

Estate Planning: Lessons Learned From Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela died at the age of ninety five in December of 2013. Mandela is widely known as the former president of South Africa that helped overcome apartheid in that country and was eventually awarded a Nobel Peace Prize. There is several estate planning lessons that can be learned from Nelson Mandela.

The top lesson about planning an estate that Mr. Mandela teaches is the need to have written funeral wishes in place before one dies. The absence of written burial instructions or advanced funeral planning can cause disagreements among family members about what someone that can no longer speak would have wanted. Mandela was reported to have made a handwritten will that included his burial and funeral plans in 1996 while he was still in office as president at age 78. The key provision of Mandela's burial wishes was that he wished that his body be put to rest in his ancestral home of Qunu, which is situated about six hundred miles away from the capital of Johannesburg. Mandela also wished to have a simple grave marker like his other family members. He did not want to have anything lavish that might be expected from such a well respected leader and instead wanted his grave site to reflect his humble and low key personality and style of leadership. In the last year of his life while Mandela was in failing health, his family helped prepare a site that included a public garden that would receive the anticipated large gathering of visitors that will make the pilgrimage to pay their respects to him that would be separate from his actual burial location that is among several family members. It is important to let family members be aware of any memorial plans in advance, because they are the ones left behind that will be there to help carry them out during a difficult time. Giving advance notice helps alleviate any surprises and will increase the likelihood of wishes being followed.

Another important lesson that Mandela teaches is the need to make an estate plan while one is still in good health. He was reported to be reluctant to make his will before he wrote it because of a typical excuse that is given in that he did not wish to think of his own death. Mandela made his will at a relatively advanced age of 78, but he was still in good physical and mental shape at the time and was still acting in his professional capacity of president. As long as one is still in good health and able to execute estate planning documents, there is no better time than the present to get it done before it is too late.

For full article please visit <http://estateplanning.ekglaw.com/post/69427104140/nelson-mandela-estate-planning-and-leading-by-example> at <http://estateplanning.ekglaw.com>

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