

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

Don't be a victim of your own silence. Prepare advanced directives for your family.

RECENT EVENTS in the news have demonstrated the extraordinary need for advanced planning with regard to your healthcare and other needs. A few hours of your time now can save your family from countless hours of grief and uncertainty later not to mention tremendous cost.

Tennessee law provides you with the ability to let your wishes be known to your family through the use of a will, living will, advanced care plan, and other forms of advanced directives.

Death is a subject that people do not want to talk about, but it happens to us all. The question is what are you doing to be prepared? Do you know who will take care of your children if both you and your spouse die, or how your property will be distributed?

These are all areas where your desires are extremely important!

But you have to let people know – **your voice has to be heard.** You can protect your legal rights, let your desires be known, and speak out for what you want done. You can prepare in advance for these situations by making a will.

If you are concerned about the care and welfare of your children in the

event of your death, you can name a guardian for them, you can direct how you want your property and assets distributed, provide for the payment of your debts, and even set up a trust to help provide for your children in a will.

If you do not have a will, the Courts will decide how your property is distributed and who will get custody of your children. These are matters which are to important for other people to decide.

If you are terminally ill and unable to communicate, will your family and friends know what to do? Not unless you tell them! Tennessee law recognizes that every person has the fundamental and inherent right to die naturally with as much dignity as circumstances permit and to accept, refuse, and control decisions relating to their own health care and has empowered each person with this right by the use of a **living will, also known as an advance care plan.**

A living will is a written declaration in which you let your wishes be known. It becomes effective only if you are not in a position to speak out for yourself, if it is determined by your doctor that you have a terminal

condition, that there is no reasonable medical expectation of recovery, and that the medical probability is that your death will result regardless of the use or discontinuance of medical treatment. By using a living will, you are the one who decides whether you want to receive extraordinary medical care or not. You decide whether you want the withdrawal of artificially provided food, water or other nourishment. It is not a decision that your family or the courts have to make. **You** are in charge of your own destiny.

You may also appoint a health care agent to make health care decisions for you if your are too sick to make them for yourself. Your health care agent can make any decision regarding your health care that you could make if you were able. Your health care agent can respond to medical situations that you might not have anticipated and makes decisions for you with knowledge of your values and wishes.

Take the time now to let your wishes be known,, and to protect your family. **Don't let your family be a victim of your silence!**



The law office of James A. Fields, P.C., can help you with your advanced planning directives. We are conveniently located at 6400 Lee Highway, Suite 103, Chattanooga, Tennessee with ample free parking. Our firm is a Community Partner with the U.S. Living Will Registry which means that your living will be also be stored online so that it can be accessed by any healthcare provider with internet access. *Attorney James A. Fields is licensed in Tennessee and Georgia. Call 266-2999, ext. 203 to make an appointment.*