CHRISTOPHER BURNS

Attorney, Shareholder

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"I am privileged to help people every day plan for their futures and provide them with peace of mind knowing that their affairs are in order. For me, there is no job better than being a trusted advocate."

ABOUT ME

My clients receive my undivided attention. I focus on learning your story and understanding your specific needs. With a broad base of legal knowledge, I will thoughtfully consider your issues, identify your options, and strategically use the right tools to accomplish your goals.

With nearly 20 years of experience, I bring considerable expertise in the following areas:

- estate planning: planning and preparation of wills, revocable trusts, health care directives, financial powers of attorney, beneficiary designations for life insurance, and retirement plans
- estate and trust administration
- litigation of contested probate, trust, guardianship, and conservatorship matters
- business succession planning
- private foundation administration
- antenuptial/prenuptial agreements
- drafting and administration of family limited partnerships (FLPs); family cabin trusts/Limited Liability Companies (LLCs); irrevocable life insurance trusts (ILITs); qualified domestic trusts (QDOTs); grantor trusts (GRATs); intentionally defective grantor trusts (IDGTs); charitable remainder trusts (CRTs); charitable lead trusts (CLTs); special and supplemental needs trusts

Conscientious in my approach, I will engage you in a conversation to explore the advantages, disadvantages, and challenges of important life decisions. Your best interests are my top priority.

In addition to my practice, I teach continuing education courses to lawyers, accountants, and financial advisors on a variety of estate planning, business succession planning, and estate administration topics. I am dedicated to serving my community through prominent roles in local government, and committed to education. It was an honor to be named "Hero of the Week" by a radio station, designated a "North Star Lawyer" by the Minnesota State Bar Association, and recognized for my commitment to pro bono work by Woodbury Magazine. I enjoy spending time with my wife and children, and we are active members of our church. In addition, I like reading, writing, politics, bicycling, and playing and watching basketball.

CLIENTS SAY:

"From the moment you meet Christopher you know that he'll take care of you; he instills confidence."

"I can put Christopher in front of my best clients without worry, confident they are in good hands."

"Christopher is an extraordinary talent. He makes a long-standing impact on the lives he touches."

"There are thousands of lawyers to choose from, but Christopher's willingness to collaborate with other professionals is his competitive advantage."

"He is genuinely engaged, patient, and calm. His persistent manner, willingness, and leadership when working with our financial advisors simplified and streamlined the entire process."

ASSOCIATIONS

PROFESSIONAL

- Member, Minnesota State Bar Association, 1999–Present
- Member, Hennepin County Bar Association, 1999–Present
- Member, Past President, Minneapolis and St. Paul Financial and Estate Planning Councils, 2001–Present
- Member, Washington County Bar Association, 2002–Present
- Member, Christian Legal Society, 2009–Present
- Member, Minnesota Planned Giving Council; Leave a Legacy Steering Committee, 2015–2016
- Member, Children's Legacy Advisors, 2015–2016
- Planning Committee Member, Minnesota CLE Probate & Trust Law Section Conference, 2011–2015
- Member, Cornerstone Council of the St. Paul Community Foundation/Minnesota Community Foundation, 2009–2014
- Board Member, Lutheran Social Service Foundation, 2010–2013
- Past Chair, Hennepin County Bar Association's Probate and Trust Law Section

EDUCATIONAL

- Voting Director, South Washington County Scholarship Committee for 2018
- Member, Dean's Council, University of Wisconsin–River Falls, College of Business and Economics
- Past Chair and Past Member, Board of the Minnesota Academic Excellence Foundation, appointed by Governor

SERVICES

Estate, Trust and Probate

- Business Succession Planning
- Estate and Trust Administration
- Estate Planning
- Gift and Estate Tax
- Guardianships and Conservatorships

Litigation

- Estate and Trust Litigation

Tax

- Tax Controversy and Dispute Resolution
- Tax Opinions
- Tax-Exempt Organizations

CREDENTIALS

EDUCATION

- J.D., cum laude, Syracuse University College of Law, 1999
- B.A., University of Wisconsin–River Falls, 1995

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Minnesota
- United States District Court, District of Minnesota

HONORS

- Selected for inclusion in Minnesota Super Lawyers®, 2014–2018
- Selected for inclusion in Minnesota Super Lawyers–Rising Stars® Edition, 2006–2012
- Listed in The Best Lawyers in America® 2018–2019, Trusts & Estates
- North Star Lawyer, Honored by Minnesota State Bar Association for commitment to pro bono service, 2013–2017
- Five Star Estate Planning Attorney for work and dedication in providing quality services to clients, 2014–2016; Selected by Minneapolis St. Paul Magazine and Twin Cities Business
- AV® Preeminent peer review rated by Martindale-Hubbell

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF FOCUS

Prenuptial, Postnuptial and Cohabitation Agreements

Pawlenty

- Past Volunteer and Presenter, Gathering of Champions and Academic All-Star Students
- Past Mentor, St. Thomas Law School

CIVIC/CITY OF WOODBURY

- Member, City of Woodbury Audit and Investment Commission, 2017–Present
- Member, Woodbury City Council, elected in 2010 and re-elected in 2014
- Chair, Woodbury Street Rehabilitation Task Force, 2013
- Past Commissioner, Woodbury Economic Development Commission
- Past Chair, Woodbury Business Development Committee

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

ARTICLES

- Contributor, "Why Gen X Is Not A Forgotten Financial Generation" Forbes, February 2019
- Contributor, "The Estate Planning Gift To Give Your Millennial Children In 2019" Forbes, December 2018
- Co-Author, "Taking a Step from Graduate to Grown-up: Estate Planning and Other Considerations for your Recent Graduate," Henson Efron Thought Leadership, June 18, 2018
- Co-Author, "Understanding the New Tax Law Changes: Considerations for Estate Planning," Henson Efron Thought Leadership, February 13, 2018
- "Life Insurance: An Investment to Remember," Henson Efron Thought Leadership, March 28, 2018
- Co-Author, "Chapter 8–Trustees' Duties, Powers, and Liabilities," Minnesota Trust Administration Handbook, Minnesota CLE, 2017
- Co-Author and Co-Presenter, "Charitable Components of Estate Planning," Minnesota CLE, 2015
- Author and Co-Presenter, "Driving Miss Daisy: Which Charitable Vehicle Do You Suggest?," CPE seminar, 2011
- Co-Author and Co-Presenter, "Raiders of the Life Insurance Trust: Holy Grail or Temple of Doom?" Minnesota CLE–Probate and Trust Law Section Conference, June 2011
- Co-Author, "Shifts in the Estate Tax Landscape: The 2010 Tax Relief Act," Bench & Bar of Minnesota, April 2011
- Co-Author and Presenter, "Estate Planning for the Family Cabin," Fall 2010
- Co-Author and Co-Presenter, "How to Draft a Simple Will," Minnesota CLE–New Lawyers Experience, 2003–2010
- Co-Author and Co-Presenter, "Planning Techniques for Disabled Individuals with a Focus on Supplemental Needs Trusts," CPE seminar, 2008
- Good Age Columnist, newspaper, 2006–2008
    - "Going to the Chapel, Prenup in Hand"
    - "Leaving on a Jet Plane? Leave an Estate Plan Behind"
    - "Feeling Sandwiched?"
    - "Getting Professional Help from a Geriatric-Care Manager"
    - "Death and Taxes Often Go Together"
    - "First Steps in a Tough Time"
    - "Elvis or Elevator Music? Making Funeral Plans in Advance"
    - "When I Die…"
    - "Estate Planning and Charitable Giving Go Hand in Hand"
- Co-Author and Co-Presenter, "Estate Planning: It's Never Too Late!" CPE seminar, 2007
- Author and Presenter, "A Practical Look at the New Conservatorship Claims Statute," MAGiC, 2005
- Co-Author and Co-Presenter, "So You Think Your Client Needs a Trust," Minnesota CLE–Probate and Trust Law Section Conference, 2004
- Co-Author, "Estate Tax Marital Deduction: A Minnesota Attorney Handbook," Minnesota CLE, 2004
- Co-Author, "Irrevocable Life Insurance Trusts," Minnesota CLE–Probate and Trust Law Section Conference, 2001

PRESENTATIONS

- Panelist, "Large Estate Panel: Flaunting Flexibility – Keeping Your Options Open in a Temporary World," 2018 Minnesota CLE Probate & Trust Law Section Conference, June 2018
- Presenter, "Trustee Duties Presentation," Minnesota CLE, September 2017
- Presenter, "Estate Plans: Do Not Die Without One!," Minnesota CLE, July 2017
- Presenter, "Charitable Component of Estate Planning," Minnesota CLE, April 2016
- Presenter, "Summary of Heckerling Institute," Twin Cities Estate Planning Council, February 2016
- Presenter, "Balancing Act...Sandwich Generation Seminar," AdvisorNet, January 2016
- Presenter, "Heckerling Update," Twin Cities Estate Planning Council, January 2016
- Moderator, "Experienced Corporate Trustee Panel," Twin Cities Financial & Estate Planning Council, January 2014
- Co-Presenter, "Estate Planning for Unmarried Couples," Financial Planning Association, October 2013
- Co-Presenter, "DTT (Divorce, Death, and Taxes)," 39th Annual Probate and Trust Law Section Conference, June 2013
- Presenter, Estate Planning for Mid-Career and Pre-Retirement Professionals, Ft. Snelling federal employee seminars, 2002–2013
- Co-Presenter, "Estate Planning in Uncertain Times: Divorce, Death, and Taxes," Twin Cities Estate Planning Council, October 2012
- Presenter, "Estate Planning for the Family Cabin," St. Croix Advisors, June 2011
- Presenter, "Preparing Your Estate Plan," Edward Jones, Spring 2011
- Presenter, "Non-Traditional Estate Planning–Brady Bunch to Modern Family," AdvisorNet, Spring 2011
- Presenter, "Estate Taxes in 2011 and Beyond," Thrivent National Sales Telephone Conference, Spring 2011
- Presenter, "Irrevocable Life Insurance Trusts," Thrivent National Sales Meeting, Fall 2010
- Featured Co-Presenter, "Estate Planning and the Use of Trusts," Ameriprise Affluent Client Seminar Series, April 2010
- Presenter, "Estate Planning in Uncertain Times," Association of Lutheran Development Executives, April 2010
- Presenter, "You Can't Take 'It' With You–How You Can Leave 'It' Behind," Farmers Insurance Advanced Life Training Luncheon; Cardinal Pointe Cooperative; Woodbury Lutheran Church; CPE Seminar; and other seminars

NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE

- Guest appearance, ABC News Good Morning America and KSTP-TV, on the topic of Prince’s estate and Minnesota’s intestacy laws
- Guest appearance, KARE-11, regarding estate planning considerations for pet owners
- Guest appearance, WCCO-TV’s 4 News on Sunday, concerning estate planning
- Multiple guest appearances, WCCO-Radio, on various estate planning topics
- Featured in the Minneapolis Star Tribune’s Today’s Spotlight
- Featured in Woodbury Magazine article regarding community and education work