

ElderLaw: The 12 days of an elder law Christmas

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In the spirit of the holiday season, we thought that we would depart from our “normal” column and provide some Christmas cheer:

On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: *A dope slap upside my head as we have done no planning for us as we age.*

On the second day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: *An advance directive – “living will” – and health care power of attorney, including an agreement as to who would speak for each of us if we were unable to do so.*

On the third day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: *A power of attorney for financial affairs so that someone could act for us financially if we couldn't.*

On the fourth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: *An opportunity to discuss with my true love whether we should have a will or trust, and which would best suit our needs and family situation.*

On the fifth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: *An appointment with a financial planner to force me to create a budget as we never used one and never really knew where our money was going.*

On the sixth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: *An appointment with an accountant to review and assist us in tax planning, especially in light of the new tax laws.*

On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: *A way to fund our potential long-term care needs, including a review of long-term care insurance policies.*

On the eighth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: *A tour of local long-term care facilities, including personal care and skilled nursing facilities along with local continuing care retirement communities, so that we were familiar with them in the event we were to need them.*

On the ninth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: *A review of IRS section 529 college savings plans to help pay for our kids/grandkids college education.*

On the 10th day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: *An emergency information card that I can carry with me containing my relevant medical information and emergency contacts.*

On the 11th day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: *A compendium of all of my computer passwords, bank and financial account numbers and insurance policies – auto, homeowners, life and health.*

On the 12th day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: *A review of all of the beneficiaries of our retirement plans, life insurance and annuity policies to help ensure that monies would go where and to whom we want them to go.*

On the 13th day of Christmas (Yes, it's a baker's dozen Christmas), my true love gave to me: *A family conference so that all of the above can be incorporated into a plan for me, us and our family and that there would be few surprises.*

Happy Holidays!

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