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» ESTATE PLANNING, TRUST, AND PROBATE LAW

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The team at Keystone Law Group is exclusively focused on probate litigation and administration and includes:

Three certified specialists in Estate Planning, Trust, and Probate Law*

Five Super Lawyers®, including Top 100 Designations

AV Rated by peers on Martindale-Hubbell®

One Los Angeles Daily Journal Top 40 Attorneys Under 40

*State Bar of California, Board of Legal Specialization

Meaningful Action, Strategic Guidance During Family Conflicts

Keystone Law Group excels in helping clients resolve sensitive, complex probate disputes through a combination of creative thinking and carefully crafted legal actions.

In a perfect world, the intergenerational transfer of wealth would be completed without disputes, obstacles, or hard feelings. The fact of the matter, however, is that litigation to resolve disputes related to property ownership, heirship claims, inheritances, financial elder abuse, and will and trust contests are on the rise.

When Shawn Kerendian, managing partner and founder of Keystone Law Group, decided to build his firm, he knew he wanted to focus exclusively on Trust and Probate Law, a complex area of the law that requires specific skills and experience.

"In addition to the legal complexities inherent in this practice area, the cases we deal with are frequently emotionally charged. Helping clients who do find themselves in such challenging situations, however, is highly rewarding," Kerendian says.

Unique Skill Set

The firm Kerendian launched in 2014 with three attorneys now offers the expertise of 10 who litigate cases in both Southern and Northern California on behalf of clients throughout the United States. Due to the complex nature of probate litigation, much of Kerendian's team comes from a civil litigation background.

"This area of law is a fusion of the civil rules of procedure and substantive probate law. Attorneys working in this area also need a certain level of knowledge in other subjects, including estate planning, real estate, securities, tax planning, and business entities," Kerendian explains. "It's essential that our experience and expertise allow us to fully understand their unique situations."

Reaching Resolution

According to Kerendian, probate cases are more likely to be settled than other cases. Mediation is quicker and less

costly than going to trial, and closure can be reached in a more timely matter. Mediation also provides flexibility and allows attorneys to get creative and find solutions amenable to all parties.

"In mediation, you can negotiate a settlement on terms that may not be options at trial, such as allowing one beneficiary to retain a business or property by buying out the interests of other beneficiaries or creating a tax-efficient plan for distribution. Clients who opt to go to trial need to understand it's usually an all or nothing situation; there's no in-between," Kerendian says.

Should a case warrant going to trial, Kerendian and his team are experienced in the courtroom, having both obtained judgments against trustees on behalf of beneficiaries and defeated litigation brought by beneficiaries against trustees.

"The most important advice I can offer when a loved one passes away is to consult with a probate attorney as soon as possible to learn what to expect, whether you're a beneficiary or a trustee and even if you don't anticipate disputes."

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