratado con respeto, consideración y el reconocimiento de la dignidad y la individualidad del pupilo;
- 4. para residir y recibir servicios de apoyo en el entorno más integrado, incluyendo el hogar o basado en otros entornos basados en la comunidad, como lo requiere el Título II de la Americans with Disabilities Act (42 USC Sección 12131 y ss.);
- 5. a la consideración de actuales y anteriormente indicadas las preferencias personales del pupilo, deseos, preferencias de tratamiento médico y psiquiátrico, creencias religiosas, arreglos de vivienda, y otras preferencias y opiniones;
- 6. a la autodeterminación financiera para se cumplan todos los beneficios públicos después de gastos de vida esenciales y las necesidades de salud y de tener acceso a un subsidio personal mensual;
- 7. para recibir atención de salud oportuna y apropiada y el tratamiento médico que no se violan los derechos del pupilo reconocidos por la constitución y las leyes de este estado y los Estados Unidos;
- 8. para ejercer un control total de todos los aspectos de la vida no específicamente otorgada por el tribunal para el tutor;
- 9. para controlar entorno personal del pupilo en base a las preferencias del pupilo;
- 10. para quejarse o plantean preocupaciones con respecto a la guarda o pupilo de la corte, incluyendo arreglos de vivienda, las represalias por el tutor, los conflictos de intereses entre el tutor y los proveedores de servicios, o una violación de ningún derecho bajo esta sección;
- 11. para recibir un aviso en el idioma nativo del pupilo, o el modo preferido de comunicación, y de una manera accesible para el pupilo, de un procedimiento judicial para continuar, modificar o terminar el pupilo y la oportunidad de comparecer ante el tribunal para expresar preferencias e intereses del pupilo con respecto a si la tutela debe continuar, modificar o cancelar;
- 12. para tener un investigador de la corte, tutor ad litem o abogado ad litem designado por el tribunal para investigar una denuncia recibida por el tribunal de la sala o cualquier persona acerca de la tutela;
- 13. para participar en actividades sociales, religiosas y recreativas, la formación, el empleo, la educación, la habilitación y la rehabilitación de la elección de la sala en el entorno más integrado;
- 14. a la libre determinación en el mantenimiento sustancial, disposición y gestión de los bienes muebles e inmuebles después

- de los gastos de vida esenciales y necesidades de salud se cumplan, incluido el derecho a recibir una notificación y el objeto sobre el mantenimiento sustancial, la disposición, o la gestión de ropa, muebles, vehículos, y otros efectos personales;
- 15. a la intimidad personal y la confidencialidad en asuntos personales, con sujeción a la ley estatal y federal;
- 16. para la comunicación sin impedimento, privado y sin censura y las visitas con las personas de la elección de la sala, a excepción de que si el tutor determina que cierta comunicación o visitas provoca un daño sustancial a la sala:
 - A. el tutor puede limitar, supervisar o restringir la comunicación o de visita, pero sólo en la medida necesaria para proteger la sala de daño sustancial; y
 - B. la sala puede solicitar una audiencia para eliminar cualquier restricción de la comunicación o visitas impuesto por el tutor en virtud del párrafo (A);
- 17. para solicitar a la corte y contratar a un abogado de la elección del pupilo que tiene un certificado requerido por el Subcapítulo E, Capítulo 1054, para representar los intereses del pupilo para la restauración de la capacidad, la modificación de la tutela, el nombramiento de un tutor diferente, o para otros alivio apropiado bajo este subcapítulo, incluyendo una transición a un acuerdo de la toma de decisiones con el apoyo, con excepción de lo limitado por la Sección 1054.006;
- 18. para votar en una elección pública, casarse, y mantener una licencia para operar un vehículo de motor, a no ser restringido por el tribunal;
- 19. a las visitas personales del tutor o persona designada por el tutor al menos una vez cada tres meses, pero con más frecuencia, si es necesario, a menos que el tribunal ordene lo contrario;
- 20. a ser informado del nombre, dirección, número de teléfono, y el propósito de Disability Rights Texas, una organización cuya misión es proteger los derechos de los y abogar por las personas con discapacidad, y para comunicarse y reunirse con representantes de esa organización;
- 21. para ser informado sobre el nombre, dirección, número de teléfono, y el propósito de un centro de vida independiente, una agencia de envejecimiento, un centro de recursos envejecimiento y la discapacidad, y la salud mental local y centro de discapacidad intelectual y del desarrollo, y para comunicar y conocer con representantes de estas agencias y organizaciones;
- 22. a ser informado del nombre, dirección, número de teléfono, y el propósito de la Comisión de Certificación Poder Judicial y el procedimiento para presentar una queja en contra de un tutor certificado;
- 23. en contacto con el Departamento de Familia y Servicios de Protección reportar abuso, negligencia, explotación o violación de los derechos personales sin temor al castigo, interferencia, coacción o represalia; y
- 24. Para que el tutor, el nombramiento y la renovación anual de la tutela, explican los derechos delineados en este inciso en el idioma nativo del pupilo, o el modo preferido de comunicación, y de una manera accesible para el pupilo.

Ward's Bill of Rights

Information to be furnished to the Ward Información a facilitar a la pupilo:

Disability Rights Texas

Headquarters

2222 West Braker Lane Austin, Texas 78758 1 (512) 454-4816(Voice) 1 (512) 323-0902(Fax)

1 (866) 362-2851(Video Phone)

El Paso Regional Office

300 E. Main, Suite 205 El Paso, TX 79901 1 (915) 542-0585 (Voice) 1 (915) 542-2676(Fax) 1 (866) 362-2851(Video Phone)

West Texas Regional Office

4747 South Loop 289, Suite 120 Lubbock, TX 79424 1 (806) 765-7794(Voice) 1 (806) 765-0496(Fax) 1 (866) 362-2851(Video Phone)

Central Texas Regional Office

2222 West Braker Lane Austin, TX 78758 1 (512) 454-4816(Voice) 1 (512) 302-4936(Fax) 1 (866) 362-2851(Video Phone)

North Texas Regional Office

1420 West Mockingbird Lane, Suite 450 Dallas, TX 75247-4932 1 (214) 630-0916 (Voice) 1 (214) 630-3472 (Fax) 1 (866) 362-2851(Video Phone)

East Texas Regional Office

1500 McGowen, Suite 100 Houston, TX 77004 1 (713) 974-7691(Voice) 1 (713) 974-7695(Fax) 1 (866) 362-2851(Video Phone)

South Texas Regional Office

6800 Park Ten Blvd., Suite 208-N San Antonio, TX 78213 1 (210) 737-0499(Voice) 1 (210) 737-2403(Fax) 1 (866) 362-2851(Video Phone)

Judicial Branch Certification Commission

205 W. 14th, Ste. 600 Austin, TX 78701 512-475-4368

Purpose: established to oversee the certification, registration, and licensing of court reporters and court reporting firms, guardians, process servers, and licensed court interpreters.

Department of Family and Protective Services

701 W. 51st St. Austin, Texas 78751 Ph: (512) 438-4800

Report Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400 to report abuse, neglect, exploitation, or violation of personal rights Information on regional offices available at www.dfps.state.tx.us/

Local independent living center	(name, address, phone number, and purpose)	
Local area agency on aging nan	ne, address, phone number, and purpose)	
Local aging and disability resou	arce center (name, address, phone number, and purpose)	
Local mental health and intellec	etual and developmental disability center (name, address, phone n	number, and purpose)

Appendix Ak: To be filed by the Guardian of the Person within thirty days of appointment.

	No			
GUARDIANSHIP O		§	IN THE PR	OBATE COURT
		§ § §	NUMBER (ONE FOR
AN INCAPACITATI	ED PERSON	§ §	TARRANT	COUNTY, TEXAS
	INITIAL REPORT OF	GUARDIAN OF T	HE PERSON	
	ury, I provide the following inform			
	(Last)	(First)		(Maiden)
Date of Birth:		Place of Birth:	-	
Social Security N	0.	Drivers' Lic-S	tate	#
Relationship to W	Vard:			
Home Address:				
	(Street)	(City)	(State)	(Zip Code)
Employer:		Occupation:		
Bus. Address: _				
	(Street)	(City)	(State)	` 1
Home Ph (_)	Work Ph	()	
2 CHADDIAN'S SI	oouse.			
2. GUAKDIAN'S SI	POUSE:(Last)	(First)	(Middle)	(Maiden)
Date of Birth:	` /	Place of Birth:		(Maiden)
				#
Deletional in to W	0	Drivers Lic-S	tate	#
Relationship to w	Vard:			
nome Address.	(Street)	(City)	(Stata)	(Zin Codo)
Home Ph (Work Ph	(State)	
)	WOIKTII	()	
3. RELATIVES WE	IO WILL ALWAYS KNOW HO	OW TO CONTA	ACT GUARD	DIAN:
3.7				
Address:			_/	
	(Street)	(City)	(State)	(Zip Code)
Name:		Phone: ((—-P ====)
Address:			_/	
	(Street)	(City)	(State)	(Zip Code)
	,	37	,	(1 /
4. WARD :				
	(Last)	(First)	(Middle)	(Maiden)
SSN:		Date of Birth:		Age
Address:				
	(Street)	(City)	(State)	(Zip Code)
Home Ph (_)	Work Ph	()	
YOU MUST IMM	EDIATELY INFORM THE COURT	OF ANY CHANG	E IN YOUR A	DDRESS OR THE WARD'S.
	TELONIC AND CUD CONTROL	man er	7 1 .1 .	
	ITIONS AND CIRCUMSTANC		ard resides in	
	me ☐ the guardian's home		` *	
	e □ a hospital/medical facility		ling/group hoi	me
other		701		
Facility Name:		Phone	·	

6.	PROPERTY MANGEMENT I have possession and control of the Ward's estate. (If "YES") I was appointed Guardian of the Estate. (If "NO", mark below as applicable to Ward's estate)	YES □ NO □ YES □ NO □
	Parent (Natural Guardian) Managing Conservator (a copy of Court Order is attached) The Ward is a beneficiary of a §867 Guardianship Management Trust (If 'YES,' give details under #11, below.)	YES □ NO □ YES □ NO □ YES □ NO □
7.		
	Address:	
	(Street) (City) (State	(Zip Code)
8.	BASIS FOR INCAPACITY ☐ Intellectual Disability: ☐ Mild ☐ Moderate ☐ Profound/Severe ☐ Chronic Mental Illness ☐ Stroke ☐ Head Injury ☐ Other: Other Medical Conditions:	☐ Alzheimer's Dementia
9.	A. medical problems/conditions:	
	B. Prognosis for the Ward: C. Ward's medical team: (Medical providers seen regularly) Specialty Primary Care GOOD □ STA	
10.	Give a brief medical history of the Ward, including any recent hospitalization. O. PHYSICAL CONDITION of the Ward:	
	A. Generally describe the Ward's physical condition:	
	B. On-going medical services the Ward receives (such as home health care,	etc)
	C. Does the Ward have unmet physical needs? (dentures, hearing aid, glasse	s, surgery, therapy)
	D. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet physical needs:	
9.	Indicate any Government/Social Programs in which the Ward participates, in or to others for the benefit of the Ward	
	☐ Social Security	Value
	Representative Payee Veterans Administration Representative Payee SSI Disability	
	Representative Payee	
	☐ Government Pension (Specify)	
	☐ Rail road Retirement	
	☐ Trust Income (Specify)	
	□ Other (Specify)	

If "YES", give name of employer or workshop and describe employment.	A. The Ward "works".		□ YES □ NO	
If "YES", describe: C. Transportation to activities is being provided for the Ward. D. The Ward goes to a senior citizen facility or adult care facility. E. Ward's unmet social needs: F. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet social needs: IO.The INTELLECTUAL/EDUCATIONAL CONDITION of the Ward is as follows: A. The Ward responds to his/her name B. The Ward responds to his/her name B. The Ward can communicate verbally. If "NO", how does the Ward communicate? C. The Ward is able to read. D. The Ward is able to read. D. The Ward is able to write. E. The Ward is able to write. E. The Ward is able to following program of study: F. The Ward participates in the following programs: G. Ward's unmet intellectual needs: H/. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet intellectual needs: II. ADDITIONAL CONCERNS, recommendations and/or comments concerning the Ward which I wish to si with the Court: 12. WARD'S BILL OF RIGHTS On the "Ward's Bill of Rights" in the ward's native language, or preferred mode of communication, and in a manuaccessible to the Ward. 13. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. DECLARATION "I, (Full Legal Name) (County) County, Texas, declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on (Date) Declarant Printed Name of Declarant ORDER APPROVING INITIAL REPORT OF GUARDIAN OF THE PERSON On this day, came on to be considered the Initial Report of the Guardian of the Person, and the Court, having considered the same, finds the Report complies with the requisites and policies of the Court and should be appreconsidered the same, finds the Report complies with the requisites and policies of the Court and should be appreconsidered the same, finds the Report complies with the requisites and policies of the Court and should be appreconsidered the same, finds the Report complies with the requisites and policies of the Court and should be apprecated.	If "YES", give name of employer or workshop and	d describe employment		
C. Transportation to activities is being provided for the Ward. D. The Ward goes to a senior citizen facility or adult care facility. E. Ward's unmet social needs: F. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet social needs:	TOUXTECH 1 1			
D. The Ward goes to a senior citizen facility or adult care facility. E. Ward's unmet social needs: F. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet social needs: 10.The INTELLECTUAL/EDUCATIONAL CONDITION of the Ward is as follows: A. The Ward responds to his/her name B. The Ward can communicate verbally. If "NO", how does the Ward communicate? C. The Ward is able to read. D. The Ward is able to write. E. The Ward is salte to write. E. The Ward is attending school. If "YES", name the school and the program of study: F. The Ward participates in the following programs: G. Ward's unmet intellectual needs: H/. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet intellectual needs: H/. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet intellectual needs: 11. ADDITIONAL CONCERNS, recommendations and/or comments concerning the Ward which I wish to si with the Court: 12. WARD'S BILL OF RIGHTS On	C. Transportation to activities is being provided	for the Ward.	□ YES □ NO	
10.The INTELLECTUAL/EDUCATIONAL CONDITION of the Ward is as follows:	D. The Ward goes to a senior citizen facility or a	dult care facility.	☐ YES ☐ NO	
10.The INTELLECTUAL/EDUCATIONAL CONDITION of the Ward is as follows: A. The Ward responds to his/her name B. The Ward responds to his/her name B. The Ward can communicate verbally. If "NO", how does the Ward communicate? C. The Ward is able to read. D. The Ward is able to write. E. The Ward is attending school. If "YES", name the school and the program of study: F. The Ward participates in the following programs: G. Ward's unmet intellectual needs: H/. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet intellectual needs: H/. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet intellectual needs: 11. ADDITIONAL CONCERNS, recommendations and/or comments concerning the Ward which I wish to swith the Court: 12. WARD'S BILL OF RIGHTS On In Explained the rights delineated the "Ward's Bill of Rights" in the ward's native language, or preferred mode of communication, and in a manneaccessible to the Ward. 13. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. DECLARATION "I,	E. Ward's unmet social needs: F. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet so	ocial needs:		
A. The Ward responds to his/her name B. The Ward can communicate verbally. If "NO", how does the Ward communicate? C. The Ward is able to read. D. The Ward is able to write. E. The Ward is attending school. If "YES", name the school and the program of study: F. The Ward participates in the following programs: G. Ward's unmet intellectual needs: H. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet intellectual needs: H. ADDITIONAL CONCERNS, recommendations and/or comments concerning the Ward which I wish to si with the Court: 11. ADDITIONAL CONCERNS 1 explained the rights delineated the "Ward's Bill of Rights" in the ward's native language, or preferred mode of communication, and in a manner accessible to the Ward. 13. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. 14. DECLARATION "I,	- Guardian 31 fair 101 meeting ward 3 diffict 30	<u></u>		
B. The Ward can communicate verbally. If "NO", how does the Ward communicate? C. The Ward is able to read. D. The Ward is able to write. E. The Ward is able to write. E. The Ward is athered is attending school. If "YES", name the school and the program of study: F. The Ward participates in the following programs: G. Ward's unmet intellectual needs: H/. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet intellectual needs: H/. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet intellectual needs: I1. ADDITIONAL CONCERNS, recommendations and/or comments concerning the Ward which I wish to si with the Court:	10.The INTELLECTUAL/EDUCATIONAL CON	DITION of the Ward is	as follows:	
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C. The Ward is able to read. D. The Ward is able to write. E. The Ward is attending school. If "YES", name the school and the program of study: F. The Ward participates in the following programs: G. Ward's unmet intellectual needs: H. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet intellectual needs: Ward's unmet intellectual needs: H. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet intellectual needs: ### J. Explained the rights delineated the "Ward's Bill of Rights" in the ward's native language, or preferred mode of communication, and in a mannea accessible to the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. ### J. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the				
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E. The Ward is attending school. If "YES", name the school and the program of study: F. The Ward participates in the following programs: G. Ward's unmet intellectual needs: H/. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet intellectual needs: H/. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet intellectual needs: 11. ADDITIONAL CONCERNS, recommendations and/or comments concerning the Ward which I wish to si with the Court:			□ YES □ NO	
If "YES", name the school and the program of study: F. The Ward participates in the following programs: G. Ward's unmet intellectual needs: H/. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet intellectual needs: 11. ADDITIONAL CONCERNS, recommendations and/or comments concerning the Ward which I wish to si with the Court: 12. WARD'S BILL OF RIGHTS On J. I explained the rights delineated the "Ward's Bill of Rights" in the ward's native language, or preferred mode of communication, and in a manneaccessible to the Ward. 13. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. 14. DECLARATION "I, Grull Legal Name) County, Texas, declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on (Date) ORDER APPROVING INITIAL REPORT OF GUARDIAN OF THE PERSON On this day, came on to be considered the Initial Report of the Guardian of the Person, and the Court, having considered the same, finds the Report complies with the requisites and policies of the Court and should be apprent of the Court and should be app	D. The Ward is able to write.		□ YES □ NO	
F. The Ward participates in the following programs: G. Ward's unmet intellectual needs: H/. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet intellectual needs: 11. ADDITIONAL CONCERNS, recommendations and/or comments concerning the Ward which I wish to si with the Court: 12. WARD'S BILL OF RIGHTS On 13. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. 14. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. 15. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. 16. PECLARATION 17. PECLARATION 18. (Full Legal Name) County, Texas, declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. County) Executed on (County) Declarant Printed Name of Declarant ORDER APPROVING INITIAL REPORT OF GUARDIAN OF THE PERSON On this day, came on to be considered the Initial Report of the Guardian of the Person, and the Court, having considered the same, finds the Report complies with the requisites and policies of the Court and should be apprent of the Court and should be appr	E. The Ward is attending school.		□ YES □ NO	
F. The Ward participates in the following programs: G. Ward's unmet intellectual needs: H/. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet intellectual needs: 11. ADDITIONAL CONCERNS, recommendations and/or comments concerning the Ward which I wish to si with the Court: 12. WARD'S BILL OF RIGHTS On 13. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. 14. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. 15. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a current photograph of the Ward. 16. PECLARATION 17. PECLARATION 18. (Full Legal Name) County, Texas, declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. County) Executed on (County) Declarant Printed Name of Declarant ORDER APPROVING INITIAL REPORT OF GUARDIAN OF THE PERSON On this day, came on to be considered the Initial Report of the Guardian of the Person, and the Court, having considered the same, finds the Report complies with the requisites and policies of the Court and should be apprent of the Court and should be appr	If "YES", name the school and the program of stu-	dy:		
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11. ADDITIONAL CONCERNS, recommendations and/or comments concerning the Ward which I wish to swith the Court: 12. WARD'S BILL OF RIGHTS On	G. Ward's unmet intellectual needs:			
11. ADDITIONAL CONCERNS, recommendations and/or comments concerning the Ward which I wish to swith the Court: 12. WARD'S BILL OF RIGHTS On	H/. Guardian's Plan for meeting Ward's unmet in	tellectual needs:		
with the Court: 12. WARD'S BILL OF RIGHTS On				
"I,		age, or preferred mode of	, I explained the rights delineated f communication, and in a manner	in
"I,	13. PHOTOGRAPH - If possible, please attach a cur	rrent photograph of the V	Vard.	
County, Texas, declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on	<u>De</u>	CLARATION		
County, Texas, declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on	"I,, the gua	ardian of the person for _	(Ward's Name)	, ın
County) Executed on	County, Texas, declare under penalty	of perjury that the forego	ing is true and correct.	
ORDER APPROVING INITIAL REPORT OF GUARDIAN OF THE PERSON On this day, came on to be considered the Initial Report of the Guardian of the Person, and the Court, having considered the same, finds the Report complies with the requisites and policies of the Court and should be appr	(County)		-	
ORDER APPROVING INITIAL REPORT OF GUARDIAN OF THE PERSON On this day, came on to be considered the Initial Report of the Guardian of the Person, and the Court, having considered the same, finds the Report complies with the requisites and policies of the Court and should be appropriate to the court and should be appropriate to the court and should be appropriated by the court and should be appropriated	Executed on (Date)			
ORDER APPROVING INITIAL REPORT OF GUARDIAN OF THE PERSON On this day, came on to be considered the Initial Report of the Guardian of the Person, and the Court, having considered the same, finds the Report complies with the requisites and policies of the Court and should be appr		Declarant		
On this day, came on to be considered the Initial Report of the Guardian of the Person, and the Court, having considered the same, finds the Report complies with the requisites and policies of the Court and should be appr		Printed Name of Dec	larant	
considered the same, finds the Report complies with the requisites and policies of the Court and should be appr	ORDER APPROVING INITIAL F	 Report of Guardian (OF THE PERSON	
and it is hereby APPROVED;	considered the same, finds the Report complies with the It is therefore ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DEC	he requisites and policies	of the Court and should be appro-	
SIGNED	SIGNED			
Judge Presiding Rev:July 2015		Judge Presiding		

Appendix Al:	No	-
ESTATE OF	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$	PROBATE COURT
	 §	Number of
	§ §	
DECEASED	§	TARRANT COUNTY, TEXAS
	AFFIDAVIT OF NOTICE BY A IN PROCEEDING TO DETERMIN (PURSUANT TO TEXAS ESTATES CODE	IE HEIRSHIP
THE STATE OF TEXAS } COUNTY OF TARRANT }		
202.057, the following information	_, having been duly sworn, herel is true and correct:	by state that, pursuant to Texas Estates Code §
1. I am the Applicant in the ab	pove styled and numbered estate.	
2. Citation in this proceeding	was served as required by Texas	Estates Code, Chapter 202, Subchapter B.
3. The name of each person up a.b.	pon whom citation was served is:	•
4. The name of each person wa.b.	who waived citation under Texas	Estates Code § 202.056 is:
Copies of all citations serve are attached hereto.	ed, proof of delivery of service of	the citations, and waivers of citation received
Signed		
	Affiant	
SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE above styled and numbered estate of	DRE ME by	, as Personal Representative of the
	Notary Pu	blic, State of Texas

		No.		
Estat	E OF		§ §	PROBATE COURT
			\$ \$ \$ \$ \$	Number of
DECE/	ASED		§ §	TARRANT COUNTY, TEXAS
		<u>IN PROCEEDING</u>	CERTIFICATE O TO DETERMINI EXAS ESTATES CODE S	E HEIRSHIP
Ιh	nereby certify that, p	oursuant to Texas Estates Co	ode § 202.057, 1	he following information is true and correct:
1.	I am counsel for t	he Applicant in the above st	tyled and numb	ered estate.
2.	Citation in this pr	oceeding was served as requ	uired by Texas	Estates Code, Chapter 202, Subchapter B.
3.	The name of each a. b.	person upon whom citation	n was served is:	
4.	The name of each a. b.	person who waived citation	n under Texas E	Estates Code § 202.056 is:
5.	Copies of all citat are attached heret		ry of service of	the citations, and waivers of citation received
	Signed			
		PRINTED NAME:		
		State Bar No. Address:		
		Telephone: Fax: email:		

COUNSEL FOR PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Appendix Am:		
No	0	
ESTATE OF	§ 8	PROBATE COURT
	\$ \$ \$ \$	NUMBER ONE
DECEASED	§ §	TARRANT COUNTY, TEXAS
Answer of Attor	rney Ad Litem in F	Ieirship Proceeding
TO THE HONORABLE JUDGE OF SAID CO	URT:	
Now comes, appointed the above-referenced Decedent, pursuant to § 2 follows:	d by this Court as a 02.009 of the Tex	Attorney Ad Litem for the unknown heirs of as Estates Code and makes this Answer as
 Your Attorney Ad Litem asserts a Gene Applicant to prove all claims, charges an the Constitution and Laws of the State of 	d allegations by a p	pectfully requests that the Court require the preponderance of the evidence as required by
2. Your Attorney Ad Litem reserves the authorized by the Texas Rules of Civil F		d answer further in this proceeding in the manner
WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDE costs be adjudged against the Applicant; and that		ey Ad Litem prays that the Applicant take nothing, that out day.
Dated:	Respecti	fully submitted,
	Attorney <attorne< td=""><td>Ad Litem ey Data></td></attorne<>	Ad Litem ey Data>
(Cer	rtificate of Servic	e)
I hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the by electronicile transmission on this		ment was served upon the following counsel
Name e-mail (Repeat as Necessary)	Address	
	Ī	[Attorney Name]

Append	dix An: N	lo		
ESTAT	TE OF	§ 8	PRO	DBATE COURT
	,	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$	NUI	MBER ONE
DECE	ASED	§ §	TAF	RRANT COUNTY, TEXAS
	Report of Attorney Ad l	Litem in Heirs	hip Proceed	ing
ТО ТН	E HONORABLE JUDGE OF SAID COURT	Γ:		
the abo	Now comes, appointed by ve-referenced Decedent, pursuant to § 202.009	this Court as A 9 of the Texas I	Attorney Ad Estates Code	Litem for the unknown heirs of and makes this report as follows:
1.	 I am of the opinion that the listing of the correct and complete. I am of the opinion that the listing of the true, correct and complete. 			
2.	Below is, in my opinion, the correct distribution Pearle Harbour Kent (Decedent) Born December 7, 1941, Honolulu, HI to Died February 23, 2015, Fort Worth, Tarr	Safe Harbour a	and Tokyo F	
	Married 1. John Wayne (predeceased) A. Bruce Wayne (predeceased) (1/5)	Community Property	y Personal P	Separate rop Real Prop
	1. Wayne Wayne (Grandchild) (Address)	1/2	½ of 1/3	½ of 1/3 plus a plus a remainder in ½ of 1/3, subject to the life estate of the surviving spouse
	2. Jane Wayne (Grandchild) (Address)	1/2	½ of 1/3	1/2 of 1/3 plus a plus a remainder in 1/2 of 1/3, subject to the life estate of the surviving spouse
	2. Clark Kent	<u>0</u>	1/3	<u>1/3 life est</u> 100 %
	(Address)	100 %	100 %	100 %
3.	I reviewed the Application for Determination documents on file in this matter and met with			1 /
4.	I filed my Answer on behalf of the unknown	heirs on		
5.	I contacted the following persons to obtain background and to determine the existence Decedent.	and location,	as applicabl	
	A(re			
	B (relation to Decedent, if any) Etc.			

Dated:	
	Respectfully submitted,
	Attorney Ad Litem
	<attorney data=""></attorney>
(Certificate	of Service)
I hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the forego by electronicile transmission on this	ing instrument was served upon the following counse.
Name e-mail Address	
(Repeat as Necessary)	
	[Attorney Name]

Appendix Ao:	NIa			
	No			
ESTATE OF		§ P	ROBATE CO	URT
		\$ P!\$ N\$ T.	UMBER ONI	Ξ
DECEASED		§ T.	ARRANT CO	UNTY, TEXAS
SWORN STATEMENT OF	SERVICES AND IN HEIRSHIP PE		TTORNEY A	D LITEM
On this day personally appear Litem") known to me, who first being	red			, ("Attorney Ad
Litem") known to me, who first being	duly sworn upon o	eath to tell the truth,	, deposed and	stated:
I am an attorney licensed cause to represent unknown he policy promulgated by the Pro I therefore request the fol Attorney Ad Litem fee Expenses and reimbu	eirs. I have perforn obate Courts of thi lowing fees and exp	ned all of the service s county. penses for my repre	es required und	
Total of Attorney's Fees and I	Expenses Requested	d:		\$
Signature :		Taxpayer ID/SS#: Bar Card #:		
		Phone Number:		
Subscribed and Sworn to before	ore me on	Notary Public, Sta		
	<u>ORDI</u>	<u>ER</u>		
On this day, the Court heard a Litem has rendered necessary services and expenses are reasonable and just,	on behalf of the un	nknown heirs of De		
It is therefore ORDERED, AI of \$ to be taxed as costs aga the registry of this Court for such purp thirty (30) days of the date hereof.	inst the Applicant l	herein and to be im	mediately paid	from funds held in
It is further ORDERED, ADJ the Attorney named herein is discharge			ppointment is	terminated and that
Signed this		<u></u> .		
		Judge Presiding		

DIVISION OF PROPERTY UPON INTESTACY IN TEXAS

I. WITHOUT Surviving Spouse - Texas Estates Code §201.001	
A. With Children or their descendants: Children & their descendants	All
B) Without Children or their descendants:	
1) Both Parents Survive: Father	1/2
Mother	1/2
or 2) One Parent Surviving: Surviving Parent	1/2
Siblings and their descendants	1/2
or 3) One Parent Surviving alone	All
or 4) Siblings and their descendants alone	All
or 5) a) Paternal Kin: 1) Both Grandparents: Grandfather	1/4
Grandmother	1/4
or 2) One Grandparent Surviving	1/4
or 2) One Grandparent Surviving & Descendants of deceased Grandparent	1/4
or 3) One Grandparent Surviving alone	1/2
or 4) Descendants of deceased Grandparent alone	1/2
& b) Maternal Kin: other half in sar	ne order
/ 	
I. WITH Surviving Spouse - Texas Estates Code §201.001	
A. SEPARATE ESTATE (§ 201.002, Texas Estates Code)	
1) With Children or their descendants - \$201,002(b)	
a) Pers Prop: 1) Surviving spouse	1/3
2) Children and their descendants	2/3
b) Real Prop: 1) Surviving spouse has life interest in	1/3
(with remainder interest to children and their descendants)	
2) Children and their descendants have fee in	2/3
2) Without Children or their descendants - §201.002(c):	
1) Pers Prop: Surviving spouse	All
2) Real Prop: a) Surviving spouse has fee in	1/2
b) 1) Both Parents Survive: Father	1/4
Mother	1/4
or 2) One Parent Surviving	1/4
& Siblings and their descendants	1/4
or 3) One Parent Surviving alone	1/2
or 4) Siblings and their descendants alone	1/2
or 5) Surviving spouse alone	All
B. COMMUNITY ESTATE (§ 201.003, Texas Estates Code)	
1) With Surviving Spouse and Children (or their descendants):	
a) Surviving Spouse and Decedent were the parents of <u>all</u> the children	
Surviving Spouse	All
b) Surviving Spouse and Decedent were <u>not</u> the parents of all the children:	
Surviving Spouse (retains Surviving Spouse's ½)	None
Children or their descendants (take Decedent's ½)	All
2. With Surviving Spouse <u>only</u>	All
3. With Children or their descendants only	All

Courtesy Judge Steve M. King, Tarrant County Probate Court One

Appendix Aq:

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ESTATES CODE THUMB-TAB INDEX (2015 EDITION)

1. Materials: 1 Estates Code of your choice (2015 Edition)

1 set alphabetical thumb-tab dividers 1 set numerical (1-31) thumb-tab dividers

2 index pages (below)

- 2. Reduce a copy of the index pages to the size of your Estates Code pamphlet (85%).
- 3. Mark the reduced index pages and both sets of the dividers to be trimmed to the same size as your Estates Code.
- 4. With the copy of the Code, the index pages, and the dividers, ask your friendly corner copy shop to cut off the spline of your code and trim the dividers and index pages to the same size to just fit in the trimmed code. (The thumb-tabs should, of course, protrude).
- 5. Insert the thumb tabs as close to the appropriate sections (as close as you can directly before or after) as indicated in the Index. Put the first ("Decedent's Estates") index page after tab "A" and the second ("Guardianship") index page after tab "1". This will make it a lot easier to find the Indexes again.
- 6. Return to the copy shop and have them bind your (now-thicker) Code. "GBC" or other plastic spiral-type bindings seem to work best.

Note: "Large Print Editions" exist only in your imagination (or, if your code pamphlet should magically experience a 10-12% increase in size, where it would conveniently fit in a three ring binder with conventionally numbered dividers).

Good Luck!

Steve M. King, Judge Probate Court Number One Tarrant County, Texas

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ESTATES CODE INDEX (2015)

A.	General Provisions Definitions (22.000), Jurisdiction (32.001), Venue (33.001), Service (51.051056),
	Returns (51.101), Alt. Service (51.151), Waiver 51.201), Deposition on Written Questions (51.203),
	Security for Costs (53.052), Ad Litems (53.104), Contests (55.001), Jury (55.002), Decedent's Med.
	Records: Will Contest (55.101), Specif. Prf. to Transfer Title (55.201), Bill of Review (55.251), Resident
	Agent(56.001)
В.	Distribution of Property Passage of Title @ Death (101), Joint Ownership (101.002), Homestead (102),
	POD Accts (111.051), CP w/ROS (112.051), Multi-Party Accts (113.001ff), Conven Accts (113.102),
	Uniform Acet Form (113.051), Disclosures (113.053), JTw/ROS (113.151), Trust Acets (113.205), T.O.D.
	Deeds (114.051), Surv Req. (121.052), Disclaimer (122ff), Effect of Divorce (123ff), Tax Apprtnment(124)
C.	Proceedings Before Administration Exam'n of Docs & Safe Dep Boxes (151), Emerg Intervntn(152),
	Access to Acct Info (153.001)(152)
D.	Intestacy Decedent w/o Spouse (201.001), Separate Estate (201.002), Comm. Estate (201.003), Maternal
2.	Inheritance (201.051), Paternal Inheritance (201.052), BFP under Heirship Affidavit (201.053), Adopted
	Child (201.054), Half-Blood (201.057), Disqualification of Parent to Inherit (201.062), Per Capita/Per
	Stirpes (201.101), Advancements
E	Determination of Heirship Standing (202.004), Application (202.005), Ad Litem (202.009) Notice
L.	(202.051ff), Written Evidence (202.151), Judgment (202.201), Non-Judicial Evidence (203), DNA Testing
	(204), Small Estate Aff(205.001)
E	Wills Requisites (251.051), Holographic (251.052), Self-Proving (251.101ff), Deposit, Safekeeping (252),
г.	Compel Prod'n (252,201), Change, Revocation (253), Prohibited Gifts, Forfeiture (254), Construction
	(255), Pretermitted Child (255.051ff), Advancements (255.101), Anti-Lapse (255.151ff), Non-Exoneration
	of Debts(255.301), Power of Appt (255.351), Modification/Reform (255.451), Default (256.003, 301.002),
	Application (256.052), Lost Will (256.054), Proof (256.151ff), Period for Contest (256.204), Muniment
~	(257), Citation & Ntc (258, 303), Notice for Probate after 4 Years
G.	Application for Letters (301), Adm'n Before Death Void (301.001), Contents (301.053), Contest 301.101),
**	Proof (301.152ff), Priority for Appointment 304.001), Persons Disqualified(304.003)
н.	Oath & Bond (305), Freeze Agreement (305.154), Grant & Issuance of Letters (306), Joint PRs 307), Ntc
	After Probate (308), Inv & Appr (309), Aff in Lieu (309.056), Alloc'n of Inc & Exp(310)
I.	Personal Representatives Powers (351), Authority with Court Order (351.051), Authority without Court
	Order (351.052), Managing Property (351.101ff), Contingent Fees (351.152), Operating Business
	(351.201ff), Borrowing (351.251), Payment of Income (304.003), Review of Bond (351.353), Judge's
	Liability (351.354), Requiring ID Info
J.	Dependent Administration Compensation (352), Expenses, Atty's Fees (352.051), Exempt Prop (353.051),
	Allowance in Lieu (353.053), Fam Allowance (353.101), Liens (353.151), Title (353.153), Summary
	Proceedings (354), W/drawal from Admn (354.051), Claims (355), Prompt Action (355.1551), Sales (356),
	Renting (357), Min. Leases (358), Annl Acct (359), - by Ind Exor (359.006), Partition (360), Resignation
	(361.001ff), Removal w/o Ntc (361.051), Removal w/Ntc (361.052), Reinstatement (361.054), Succrs
	(361.101), Settle & Close (362.001), Compel Sttlmnt (362.001), Fnl Acct(362.003)
K.	Independent Administration Intent (401.001), Ct-Created Testate (401.002), Ct-Created Intestate
	(401.003), Power of Sale by Agreement (401.006), Powers of Ind Exor (402ff), Exemptions & Allowances
	(403.001), Claims (403.051), Accountings (404.001, 405.001), Removal (404.003), Successors (404.004),
	Court-Appt'd Successor IE (404.005), Distribution (405.001), Judicial Discharge (405.003), Closing by
	Report or Notice (405.004), Partition & Distrib (405.008), Closing on Appl'n by Distributee(405.009)
L.	Additional Matters Order of No Admn (451.001), Temp. Adm'n (452), Pending Cont (452.051) Admn of
	CP (453), Admn w/Presumption of Death (454.001), Public Probate Admr(455.001)
	<u>Lawyer Trust Accounts</u> (456.0001)
N.	Foreign Wills Ancillary Probate (501) Original Probate (502), Recording in Deed Rec. (503), Contests
	(504), Foreign PRs, Trustees & Fiduciaries(505.052)
0.	Payment to Comptroller(551.001)
P.	Durable Power of Attorney(751, 752)

GUARDIANSHIP CODE INDEX (2015)

1.	Less Restrictive Alternative (1002.015), Supports and Services (1002.031), Definitions(1002)
2.	<u>Jurisdiction</u> (1022), Concurrent Juris (1022.006), Transfer to Statutory Probate Court (1022.007),
	Transfer to SAPCR (1022.008), <u>Venue</u> (1023), Transfer to Another County(1023.003)
3.	Citation & Notice (1051), 'Laundry List' (1051.104), Affdyt of Notice (1051.104). Alternative Service
	(1051.201), Waiver (1051.251), Depo on Written Questions(1051.253)
4.	Ad Litems Rule for Costs (1053.051), Attorney Ad Litem – Duties (1054.004), Retained Counsel
	(1054.006), Guardian Ad Litem - Duties (1054.054), Limited Immunity (1054.056), Court Visitors
	(1054.101), Court Investigators (1054.151), Attorney Ad Litem Certification(1054.201)
5.	Trial Standing (1055.001), Intervention (1051.003), Trial by Submn (1055.051), Jury (1055.052, 1101.052),
	Hearing Location (1055.053), Mediation (1055.151), Bill of Review (1056.101), Change Res. Agt (1057.001)
6.	Creation of Guardianship Application (1101.001), Hearing (1101.051), Findings & Proof (1101.101),
	CME, IME (1101.103), DID(1101.104)
7.	<u>Order Full Authority (1101.151), Limited Authority (1101.152), Contents(1101.153)</u>
8.	
	(1103.002), Information Letter (1102.003), Only 1 as Gdn (1104.001), Pre-Need Desig'n (1104ff), Certif of
	Gdn (1104.251), Prof Grdns (1104.301), Disqualification (1104.351), Unsuitability (1104.352), Criminal
	Background Checks(1104.402)
9.	Appointment & Qualification (1105), Bond & Oath (1105.002), Waiver of Bond (1105.101), Bond Amount
•	(1105.152), Safekeeping before Apptointment (1105.156), Sureties (1105.160ff), Letters(1106.001)
10	Administration Rights, Powers & Duties - Rights Ret'd (1151.001), BFPs (1151.002), Powers and Duties:
10.	GOP: Restrictive Care (1151.051), MH Treatment (1151.053), Ψ Meds (1151.054), Duty to Provide Info
	1151.056)Powers of GOE with & w/t Order (1151.102-3), Abandon Prop (1151.102), Litigation
	(1151.104); Care of Prop (1151.151), Borrowing (1151.201), Guardian for Govt Funds (1151.251), Notice
	to VA (1151.301), Ward's Bill of Rights (1151.301) Admn Pending Appeal(1152)
11	Notice to Creditors (1153), Permissive Notice (1153.004), Inventory & Appraisement (1154.051ff),
11.	Compensation (1155), Prof Services (1155.051), Dual Compensation (1155.052), Contingent Fees
	(1155.053); Expns (1155.101); Costs (1155.151), Compn from Medicaid(1155.201)
12	Allowances, Accountings (1156ff), Claims (1157), Sales (1158), Partition (1158.701), Renting (1159),
14.	Minerals (1160), Investments (1161); Investment Plan, Loans (1161.051), Estate Plan (1162.001), Inspn of
	Docs (1162.005), Annual Account (GOE) (1163), GOPR (1163.101), E-Filing GOPR (1163.1011), Liab of
	Gdn (1164.001), Immunity of Grdnship Prog(1164.002)
12	Evaluation, Modification, Termination, Removal & Reinstatement Bond Review (1201.002), Judge's
13.	
	Liability (1201.003), Annual Determination (1201.052), Termination (1201.003) Restoration or Modification (1202.051), Resignation (1203.001), Removal: w/o Notice (1203.051), w/Notice (1203.052),
1.4	Reinstatement (1203.056), Successors
14.	
	Intest. Est (1205.052), Final Accounts (1204.101), Delivery of Prop (1204.109), Closing/Disch (1204.151),
1-	Removal from Active Docket
15.	Special Proceedings Temp Gdn (1251.001), Pending Contest (1251.051), Non-Res Ward (1252.001) Non-
	Res Grdn (1252.051); Xfer to For. Juris (1253.001); Rec & Accep of Foreign Gdnship (1253.051), Gdn
	filed in Tex & For Juris (1253.101), Most Approp. Forum
	Court Authorized Trusts & Accounts Management Trust (1301.051), Pooled Trust Subacct(1302.001)
17.	Special Proceedings & Alternatives Sale of Minor's Int (1351.001), Sale of Adult Ward's Int (1351.051),
	Mortgage Minor's Int (1352.051, 101), Commy Admr (1353.002), Receivers (1354.001) Payt to Ct Reg'y
	(1355.001), Payt to Non-Res Creditor (1355.002), W/drwl from Reg'y (1355.102ff), Use of \$ by Char.
	Instn(1355.151)
	Arts, Entertainment & Sports Contracts(1356.001)
20.	Supported Decision-Making(1357.001)