

Estate Planning: Lessons Learned From Natina Reed

Natina Reed died on October 27 2012 and was best known as a member of the girl group, Blaque, and as an actress in the popular cheerleader movie Bring It On. Reed passed away after being involved in a tragic auto accident after being hit by a car as a pedestrian. She was thirty-two years old at the time of her death. There are many estate planning lessons that can be learned from Natina Reed.

The biggest lesson is that there is no correct age to begin thinking about planning an estate. Reed was in her early thirties and like most people in their twenties and thirties there is generally thought to be no need to begin to think about planning an estate or think that death is ever a possibility. A sudden lethal accident is not uncommon for many young people and there should be no age is to soon to begin thinking about seeing an estate planning attorney. Once one turns age eighteen and becomes an adult, it is also time to begin thinking about an estate plan. There are too many public examples of celebrities dying at a young age or before their time to be a lesson to the average person to think about a plan just in case.

Another lesson to be learned is that it is absolutely vital to have an estate plan if one has a child. Reed was the mother of a ten-year old son when she died. Having a last will and testament is the only way to formally appoint a potential successor guardian for a minor in many jurisdictions. There is no decision that is as important or a parent as choosing who will look after a child in the event that they are no longer alive. Absent a written document such as a will, a family court may intervene and choose a guardian that may be different from the guardian that the parent would have chosen. Also there may be disagreement among family members about who should be the child's guardian that could result into arguments and fighting. A public fight that extends into court with negative facts being brought may result into no family member being chosen as guardian and the child being raised by the state in foster care. An estate plan is needed to remove doubt about such an important choice and make sure that a child is cared for by the person the parent chooses.

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