DrummondWoodsum 2022

Estate Planning Year in Review

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Contact Us

David J. Backer
207.253.0529
dbacker@dwmlaw.com

John S. Kaminski
207.253.0561
jkaminski@dwmlaw.com

Jana R. Magnuson
207.771.9282
jmagnuson@dwmlaw.com

Jessica M. Scherb
207.253.0574
jscherb@dwmlaw.com

Denae (Dee) Barton
207.253.0527
dbarton@dwmlaw.com

Christopher G. Stevenson
207.253.0515
cstevenson@dwmlaw.com

Jeffrey T. Piampiano
207.253.0522
jpiampiano@dwmlaw.com

"Politics...is the hottest, most dangerous subject in the land. It's not only a conversation-wrecker, it's a family-wrecker, a job-wrecker, a future-wrecker."

- The late Barbara Walters (1929-2022), journalist

The year 2022 brought with it continued political turmoil. The hearings of the January 6 Committee that began in 2021 continued – and went live on television – its co-chair, former Republican congresswoman Liz Cheney, lost her seat in the November mid-term election, former President Donald Trump remained in the news for a number of not very flattering reasons, the Supreme Court's conservative majority overturned *Roe v. Wade*, and, following the November elections, the Republicans retook control of the House of Representatives, with the Democrats maintaining a razor-thin margin in the Senate. As we've noted in the past, we try to stay away from politics, for the reasons the late Barbara Walters noted in the introductory quote, but we recognize that they necessarily play a role in the legislation that affects our clients. We've given up trying to predict what our government might do in the coming year, but luckily for our readers, we have much to report on with regard to what it has been up to in the past year.

Secure 2.0

"I absolutely do not have a retirement age. I believe age should not stop you from keeping on."

- The late Angela Lansbury (1925-2022), actress

When we wrote to you in early 2020, we included a piece on the SECURE Act - Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement. To those who recall last year's overview of the complicated path a bill takes to become a law, it will not come as a surprise that parts of what we now know as the SECURE Act were developing during President Obama's administration. The SECURE Act itself wasn't passed until December 20, 2019, though, and only then because it was attached to a spending bill that was passed to prevent a government shutdown. Government shutdowns – or at least dire warnings of them – have become the norm in recent years, as have unrelated stagnant bills being attached to them as a final attempt to get them passed. And 2022 was no different.

The SECURE Act was a massive overhaul of the retirement system. The most significant impact SECURE had for our clients was the so-called "death of the stretch". Under pre-SECURE law, a non-spouse beneficiary who inherited a retirement account had the ability to "stretch" withdrawals from the account over the inheritor's life expectancy. That meant that, in 2019, a 20-year-old inheriting a retirement account had the option of taking required minimum distributions (RMDs) incrementally over their 63-year life expectancy. The inheritor always had the option of withdrawing funds from the inherited retirement account on a faster schedule, but stretching the retirement account withdrawals over as many years as possible, by taking only the required minimum distributions, enabled the inheritor to defer payment of income tax on the account – and benefit from years of continued tax-deferred growth in the account.

The SECURE Act eliminated a non-spouse inheritor's ability to "stretch" the IRA withdrawals over the inheritor's lifetime. With a few exceptions, anyone other than a spouse who inherits a retirement account after 2019 is required to withdraw the entire account within ten years after the death of the account owner. Note, though, that the ten-year clock doesn't start ticking for minor children of the account owner (and only children, not grandchildren or other beneficiaries) until they reach age 21.

This death of the stretch had a significant effect on retirement accounts payable to trusts. The use of trusts as beneficiaries of retirement accounts has long been an attractive planning option for many reasons, including providing creditor and divorce protection for a beneficiary, or protecting a beneficiary from their own mismanagement of their inheritance. Post-SECURE, however, even retirement accounts payable to a trust must be paid in full to the trust within ten years. Once paid out to the trust, the funds could then either be distributed out to the trust beneficiary (thereby bypassing the protection of the trust) or retained in the trust itself (where the funds are protected for the beneficiary and administered under the terms of the trust, but also where the distributions are taxed at a generally higher rate than if they were distributed out to the beneficiary). This portion of SECURE leaves account owners to determine which is their priority – protecting the beneficiary or minimizing taxes.

It's no wonder why Congress did away with the stretch. Accelerating the rate that beneficiaries are required to withdraw funds from inherited retirement accounts also accelerates the payment of the income tax on the withdrawals. But the SECURE Act wasn't all bad news. Although it did away with the stretch benefit of inherited IRAs for most beneficiaries, it also modestly extended the required beginning date, the date by which account owners have to begin taking required minimum distributions. Although the required beginning date is not tied precisely to the date a person attains a specified age (it's actually April 1st of the year following the year in which the account owner attains the specified age), for simplicity we refer to it by age. Both pre- and post-SECURE, account owners are permitted to begin taking distributions without penalty after attaining 59 ½ years of age, but SECURE increased the age at which an account owner is required to begin taking distributions from age 70 ½ to age 72. The extension of the required beginning date feels like no more than a token bone thrown our way in exchange for taking away the lifetime stretch of inherited retirement accounts.

Although the SECURE Act was passed in late 2019, and went into effect on January 1, 2020, many of its provisions were ambiguous to account owners and planners alike. Top of the list of unanswered questions was whether the ten-year payout for non-spouse beneficiaries required payment evenly over the ten years, using something akin to a ten-year life expectancy payout, or whether the inheritor could dispense with annual withdrawals for nine years and then take the full amount in a lump sum in year ten. The IRS issued proposed regulations in 2022, which answered this question with the classic lawyer response – it depends. Under the proposed regulations, if the account owner dies after their required beginning date, the inheritor needs to take distributions starting in the year after the account owner's death, but if the account owner dies before their required beginning date, the inheritor can wait until year ten to withdraw the balance of the account. The proposed regulations have not been finalized, and the IRS has noted that any final regulations will not apply until at least 2023. However, in the meantime, "good faith interpretation" of SECURE is required, and complying with the proposed regulations meets this burden.

While we awaited regulations to provide clarity on some of the ambiguous part of the SECURE Act - and even now still await the regulations being made final - SECURE 2.0 was in the works. The

Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 – part of which is SECURE 2.0 – was signed into law by President Biden on December 29, 2022. As with the original SECURE Act, SECURE 2.0 was part of another funding bill, passed – yet again – to prevent a government shutdown. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 was a $1.7 trillion, 4,155-page bill, less than 1/10th of which has been dubbed SECURE 2.0. And, like its predecessor, SECURE 2.0 represents yet another overhaul of the retirement system.

Like the original SECURE Act, SECURE 2.0 – perhaps channeling a bit of the late Angela Lansbury – further increases the age at which workers are required to start taking minimum distributions, now from age 72 to age 73 for those turning 72 after December 31, 2022, and reaching age 73 before January 1, 2033, and to age 75 for those turning 74 in 2033 or later. RMDs will not be required at all for Roth accounts in employer retirement plans starting in 2024. For those savvy mathematicians among you, we do realize that those born in 1959 fit into both groups – turning 73 before January 1, 2033, and also turning 74 in 2033. Have we mentioned yet this year that legislation is often confusing and requires subsequent clarification and correction?

Individual IRA owners who have reached age 70 ½ have had the ability since 2006 to transfer $100,000 per year for certain charitable donations. This type of transfer is known as a "qualified charitable distribution." In addition to the obvious charitable benefit, the IRA owner does not report the withdrawal as income, and the withdrawn amount can count toward the RMD for the year of the contribution. The withdrawal from the IRA must be made directly to the qualified charitable recipient. SECURE 2.0 indexes the $100,000 amount to inflation beginning in 2024 and provides a new, second option for an IRA owner to make a charitable gift if the IRA owner has reached age 70 ½ and is required to take RMDs.

The IRA owner may make a one-time transfer of up to $50,000 directly from an IRA to a charitable gift annuity and to certain charitable remainder trusts as part of the qualified charitable distribution. Distributions from an IRA directly to a qualified charity provide no economic benefit to the IRA owner other than the exclusion of the amount of the charitable gift from the IRA owner's taxable income. In contrast, a charitable gift annuity and certain charitable remainder trusts can provide a stream of income to the IRA owner that provides the IRA owner with up to 90% of the economic value of the amount transferred to fund the charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder trust. In other words, from the $50,000 transferred from the IRA, the IRA owner may receive annual payments from the charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder trust of up to $45,000 over a term of years or for life. This is a significant benefit, and is limited to a one-time $50,000 transfer from the IRA.

Disability Planning

"It took me quite a long time to develop a voice, and now that I have it, I am not going to be silent."

- The late Madeleine Albright (1937-2022), former United States Secretary of State

If the last several years of pandemic, and a current triple-demic, have taught us anything, it is the importance of being prepared. We pride ourselves on helping our clients achieve that, by crafting effective, flexible estate plans. When most people think of estate planning, the Will is the first document that comes to mind. But estate planning is not just about deciding where your assets will pass upon your death. Estate planning is also about planning for incapacity. Disability planning is not just for the elderly. Although we often think of it in the context of a person needing nursing home level care late in life, it also applies to the young, healthy person going in for a routine surgery. The last thing anyone wants – in either situation – is loved ones guessing at the incapacitated person's wishes, or, worse, fighting over them. We all have a voice, and when we can no longer use it, we – and those around us – have to rely on what we have provided for guidance.

Absent a couple of simple documents, a friend, family member, or agency is likely to have to petition the probate court for the appointment of a guardian (someone to manage the incapacitated person's personal care) and/or conservator (someone to manage the incapacitated person's financial affairs). Guardianship and conservatorship proceedings cost valuable time and money, and can be easily avoided with some simple planning. And there is no better time to plan for incapacity than when you are healthy, and have the time and energy to put into crafting the documents that will support you and your wishes. Planning while in the midst of a crisis is never ideal.

All comprehensive estate plans we craft for our clients include a medical power of attorney and a financial power of attorney. Although these documents have different names – Advance Directive and Living Will and Durable General Power of Attorney for our New Hampshire clients, and Advance Health Care Directive and Durable Financial Power of Attorney for our Maine clients – they both serve the same important purpose: designating one or more individuals to make decisions on your behalf. There is often an obvious choice for who to name first in these documents, with couples naming each other, and single individuals naming a parent, sibling, adult child, or trusted friend or advisor. We encourage our clients to name at least one person to serve as a back-up, if the person(s) named ahead of them is unable or prefers not to serve. Because the medical and financial powers of attorney are two separate documents, clients may decide to choose different people to serve as their agents for each purpose. Sometimes the financially savvy person who might be best to manage our financial affairs is not the same person that we want making medical decisions for us.

In addition to naming one or more agents to act on your behalf, in our medical powers of attorney you can give your agents instruction regarding your wishes in certain circumstances. The first circumstance is the end-of-life decision, and whether you want measures taken to prolong your life in certain situations. You can also provide guidance to your agents about your wishes regarding organ and tissue donation upon death, and for what purpose or purposes. The medical power of attorney can also indicate your wishes regarding cremation or other final arrangements.

We advise our clients to make their financial powers of attorney effective immediately upon execution – this not only ensures that someone is authorized to act for the principal during the sometimes lengthy grey area between full capacity and full incapacity as we age, but also provides for convenience, in the event someone is ill or out of town when an action needs to be taken. The alternative is that the document becomes effective only upon the person's incapacity, which generally requires certification by a medical practitioner or a judicial interpretation of incapacity, and, understandably, is a high hurdle. Financial powers of attorney prepared years ago were often prepared as "springing" powers, with the agent's authority to act triggered by a determination of incapacity of the principal (the person who created the financial power of attorney). Over time, the legal, financial planning, and medical communities have learned that springing powers are problematic. A determination of incapacity by a medical professional isn't always easy to obtain. The transition from capacity to incapacity is often a prolonged, progressive process and family members and medical practitioners may be unable to identify the time when the line has been crossed to the point where the principal no longer has the ability to make effective and prudent financial decisions. A springing financial power of attorney is of no benefit during a period of ambiguity with regard to the principal's capacity or incapacity. But, what if the principal doesn't have enough trust in the named agent to make the agent's powers effective immediately? There are a few options available under that circumstance. You can name a co-agent whose consent is required for any action taken by the agents; you can decide not to give your agent a copy of the signed financial power of attorney, and let them know that the document will be available to them in the event of your incapacity; or you can give your attorney the authority to release the financial power of attorney to your agent if your attorney is satisfied that you no longer have capacity to make good decisions for yourself. But, in our view, if you don't have sufficient trust in your named agent to have the confidence that the agent will only act in your best interests, you should re-think who you've named as your agent. If you don't have complete confidence in your named agent, at the time you are naming them, that's likely a good indication that you've named the wrong person.

Medical powers of attorney can also be made effective immediately upon execution, or only upon a certification or determination of incapacity. Many of our younger clients prefer to make their medical powers of attorney effective only upon incapacity, but our clients who have a spouse or adult child helping to coordinate care may prefer to make their medical powers of attorney effective immediately.

Just as our clients' wishes about these documents change over time, so too does our own thinking as attorneys drafting them. Over the past several years we have crafted COVID-specific addenda, as well as language regarding dementia and quality of life considerations, in order to remain in tune with both the world we live in and our clients' wishes. If it has been more than a few years since you executed these documents – or if you never have – we welcome the opportunity to discuss them with you.

Same-Sex Marriage Equality – Finally… Again?

"And the songbirds are singing
Like they know the score
And I love you, I love you
I love you like never before"

- The late Christine McVie, musician (1943-2022), singer and songwriter, in *Songbird*

New Hampshire has recognized same-sex marriage since 2010. In November of 2012, Maine became among the first states in the country to legalize same-sex marriage by popular referendum vote. In 2014, the United States Supreme Court, in *Windsor v. United States*, declared the portion of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act that defined "marriage" as the "legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife", and "spouse" as "a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or wife" to be unconstitutional. In 2015, the U. S. Supreme Court case of *Obergefell v. Hodges* held that the right of same-sex couples to marry is part of the liberty promised by the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution.

We wrote to you about these events in three separate Estate Planning Year in Review newsletters. We did not expect to – and, on a personal note, hoped that we wouldn't – have to write to you again about same-sex marriage equality. It was, we thought, settled law.

However, the Supreme Court, in its 2022 decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson*, which overturned the landmark 1973 case of *Roe v. Wade*, ruled that there is no constitutionally protected right under the Due Process Clause to abortion, and left in question whether the Supreme Court could – and would – similarly take away the equality that married same-sex couples living in the United States have relied upon since *Obergefell*. The overturning of *Roe v. Wade* spurred Congress into action, motivated by a concern that the Supreme Court would similarly strike down the *Obergefell* ruling. It was not a moment of unjustified panic by socially liberal Americans and the Congresspeople who represent them. Rather, it was a concern spawned by Justice Clarence Thomas, in his concurring opinion in *Dobbs*, who called upon the Supreme Court to reconsider *Obergefell* in light of the Court's reasoning in *Dobbs*.

The Respect for Marriage Act was signed into law by President Biden on December 13, 2022. This Act, however, provides limited protection to same-sex couples because it relies upon *Obergefell*. Although it requires all states to recognize same-sex marriages that were legally performed in other states, and recognizes those marriages for purposes of federal law, it does not require states to perform same-sex marriages. In other words, a state is permitted to block same-sex marriages from taking place in that state if the Supreme Court permits it to do so… which it could do by overturning *Obergefell*. Stay tuned.

The Federal Gift and Estate Tax Exemption

While many of us have spent the better part of the past year lamenting the negative impacts of inflation, one area where inflation is a good thing – if you're fortunate enough to have to worry about it – is in the annual determination of the federal gift and estate tax exemption. Since 2018, the exemption has been indexed to inflation, with each turn of the calendar resulting in a modest boost to the amount a person can leave free of tax during life or upon death.
To no one's surprise, however, 2023 begin with a significant boost to the exemption – more than 7%, and more than double the jump we saw for 2022.

Effective January 1, 2023, the federal gift and estate tax exemptions are unified at $12.92 million, up from the 2022 exemption of $12.06 million – an increase of $860,000. The tax rate on transferred assets over $12.92 million remains at a flat 40%. A person may use their $12.92 million exemption during lifetime or upon death to transfer assets without payment of gift or estate tax. The exemption is not separate for lifetime gifts and transfers upon death. Instead, whatever you use of your gift tax exemption during your lifetime reduces dollar-for-dollar the estate tax exemption available at your death. However, the federal exemption is portable – meaning that a surviving spouse can inherit their deceased spouse's unused federal exemption amount.

The gift and estate tax exemptions will continue to increase with annual inflationary adjustments until January 1, 2026, when the current gift and estate tax exemption established by former President Trump's tax policy in 2018 expires, and the exemption amount rolls back to $5 million, adjusted for inflation. As adjusted for inflation, the 2026 gift and estate tax exemption amount is expected to be somewhere

close to $7 million. Congress may always act in the meantime, however, to avoid this rollback.

The generation-skipping transfer tax exemption is tied to the gift and estate tax exemptions, and also increased to $12.92 million on January 1, 2023.

The annual federal gift tax exclusion amount, which remained unchanged from 2018 through 2021, increased to $16,000 for gifts made in 2022, and has increased again to $17,000 for gifts made in 2023. The annual gift tax exclusion permits a person to give $17,000 per year to as many recipients as desired, without eroding the $12.92 million federal gift and estate tax exemption. Married couples can also elect to split gifts, allowing them to make total gifts of $34,000 per year to as many recipients as they desire, even if more than one-half of the gift comes from only one spouse's assets. As has been the case for many years, direct payments of tuition and certain medical expenses are not subject to gift tax, and may be made in addition to the $17,000 annual gift tax exclusion.

The annual gift tax exclusion for gifts to non-U.S. citizen spouses increased to $175,000 on January 1, 2023, from $164,000 in 2022.

Neither Maine nor New Hampshire has a separate gift tax, but gifts made within one year of death are included in the calculation of Maine estate tax.

The Maine Estate Tax

Maine remains one of only 17 states that imposes an estate or inheritance tax. The Maine estate tax exemption in 2022 was $6.01 million. As of January 1, 2023, the Maine estate tax exemption amount increased to $6.41 million, based on an inflationary adjustment. Our Maine clients with estates valued at more than $6.41 million need to be sure that their estate planning documents are designed with the flexibility to account for the difference between the Maine and federal exemptions.

The Maine estate tax has three rates ranging from 8% to 12% that apply in $3 million increments. The 2023 brackets are:

- Up to $6.41 million: no tax
- Greater than $6.41 million and no more than $9.41 million: 8% of the excess over $6.41 million
- Greater than $9.41 million and no more than $12.41 million: 10% of the excess over $9.41 million, plus $240,000
- Above $12.41 million: 12% of the excess over $12.41 million, plus $540,000

While the federal estate tax exemption is portable, the Maine estate tax exemption is not. Therefore, if you are married or have a life partner, and together you have assets valued in excess of the Maine estate tax exemption amount, it is critical that you have appropriate estate tax planning in place to reduce or eliminate the effect of the Maine estate tax. These tax savings provisions must be in the estate planning documents of the first of the couple to die – which, because we cannot predict the order of death, means that they must be contained in both partners' documents.

New Hampshire - An Estate Tax-Free Haven

Our New Hampshire clients are happy to be residents of one of the 33 states that imposes neither an estate tax nor an inheritance tax.

State of the Estate Review

"We all need to get the balance right between action and reflection. With so many distractions, it is easy to forget to pause and take stock."

- The late Queen Elizabeth II (1926-2022), the United Kingdom's longest reigning monarch

We all know the importance of planning, and in using our past experiences to shape our future plans. When we initially meet with clients to discuss their estate planning, we talk about what brought them to us, and work with them to design a plan that meets their current goals. Part of most initial estate planning meetings with our clients involves the question "Once we sign everything, how often should we update our documents?" There is no standard answer to this question. Rather, we leave it to each of our clients to let us know when situations have changed for them such that a revisit of and update to their documents is necessary. We use this annual *Estate Planning Year in Review* to not only inform you of changes to the gift and estate tax, along with other information that we hope you will

find informative and useful, but also to remind you that it is incumbent upon you to let us know when you want to discuss changes to your documents. We pride ourselves on making estate planning documents as flexible as possible to accommodate changing circumstances and changing laws, but we are nevertheless in a sense limited to a snapshot when we do your planning – if something were to happen the day after you sign your documents, what are your wishes? Although we do our best to guide you to flexibility that will meet your and your family's needs not only in the near term, but for the next 10 or more years, we all recognize – and inform our clients – that the only constant is change. It therefore remains essential that you take responsibility for reviewing your estate plan with us from time to time to ensure that your estate planning documents aren't tied to tax laws or personal or family circumstances that have changed.

If your IRA, 401(k), 403(b), or other retirement account beneficiary designation names a trust as beneficiary, we encourage you to contact us to schedule a time to talk about whether the provisions of the trust should be changed, or whether the beneficiary designation should be changed to have the retirement account benefits paid directly to your individual beneficiaries instead of to a trust for their benefit. As noted above, the proposed regulations issued by the IRS for the SECURE Act in 2022 have changed the required distribution rules in significant ways. Those changes may justify a revision of your current trust provisions or beneficiary designations.

Our *State of the Estate Review* is an acknowledgement that estate planning is not a one-time undertaking. It is a continuing process, and one that requires conscious attention by you in order for it to be successful. As your assets and the tax laws both change over time, so may your goals and your family situation. It is up to you to take stock of your documents and your situation periodically and reach out to us when it is time to make changes. We are also happy to engage in a review of your plans with you if you need a refresher. However, absent your request to schedule a *State of the Estate Review*, we will not be responsible for reviewing or updating your estate plan to reflect changes in the law, or for other purposes.

The Brightest Stars

"I set my star so high that I would constantly be in motion toward it."

- The late Sidney Poitier (1927-2022), actor, director, and diplomat

Drummond Woodsum is proud to count among its ranks many of the star lawyers in their fields. In addition to representing individuals with their personal estate planning needs, we also provide legal guidance for clients serving as fiduciaries – from banks and trust companies to individual family members – and succession planning for our large and small business owner clients. Our colleagues have expertise in real estate, intellectual property, litigation, and general business matters. We are honored to be part of such a diverse group of professionals, and feel that we best serve our clients when we can provide as many, top-notch services as possible within our walls.

For the 6th year in a row, Drummond Woodsum has been recognized as one of the Best Places to Work in Maine. Without question, one of the many factors that make it a great place to work is the excellent quality of the work done by our colleagues.

Forty-eight lawyers from 44 practice areas are listed in the 2022 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*. Nine lawyers were named as 2022 Lawyers of the Year by *Best Lawyers*. Twenty-six lawyers in three offices were selected by peers for inclusion in New England *Super Lawyers* and *Rising Stars by Super Lawyers* for 2022.

David Backer, John Kaminski, Jana Magnuson and Jessica Scherb were each recognized by *Super Lawyers* and/or *Best Lawyers* for their work in trust and estate planning and probate, and John was also recognized for his skill in tax law.

Both David and John are elected Fellows of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel. A lawyer cannot apply for membership in the College. Fellows of the College are selected on the basis of professional reputation and ability in the fields of trusts and estates. David was one of only six lawyers in Maine recognized by the 2022 Chambers *High Net Worth Guide* as a "Band 1" lawyer - the highest distinction awarded by Chambers - in the realm of Private Wealth Law. Chambers' 2022 review of David, based on interviews with other professionals

in the field of private wealth law, says: "(He) is really an extremely strong practitioner," enthuses a source, adding, "He's technically strong and is also very dedicated to improving the trust and estates practice in Maine. He is well known for his sophisticated trust and estate work." David has been consistently ranked in Band 1 since 2017. Jana Magnuson was also recognized by the 2022 Chambers *High Net Worth Guide* as a "Band 2" lawyer for the 3rd consecutive year. The *High Net Worth Guide* covers the private wealth market in key jurisdictions around the world and is designed to be an all-encompassing resource for high net worth individuals and their advisors.

In 2022 David was reappointed by the Chief Justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court to serve his fifth three-year term as a member of Maine's Probate and Trust Law Advisory Commission, created by the Maine Legislature in 2009. David has served as Chair of the Commission since its creation. The Commission, made up of lawyers and judges, is charged with conducting a continuing study of the probate and trust laws in Maine and making recommendations to the Legislature for how those laws may be improved.

Jana Magnuson represents and advises individuals, families, trustees, and other fiduciaries in a wide range of trust and estate planning and administration matters. In addition to her inclusion in *Best Lawyers* and the *High Net Worth Guide*, she has been recognized for her longstanding pro bono estate planning work with terminally ill clients. Clients have expressed their appreciation of Jana's considered, "down-to-earth" approach to challenging matters, calling her an "expert and collaborative partner" and "an example of what wise counsel should be."

Jessica Scherb is licensed to practice in both Maine and New Hampshire, where she provides estate planning and trust and estate administration services, as well as a broad range of business services, for her clients. In addition to her inclusion in *Best Lawyers*, Jessica was recognized as a *Super Lawyers Rising Star* (recognizing those attorneys age 40 or under, or who have been practicing 10 years or less) in estate planning & probate as well as mergers & acquisitions for the years 2011-2019.

Dee Barton is a tax attorney who began her early career as a tax consultant in a public accounting firm before transiting to a traditional law firm setting. Dee's diverse experience in tax matters, including significant international tax planning and advising, has given her excellent tools to provide comprehensive tax analyses and planning for businesses and trusts of any size and level of complexity. She was recently named as "One to Watch" by *Best Lawyers*.

Chris Stevenson is a tax attorney and certified public accountant. We turn to Chris for input on the many tax issues inherent in trust and estate planning and administration. Chris also regularly advises clients with respect to federal gift taxation and prepares federal gift tax returns. Chris was recognized as a *Super Lawyers Rising Star* in tax law for the years 2011-2018.

When disputes arise in estate and trust administration, we regularly turn to Jeff Piampiano. Jeff has been a commercial litigator at Drummond Woodsum for more than 20 years, and regularly serves as a fiduciary himself as a trustee in bankruptcy cases. Jeff has a keen understanding of the business- and fiduciary-related aspects of disputes relating to trusts and estates, and is always ready to offer prompt, business-minded, and sound legal advice on trust and estate litigation matters. Jeff was recognized by *Super Lawyers* for the years 2000-2022.

Thank You for Your Trust

We take seriously the trust you place in us and will continue to do everything possible to continue to earn your trust.

DrummondWoodsum

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