Lauretta K. Murphy

MEMBER

Grand Rapids

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Laurie Murphy is Chair of the Estates, Trusts and Private Client Practice Group, former chair of the Elder Law and Disability Planning Practice Group, and former Vice Chair of the firm's Business Section. Laurie draws on her 35 years of experience in probate and estate planning, taxation of estates, trusts and gifts, business succession planning, family office support, elder law and special needs planning to skillfully advise families, high net worth individuals and client managers in preserving and positioning assets to fulfill their specific objectives.

Probate and Estate Planning

Ms. Murphy works with a wide variety of individuals including business owners, seniors, baby boomers, married couples, single parents, young families and non-traditional families to assist them in making informed decisions that will achieve their goals. Personable and knowledgeable, Ms. Murphy is able to put clients at ease while discussing options and analyzing their particular financial and personal situations. Ms. Murphy focuses on practical solutions and is able to communicate the complexities of the law in a simple and straightforward way that clients can easily understand. She customizes each client's

Practice Areas

- Probate
- Estate Planning
- Elder Law – Medicaid Planning
- Health Care Reform Team
- Disability and Special Needs Planning
- Business and Corporate
- Personal Legal Services
- Guardianships and Conservatorships
- Private Client
- Wills and Trusts Disputes

Education

- J.D., University of Notre Dame Law School, 1988, *magna cum laude*
- B.A., Aquinas College, 1984, *summa cum laude*

Bar Admissions

- Michigan, 1988

plan based on each unique situation, while also incorporating common objectives that often include:

- Wills and trusts
- Gift and estate tax planning
- Avoiding probate
- Protecting assets from creditor claims
- Minimizing or eliminating gift, estate, capital gains and income taxes
- Coordinating retirement plans and life insurance policies
- Protecting minor children or disabled loved ones
- Post-death administration

Business Owners and Succession Planning
Ms. Murphy represents many successful business owners and their families in succession planning. Her goal is to minimize taxes at each generation while maximizing creditor protection and family control. She develops strategies to leverage available estate tax, gift tax and generation skipping tax exemptions. She coordinates with other trusted family advisors like CPAs, financial professionals and family business advisors. She as a deep understanding of the tools and techniques available to effectively transition wealth, some of which include:

- Charitable foundations and donor advised funds
- Irrevocable life insurance trusts
- Intentionally defective grantor trusts
- Spousal lifetime access trusts
- Family limited partnerships
- Limited liability companies
- Crummey Trusts
- GRATs

- Business cross-purchase agreements

Elder Law and Disability Planning

Ms. Murphy has a statewide reputation as an expert in Elder Law, helping families with the legal and practical aspects of planning for needs that arise as people age. One of Ms. Murphy's goals is to serve as an "agent of hope" when families are in crisis related to nursing home and long-term care issues. Her caring manner effectively eases the anxiety that is often present among family members in the midst of difficult decisions and rapid change. Ms. Murphy's deep understanding of the issues families encounter, enables her to assist in developing solutions and establishing the level of trust necessary to help implement them including the drafting of proper documents, development of asset protection planning, and a variety of specific elder law services including:

- Preparing powers of attorney and patient advocate designations
- Filing guardianships and conservatorships
- Preserving government benefits Medicaid and SSI
- Providing assistance with Medicaid/Medicare issues such as spend down and asset sheltering
- Preparing Medicaid applications and forms, and assisting with appeals if needed
- Reviewing nursing home contracts and policies
- Identifying resources for people afflicted with Alzheimer's or other dementia
- Protecting the homestead – preserving the family's primary residence to benefit the homeowner and his or her family

Special Needs Planning

Ms. Murphy's practice also includes planning to maximize resources for people with disabilities and special needs. She believes that every person deserves the highest level of respect and consideration. Ms. Murphy prepares trusts to protect people with disabilities so they can maintain government benefits while family funds are used to enhance quality of life. She works with disabled people who receive funds from insurance proceeds and money judgments to draft and fund special needs trusts specifically authorized by state and federal law to shelter assets.

Professional Affiliations and Activities

Ms. Murphy is a one of only 50 fellows of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC) in the state of Michigan. ACTEC, a nonprofit association of lawyers. Only those attorneys who demonstrate the highest level of integrity, commitment to the profession, competence and experience as trust and estate counselors are elected into membership.

Ms. Murphy is past-president of the West Michigan Estate Planning Council and the Kent County Bar Association Probate and Estate Section. She currently serves as President of the Grand Rapids Art Museum Foundation Board of Directors and the Pine Rest Christian Hospital Board of Directors.

Ms. Murphy is one of only six Michigan lawyers invited to join Special Needs Alliance (SNA), a national, not for profit organization of attorneys who have specific expertise in special needs trust planning and other issues affecting people with disabilities. Her membership in SNA is based on a combination of relevant legal experience in the special needs planning and elder law fields, active participation with national, state and local disability advocacy organizations, and professional reputation.

Ms. Murphy is the past president of the Board of Directors for Elder Law of Michigan, Inc. and Disability Advocates of Kent County.

Ms. Murphy is a member of the State Bar of Michigan and was the secretary and treasurer for the Elder Law and Advocacy Section. Ms. Murphy is a member of the Grand Rapids Bar Association. She belongs to the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, Women Lawyers Association of Michigan, and American Bar Association.

Articles and Presentations

Ms. Murphy is a frequent speaker at the Michigan Institute for Continuing Legal Education and is invited regularly to speak to CPAs, bank trust officers, financial planners and other professional and community groups on estate and gift tax, estate planning, wills and trusts, sophisticated estate planning techniques, powers of attorney, living wills, patient advocate designations, planning to avoid probate, Medicaid, elder law and other topics.

Ms. Murphy is an editor of the fourth edition of "Advising the Older Client or Client with a Disability" published by The Institute of Continuing Legal Education (ICLE). She also contributed, as a co-author, to the chapter "Medicare Benefits and Procedures."

Articles and presentations she has written include:

- "Advanced Estate Tax Planning: Drafting Trusts for Married Couples," December 6, 2022
- "Signing an Estate Plan from Home During COVID-19: Governor Whitmer Executive Order Allows for Remote Witnessing and Notarization," April 13, 2020
- "Impact of CARES ACT for Charitable Giving During COVID-19 Pandemic," April 7, 2020
- "Estate Planning Considerations During COVID-19," March 24, 2020
- "The SECURE Act Part 2: Retirement Account Estate Planning Changes," January 30, 2020
- "Tax Updates for Estate Planners:'‘Permanent' Estate and Gift Tax Exemptions, Portability, Property Tax Changes and Trust Tax Issues," West Michigan Tax Symposium, November 12, 2013
- "Sophisticated Estate Tax Planning After the 2013 Tax Act," February 28, 2013
- "Benefits of Special Needs Trusts," BRAINS Express newsletter, May 1, 2012
- "Special Needs Trust Basics," *Michigan Probate and Estate Planning Journal*, Jan. 2012
- "What to Ask the Nursing Home," Miller Johnson's *Business Law Update*, Winter 2012

Honors

Chambers High Net Worth, a publication dedicated to providing an independent ranking of the world's leading high net worth advisers, ranked Miller Johnson's estate planning group with the highest ranking (Band 1 of 5) for the 7th consecutive year (2016-2022) and again recognized Laurie Murphy as a leading practitioner.

Ms. Murphy was named by *Michigan Lawyers Weekly* as a 2013 “Michigan Women in the Law.” Ms. Murphy was named as Best Lawyers 2016 Grand Rapids Lawyer of the Year for Trusts and Estates Law. She is listed in the “Best Lawyers in America®” for Elder Law, and Trusts and Estates and has been named as a Michigan “Super Lawyer” in Estate Planning & Probate, to the Top 50 Michigan Women list and the Top 50 Consumer Super Lawyer List. She was also the recipient of the 2013 Joe D. Sutton Call to Justice Award given by Elder Law of Michigan for making significant contributions in the areas of safety, fairness and justice for vulnerable adults. Ms. Murphy is a fellow in the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC). She was selected to join this prestigious professional association on the basis of her professional reputation and ability in the fields of trusts and estates and on the basis of having made substantial contributions to these fields through lecturing, writing, teaching, and bar activities.

Education

Ms. Murphy received her law degree *magna cum laude* in 1988 from Notre Dame Law School and her undergraduate degree *summa cum laude* in 1984 from Aquinas College. She is admitted to practice in Michigan.