



PROBATE ATTORNEY — FORTY FORT, PA

You just lost someone. Now you're the executor. Here's what you need to know.

Probate doesn't have to be something you figure out alone while grieving. Bregman & Lantz has guided families across Northeast Pennsylvania through this process for years.

WHAT PROBATE IS AND WHY IT MATTERS

Losing a loved one is difficult enough without having to make important legal decisions while grieving.

Probate is the court process by which an estate is inventoried and distributed — according to the will, or Pennsylvania state law if there isn't one.

3-8%

of estate value in typical probate costs

Months

to years depending on complexity

the start matters.



WHAT HAPPENS WITHOUT A WILL

Died without a will?

Pennsylvania decides who gets what. A surviving spouse typically receives at least half. Children receive the rest. No one's wishes are taken into account — assets are distributed by state law, period.

An estate administration attorney in PA can help navigate intestate succession and make sure the right people receive what they're entitled to under the law.

WHAT THE EXECUTOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR

If you've been named executor, the stakes are real. A mistake — even an unintentional one — can make you personally and legally liable.

The executor must handle:

Filing the will with the court. Notifying all creditors. Securing the decedent's property. Inventorying all assets. Paying debts and taxes. Filing tax returns. Making final distributions to beneficiaries. Reporting every step to the court.

Many families in Wilkes-Barre, Scranton, Kingston, and across Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties choose to work with a probate lawyer rather than navigate this alone.



MISTAKES EXECUTORS COMMONLY MAKE

Handling assets incorrectly.

Different assets require different steps. Financial accounts may need to be closed immediately. Real property has to be secured and maintained. Getting this wrong early causes problems throughout.

Categorizing assets incorrectly.

Not everything goes through probate. Assets in a trust, accounts with named beneficiaries, and certain jointly held property typically bypass probate. Treating them as probate assets wastes time and money.

Failing to notify creditors properly.

Every known creditor must be personally notified. Unknown creditors require a public notice in a local newspaper. Skipping this step can expose you to personal liability.

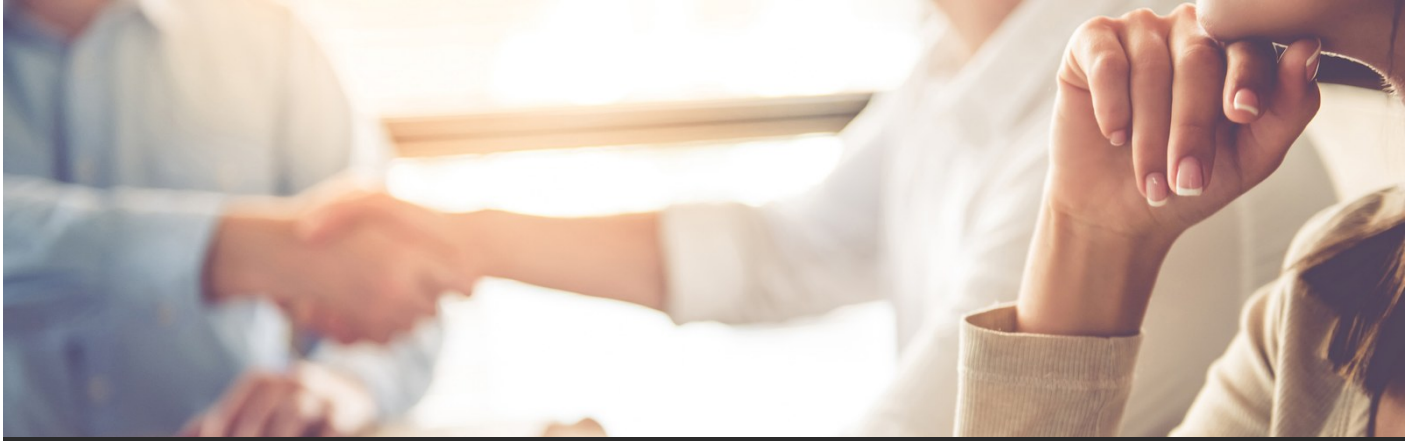
Distributing assets too soon.

If the estate can't cover both creditor claims and beneficiary distributions, creditors must be paid first. Distributing to beneficiaries first can make you personally liable for what's left unpaid.

Poor communication with beneficiaries.

You're not legally required to keep beneficiaries informed — but failing to do so often leads to conflict and costly litigation. Everyone is grieving. Staying in contact matters.

If you fail to follow the will's instructions to the letter, you can be held personally and legally responsible — even if the errors were unintentional.



You don't have to do this alone.

A qualified probate attorney can handle the entire process for you from start to finish — so you can focus on what matters most right now. Families across Luzerne County, Lackawanna County, and all of Northeast Pennsylvania have trusted Bregman & Lantz to guide them through probate with care and clarity.

Call now: (570) 288-1800