



About Matthew Crider, J.D.

Matthew Crider formed [Crider Law PC](#) in 1999 so he could help individuals and business owners by providing creative solutions and be their trusted advisor and legal counselor. He serves his clients by listening closely to their goals, dreams and concerns and working with them to develop superior and comprehensive estate and asset protection plans. His estate planning practice focuses on preserving and growing wealth by providing comprehensive, highly personalized estate planning counsel to couples, families, individuals and businesses.

Celebrities who messed up their wills

By Matthew Crider, JD | Family Wealth Protection Attorney

It is important to get your will right. Even top celebrities, who have access to the best legal advice, mess them up all the time. Actor James Gandolfini is the latest who apparently didn't do the best job.

Gandolfini's will was an unnecessarily brief document. It is still being examined and debated, but one leading estate planning attorney called it a "disaster." It appears that he may not have properly protected the assets he left to his wife and children, according to an article on [money.msn.com](#). It shows the importance of having a solid estate plan in place. A revocable living trust would at least have kept the matter out of the public eye.

Other celebrities who messed up their wills include Anna Nicole Smith. Shortly after her marriage to 89-year-old billionaire J. Marshall Smith, his son helped him draft a new will that left her nothing. The matter has been in the courts for years. Smith's will left everything to her son, who had died months earlier. A judge could order her daughter to receive up to \$49 million from Smith's estate.

Actor Gary Coleman had one will that left everything to his manager. A second will left everything to a friend. After he got married, he added an amendment making his wife his heir. They divorced after a year. That invalidated the amendment. He had given his wife power of attorney and she ordered doctors to take him off life support a day after he slipped into a coma. But a living will he signed called for him to be left on life support for at least 15 days. It shows you must be careful to whom you give the power to make medical decisions on your behalf.

Football player Steve McNair had no will when he was shot to death. So his \$19 million estate was frozen for years. His wife had to ask the court for money so she and their four children could have something to live on. He probably should have had a revocable living trust so his estate could have been kept out of probate and out of the public eye.