

Estate Planning: Lessons Learned From Hector "Macho" Camacho

Hector "Macho" Camacho was shot outside of a bar in Puerto Rico in November of 2012 and was pronounced brain dead by doctors. "Macho" Camacho is best known as a professional boxer that won four World Championship titles during his career and winning fights against Roberto Durán, Sugar Ray Leonard and fighting agiant Julio César Chávez, Félix Trinidad, and Oscar de la Hoya. There are several estate planning lessons that can be learned from Camacho.

The biggest lesson is how important it is to have advance healthcare directives in place. Planning an estate is not just about deciding who gets your assets after you die, but also having a plan in place for what kind of health care you want or not want if you are unable to speak for yourself. A simple will does not account for these important choices Advance directives such as a living will or a healthcare power of attorney can help make critical end of life decisions in the case of imminent death or there is no brain activity. When there is no living will or healthcare power of attorney in place the decision falls to family members in most jurisdictions. "Macho" Camacho did not have his advance directives in place and the decision to remove life sustaining treatment after doctors diagnosed him clinically brain dead fell upon his family. There was disagreement on the course of action to take by his family members as his father wanted to remove treatment, but two of his aunts wanted to wait and continue treatment. The key feature of a living will or healthcare power of attorney is to decide for oneself the course of medical action to be taken, but more importantly the decision is taken out of the hands of family members. Putting final health wishes in written form makes things easier for family members going through a stressful and grief filled time and takes away the responsibility to make a decision that in effect literally ends the life of someone that is so close.

Hector "Macho" Camacho was a professional boxer and as a natural consequence of his profession should have already had his health documents in place as he could have become incapacitated after any fight. Members of the general public are not immune to suffering from a car accident or health event such as stroke or heart attack that could lead them to be incapacitated. Many jurisdictions offer free advance directives that are standard state forms that can be filled out without a lawyer or with help of medical personnel. These are the easiest estate planning forms to have done and can make things easier for family members in case of an emergency.

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