

You Really Can Afford Good Legal Advice

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Most of us have probably seen dramatic lawyer shows on TV or the movies. High powered, expensive suit wearing icons working from skyscraper offices in metropolis. Or, we've seen headlines about the law firm that lands the billion-dollar lawsuit in a class action suit against some large corporation. While these scenarios are interesting, they don't represent the average consumer of legal services. Unfortunately, the footprint left by these media impressions leaves the average person with the notion that lawyers are expensive and they can't afford one even though there is a serious legal problem to resolve.

Let's use a common example to which just about everyone can relate. It's like saying, "I can't afford a car." However, maybe it's more like, "I can't afford that car." People buy different types of cars for different reasons and they have different prices. Some people purchase a cheap car just to commute with the sole reason being efficient transportation. Others purchase a large sport utility vehicle or van to accommodate a large family, which is more expensive. Still others purchase exotic cars for pleasure (even more expensive). Regardless, a choice is made based upon the needs of the car purchaser.

Now, let's get back to the legal business. Like medicine and other professions, the legal business has gravitated towards specialists over the past few decades. Think about how many different doctors you see annually than you did 10 years ago, or 20 years ago? The same can be said for lawyers in many special areas of the law.

Our practice concentrates on Elder Law and Disability Planning for people of all ages. Believe it or not, even though the specific practice area of Elder Law has been around for over 30 years, some people don't even know it exists! They often confuse traditional estate planning (wills and trusts) with Elder Law. So, what's the difference? We handle the specific issues related to aging, most significantly the choices and funding options for long term care. Most of us don't like to talk about death or long-term disability issues, but statistically we will all be touched by these situations at one time or another. Comprehensive planning involves so much more than just preparing legal documents - and that's where the confusion lies.

Many families contact us in crisis. A family member has recently learned that an expensive long-term care facility or home care will be required for several years if not the rest of the person's life. Aside from all of the care options and treatment issues to navigate, this journey is going to get expensive, usually hundreds of thousands of dollars over several years. This is where the Elder Law Attorney provides excellent value for his advice. Frequently, a plan can be prepared that may save the client exponentially greater value than the cost of legal services. The cost of our legal services can be found in the "spend down" money to gain eligibility for government benefits.

Other families contact us because they are aware that planning ahead saves headaches and money. Or, they've seen the financial ruin that can arise when a family member needs expensive long-term care. So, once again, that client, (not unlike the person selecting a specific type of car for a specific transportation need) is looking for the value of the results of planning ahead. When families fail to plan and react to crisis or death, frequently the outcome may be significant financial loss through arguments or lawsuits, not to mention the stress and time investment in such adventures.

In short, we don't go to a general practitioner if we have a broken foot. There are specialists in just about every profession. As we age, the Elder Law Attorney can help a person navigate the journey on many levels, and not just the preparation of legal documents. Some cases involve families with very little assets living on government benefit programs. Others involve wealthier clients attempting to map out the right course for the future. There's no one size fits all when it comes to legal services, and our firm always listens to the client's situation first at no obligation. It comes down to a question of value - not price.