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Five Reasons Why I don't Have a Will

By **Wayne Patterson**

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One: I hate my children and want them to never speak to each other again after the battle over my estate.

Two: I hate my spouse and want him or her to suffer the agony of attempting to probate my estate without a will.

Three: I think foster care is great and I want my minor children placed there while a court decides which greedy relative will get custody.

Four: My family doesn't need the money so I want the government to take as much of my estate for taxes as possible.

Five: I have reliable information that I am never going to die.

Of course the above is written tongue in cheek. However the tragedy of the Twin Towers, the battle over freezing Ted Williams body, and now the sniper shootings in the D.C. area are bringing to more Americans a deeper realization of their own mortality and that of their loved ones. The American Bar Association estimates that 70% of Americans do not have a will. The median age of those killed in the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center was 39 and over two thirds of those killed were men. This is the age group least likely to have a will and the court battles will last for many years after the physical scars are erased.

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A case in point is the story of a young lady from Atlanta, Georgia. Her parents divorced when she was a baby and her mother died several years later. Her aunt took in the child and worked two jobs so the niece could graduate from college. The young lady was ambitious and bright. After college she excelled in her job and which allowed her to buy a house and a new car. Eventually the aunt became disabled and was taken in and cared for by her niece. One foggy morning a crash on an Atlanta freeway ended the young lady's life. Without a will her entire estate; home, car and bank account; was awarded by the court to two half-sisters that she had met only briefly at her father's funeral. The aunt was forced to enter a nursing home. Unfortunately what is fair is not always what is legal. My wife Carolyn is currently involved in a court battle over her mother's estate. A family member confiscated the will and has refused to provide any information in defiance of a court order. It has been over a year and the estate is still in limbo. Much of the emotional stress and most of the legal bills would have been avoided if an attorney had been in possession of a copy of her will.

Review the five reasons not to have a will and ask yourself which one applies to you. I will also be glad to add any new reasons to the list. One that is not acceptable is that it costs too much.

Nolo's Willmaker software is available online at a cost of approximately \$40.00. Pre-Paid Legal Services

will prepare a will for you and your spouse

without extra charge with a membership and offers reduced rates on trusts and other estate legal

issues. An attorney that specializes in estates can be located through your state's Bar Association. Whatever route you chose, don't leave your final arrangements to the whim of a judge

Wayne Patterson owns two successful construction companies and has been featured in the national Constructor magazine.

Why Vegans Don't Consume Dairy Products?

By David Hooper

As with most dietary questions, vegans are split on the issue of dairy products—not so much on the question of whether or not they are acceptable, but instead for what reasons they should not be consumed.

All vegans (or at least true vegans) abstain from consuming dairy products. Some do so for nutritional reasons; others abstain for ethical reasons.

Those who do it for nutritional reasons cite a range of health problems related to the consumption of dairy products, including high cholesterol. Many also have a problem digesting lactose or have a blood-iron or diabetic problem related to milk protein, casein. In addition to this, milk and cheese often contain small portions of undesirable hormones that are added to dairy cow feeds to increase

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production.

Those who abstain from consuming dairy products for ethical reasons also have a range of reasons for doing so.

Some cite the poor treatment of dairy cows as a main reason for not consuming milk and cheese. They note that dairy cows are forced to become pregnant once each year to maintain a constantly high yield of milk. They are also fed numerous steroids to increase production.

Others who abstain for ethical reasons often cite the maltreatment of dairy cow offspring. They note that calves are not allowed to spend time with or suckle from the mother, but instead are prematurely removed to be reared for either veal production, beef production, or as replacement dairy cows.

The calves selected for "veal" production are often forced to live in crates so tiny that they cannot turn around. They must face in one direction; they cannot groom themselves; and they are fed hormone-laden feed until they are sent off to be slaughtered.

If you are a prospective vegan, you may want to take some time now to think about what is best for you. Ask yourself whether you wanted to become a vegan for ethical reasons, dietary reasons, or both. And from there, determine whether or not these arguments were strong enough to compel you to do so. Either way, you should emerge with a stronger viewpoint and a better understanding of what you do and do not want.

Kirsten Hawkins is a vegetarian and nutrition expert from Nashville, TN. Visit

for more information on vegetarian recipes and resources.

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