

Aretha Franklin, Like Many, Died Without a Will



by Ernest J. Guerriero, CLU®, ChFC®, CEBS®,
CPCU®, CPC, CMS, AIF®, RICP®, CPFA
Vice President, Marketing

Deeply private in life, Aretha Franklin died without having a will or trust in place. Now her roughly 80 million dollar estate will be laid bare for all to see.

Her four sons filed documents in Oakland County Probate Court acknowledging the absence of a will and naming themselves as parties interested in her estate. Additionally, Franklin's niece, Sabrina Owens, asked to be appointed as the estate's personal representative.

There's no indication that any of the parties are in conflict, at least for the moment. Franklin's long-time entertainment lawyer, Don Wilson, doesn't paint a particularly optimistic picture. "I was after her for a number of years to do a trust," he said. "It would have expedited things and kept them out of probate and kept things private." Wilson continued, noting, "I just hope [Franklin's estate] doesn't end up getting so hotly contested. Any time they don't leave a trust or will, there always ends up being a fight."

What is certain is that Franklin should have followed her own advice and taken some time to think. Learn from Aretha's mistake and be sure to think about your privacy, your estate and what you want to leave to whom and when.



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