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ELDER LAW MINUTE

Since I began publishing the ELDER LAW MINUTE newsletter in January, many of you have asked how I got into Elder Law? When I started law school at Emory, my goal was to help the defenseless, little guy. After graduating, I clerked for a federal judge for one year and then started working with Henkel, Hackett, Edge and Fleming, a small tax firm. At first, I helped clients plan their estates. Later I was asked to concentrate in the area of ERISA, representing pension and profit sharing plans sponsored by corporate clients. In 1985, Henkel Hackett merged into Troutman Sanders, a large, international firm. My clients became major pension plans sponsored by publicly traded corporations and public entities.

When I didn't find this work personally fulfilling, I tried changing firms to see if a new environment would help. In 1987, I joined Hansell and Post, another large, downtown Atlanta law firm, in their ERISA department. I was no more satisfied in the new locale, so in 1989 I left Hansell and Post determined to find happiness.

Shortly into that sabbatical year, I met a geriatric social worker who offered to help me find happiness. She asked me what I liked and did not like about my prior jobs, and if there were any clients that I enjoyed working with? Two immediately came to mind: my grandmother who was living in subsidized housing and wanted to know how to protect her assets; and a retiring bank officer who wanted to know how to preserve his retirement savings. We concluded that I enjoy working with people rather than corporations and that I particularly gravitate to older folks.

In 1989, after eight months of travelling I started exploring the area of Elder Law and found that it would allow me to realize my law school goal of helping the little guy. In 1990, I started building a practice and also teaching Elder Law at Emory Law School. Helping older folks with diminished capacity has been very satisfying and rewarding to me. And, realizing my personal goal through my work has made a huge difference in my life.

Information contained in this newsletter is general in nature and not intended as legal advice. Legal advice should be obtained before action is taken based upon this information. Receiving this Elder Law Minute newsletter does not create an attorney-client relationship.