

# PROFILES IN WEALTH MANAGEMENT: A Q&A WITH SOME OF THE INDUSTRY'S LEADERS



Brown

**Eden Rose Brown**  
Law Office of Eden Rose Brown  
Salem, Oregon

**WWMB:** What is your overall estate planning philosophy?

**Brown:** The seeds of my estate planning philosophy were sown as a young Air Force JAG officer charged with drafting wills and trusts for our troops deploying for the Gulf War. Those brave military men and women taught me that the essence of estate planning is not about what you own, but about what you value in life. From that war time experience, I developed an estate planning philosophy that is, first and foremost, values-driven. In my practice, that means in-depth counseling to help our clients identify and articulate their unique goals, values, concerns and philosophies.

Using that information, we guide them through the process of building a foundation for their family legacy that can profoundly impact their family for generations. Our innovative values-based planning enables our clients to provide for the wise stewardship and protection of family wealth built around the framework of what is truly unique and important to them.

**WWMB:** Over the years, what was your single greatest client challenge and how did you overcome the challenge?

**Brown:** Saving taxes and avoiding probate are peripheral, mechanical issues that are, for the most part, easily handled. In almost every case, my number one challenge as an estate planner is to help ensure that the family doesn't fall apart after the parents are gone. Parents are the glue that holds a family together. Once that glue is gone, and without the proper tools available, disagreements and misunderstandings can tear a family apart, sometimes creating irreparable damage. I know this is true because I watched it happen in my own family and I've seen it happen to other families as well. To address this overriding concern I've developed several unique planning strategies that either remove or significantly reduce the opportunity for the children to

fight or argue, while ensuring that the estate is managed and distributed fairly, quickly, and wisely. Of course, we avoid probate and reduce taxes — that's the easy part. But if the children stop caring for each other after mom and dad are gone and the fabric of the family unravels, I believe I have failed in my role as the family's estate planner. During the past 15 years, while serving hundreds of client families, we have never had a family fight or argue after the death of a parent. This, to me, is our greatest success.

**WWMB:** What was your most unusual client request?

**Brown:** "Damn the taxes, full speed ahead!" I have one client who is so adamant about keeping things simple in his estate plan, that he knowingly accepts the fact that his estate will be paying tens of millions of dollars in estate tax after he's gone. His rationale is that his children don't need more than the X million dollars that he is providing for each of them, so he prefers to just pay the tax on the excess, skip the fancy lawyering, and, when it's all said and done, the kids will still have more than enough left over as their inheritance. That philosophy is so contrary to basic estate planning principles (avoid tax whenever possible), it was a bit hard to swallow at first. But I've learned, over time, that our job is, first and foremost, to listen

to our clients, and to then apply our expertise to accomplish their stated goals and desires. So, we kept things simple. He will pay a lot in taxes, but I have a happy client.

**WWMB:** What aspect of your profession gives you the most satisfaction?

**Brown:** My greatest satisfaction comes from working with caring clients and their families. Together we create living trust based estate plans that maximize family control during disability and after death, avoid probate, minimize taxes and expenses, and provide for the preservation and wise stewardship of family wealth down through the generations. The track record behind our values-focused planning approach is telling.

We are told that living trust plans often fail to deliver the intended result because of funding failures or inadequate drafting. But I think a large part of that failure occurs because the clients are not encouraged to have an emotional stake in their planning process. The hundreds of clients we have counseled during the past 15 years have consciously invested significant time and resources to implement estate plans that have never required a probate, guardianship, conservatorship, or any other court proceeding. Even more significantly, we've never had a family argument or disagreement after the parents are gone.

Providing the best possible planning strategies for our clients is a serious responsibility that I don't take lightly. The innovative processes we've developed, honed, and fine tuned during the years are incredibly effective tools for fully engaging our clients in their planning process. The peace of mind my clients come away with at the end of our planning journey is far and away what gives me the greatest professional satisfaction; it's why I love what I do.

**WWMB:** What keeps you awake at night?

Nothing really. I am blessed with a wonderful career, good health, close friends, and a loving family.



**ELDERCARE SOLUTIONS**  
Incorporated

**A High Quality Care Management Provider offering:**



- ◆ We remove your fiduciary liability when we become involved
- ◆ We can offer employment for all the employees of your fiduciary client regardless of position
- ◆ Experts in handling all forms of Fiduciary Relationships, e.g. Special Needs Trust
- ◆ We are *not* a Franchised Organization – So all Policy and Care Decisions are Consistent and uniformly applied
- ◆ Served by a central point of contact for the best care of our clients – since 1992, twice as long as the competition – Nationwide

858-457-8080  
[www.eldercaresolutionsinc.com](http://www.eldercaresolutionsinc.com)



**ELDERCARE SOLUTIONS**  
Incorporated

WESTERN  
WEALTH MANAGEMENT  
BUSINESS