

Elder Law Guys: Take Time to be the Family Storyteller

It's been estimated that over 50% of the population over age 65 will need some form of assistance with long-term care services and supports.

Long-term care services and supports includes assistance with activities of daily living (bathing, dressing, eating, toileting and transferring). And, with the average Pennsylvania annual cost of nursing home care at almost \$128,000, one can easily understand the concerns people have about the aging process. And, the lack of family members able and willing to assist in helping to meet those potential long-term care needs only adds to the issue.

For now, we'd like to tack away from the economics and fears of aging and remind folks that the aging process is also an opportunity. Yes, that's correct, an opportunity.

How many of us have wished that our parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents had imparted to us some of, not only their wisdom, but also, their stories and values. How did they come to live where they did and take up the work that they performed?

And what did they do for entertainment?

Examples are a client, who, in one of our offices was staring at a screensaver of a World War II F4U Corsair taking off from an aircraft carrier and started telling his family who were with him of his flying that plane during the war — a story about which they never heard. Or, for one of us, a cousin recently relating the story of two of our fun-loving aunts asking the cousin to score some pot for them when the cousin was in college!

Based upon our own, and more particularly, our clients' experiences, a regret many of them have is not having been privy to these stories, either orally or in writing.

So, irrespective of these novel coronavirus issues with which we are dealing, take the time now to be that storyteller or writer of the family history so that the younger generations can have a better understanding of how and why your and their lives were formed.

And remember the Olde Slovenian proverb: "Keep washing your hands!"

Julian Gray and Frank Petrich are both Certified Elder Law Attorneys with over 50 years of combined elder law experience who practice in the Pittsburgh area at Gray Elder Law. Send questions for consideration in this column to elderlawguys@grayelderlaw.com and visit their web site at www.grayelderlaw.com