Estate Planning: Private Client & Fiduciary Services

Williams Mullen offers an array of sophisticated estate planning services for the disposition of family wealth and the sheltering of assets from income, gift, estate and generation-skipping transfer taxes. Our experienced team of attorneys and paralegals also help individual and institutional fiduciaries handle the legal and tax complexities of estate and trust administration.

The practice was recently recognized in the *Chambers USA High Net Worth Guide* for Private Wealth in 2018, where clients praised the firm for its "incredible reputation" and ability to "handle very thorny issues and deal with the highest level of complexity."

Because estate planning calls for approaches and techniques that vary with the particular client’s needs, the firm offers an array of estate planning services. These include not only the preparation of wills and trust agreements but also a variety of more sophisticated planning devices for the disposition of family wealth and the sheltering of assets from income, gift, estate and generation-skipping transfer taxes.

Private Client Services:

- Comprehensive estate plans.
- Business succession planning.
- Buy-sell agreements.
- Charitable lead and charitable remainder trusts.
- Digital assets planning.
- Discount valuation planning.
- Funded "living trusts."
- Generation-skipping trusts.
- Grantor retained annuity trusts.
- Irrevocable life insurance trusts.
- Lifetime gift planning.
- Limited liability companies and family limited partnerships.
- Planning for retirement plan benefits.
- Planning to minimize estate taxes.
- Pre-marital agreements.
- Qualified personal residence trusts.

- Supplemental needs trusts.
- Wills, revocable trusts, powers of attorney, advance medical directives.

For many years, the firm has been general counsel to major bank trust departments, and this relationship has provided a special opportunity for experience and insight into practical considerations in planning and administration. While the firm has a particular appreciation of the benefits of institutional fiduciaries, we recognize that not everyone wishes to use such a fiduciary and that many prefer to have an individual administer estates and trusts. We stand ready to assist any type of fiduciary in any capacity.

Fiduciary Services:

- Augmented estate elections and computations.
- Fiduciary appointments (executor and trustee).
- Legal advice for estates and trusts.
- Post-mortem tax planning.
- Preparation of estate tax returns.
- Preparation of fiduciary income tax returns.
- Probate procedures and documents (e.g., notices, inventory, accountings).
- Will contests and beneficiary controversies.

Our attorneys also frequently advise clients regarding will disputes. We represent fiduciaries and beneficiaries in resolving such disputes, and, when required, we represent their interests in any related litigation.

The benefits of the firm’s depth of experience in this field include the ability of its attorneys to complement one another when special knowledge is required. Within the group, there is the technical skill and experience to meet any need. The abilities of this group are evidenced by their activities and leadership in professional organizations. Nearly half of our estate planning practitioners are fellows of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel. One currently serves as ACTEC’s Virginia state chair, and several are past chairmen of the Virginia Bar Association’s Wills, Trusts, and Estates Section, which is responsible for promulgating new legislation in the trusts and estates area.

Our attorneys and experienced paralegals use sophisticated software and other products to handle estates and trusts of all sizes in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Just as important as technical prowess and lean mindset is a sensitivity to the client’s feelings. Those who practice in this field take special pleasure in helping others, and this is the precept by which we are guided.

Related News

- Client Alert: Virginia Enacts Trust Decanting Statute

- Client Alert: Gift and Creditor Protection Planning with Virginia?s New Self-Settled Spendthrift Trust Statute
- Wealth Transfer Planning in 2012: Perfect Storm of Opportunity
- Alert: IRS Grants Extension of Time to Make Late Portability Election
- Understanding Portability of Unused Spousal Exclusion: Avoiding the "sue" in DSUEA
- IRS Provides Guidance on Procedures for Election Out of Estate Taxation and Filing Form 8939
- North Carolina Substantially Revises Procedural Rules for Estate Matters and Caveat Proceedings and Expands Reach of Non-Claim Statute
- Happy Holidays: Historic Wealth Transfer Tax Changes
- Virginia's New Power of Attorney Act
- How To Limit An Executor's Personal Liability For A Decedent's Unpaid Taxes
- Christine Piersall Selected as "Top 40 Under Forty"
- IRS Notice 2010-32 Extends Treatment of Bundled Fiduciary Fees
- Federal Estate Tax Repeal in 2010
- House of Representatives Passes Permanent Estate Tax Relief Act
- Potential Estate and Gift Tax Legislative Changes
- Recent Wealth Transfer Tax Changes
- Grantor Retained Annuity Trusts
- How Should A Married Couple Title Their Assets?
- Williams Mullen Partner John H. Turner III honored as a Fellow in the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel
- Seventy-two Williams Mullen Attorneys Named to 2010 "Legal Elite"
- Edward S. Desmarais, Jr. Joins Williams Mullen's Tax Practice in Richmond
- Williams Mullen has 47 first-tier metropolitan rankings in Best Lawyers and U.S. News Media Group's Best Law Firms inaugural publication
- Williams Mullen Announces the Election of Four New Partners
- Nine Williams Mullen Attorneys Named "Legal Elite" in North Carolina
- Eighty-one Attorneys Named "Best Lawyers in America 2009"
- Williams Mullen Announces Election of New Partners
- Williams Mullen Attorneys Named 2012 Virginia ?Legal Elite?
- Attorney Thomas "TJ" Aldous, Jr. Joins Williams Mullen's Private Client and Fiduciary Services Team
- Williams Mullen Welcomes Tax Attorney Daniel Durst
- Tax Court Clarifies Conservation Easement Qualifications
- Williams Mullen Welcomes Tax Attorney J. Patrick Becker
- Williams Mullen Receives Top Rankings in U.S. News Best Lawyers "Best Law Firms"
- Virginia Department of Taxation Will Not Recognize Joint Returns for Same-Sex Couples After

Windsor

- Williams Mullen Attorneys Named to Virginia Business magazine?s 2013 ?Legal Elite?
- Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals Holds that Required Records Doctrine Trumps Fifth Amendment
- Simplified IRS Relief for Same-Sex Couples and Others
- Tax Court Rules on Built-In Gains Discount and Appraiser Qualification
- Obama Administration Announces Gift Tax Annual Exclusion Proposal
- Taxation of Trust Income: What Is a Resident Trust And How Does a Jurisdiction Decide It Should Be Taxed?
- Virginia Supreme Court Clarifies Intestacy Laws for Collaterals of the Half Blood
- Taxation of Trust Income: What Are the Constitutional Limitations to Impose Tax, and Are States Adhering to Them?
- Final Regulations Issued For Investment Advisory Fees and Other Costs Incurred By Trusts and Estates Subject to the 2-Percent Floor
- TJ Aldous quoted in Bloomberg BNA article about changing estate tax laws
- Reliance on Professional Advice Avoids Valuation Penalty
- Christine Piersall quoted in Virginian-Pilot about important legal considerations for the elderly
- 100 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named 2015 Best Lawyers in America
- Virginia Tax Department Changes Conservation Easement Tax Credit Procedures
- Fifth Circuit Court Reverses Tax Court Ruling on Fractional Interest Valuation Discounts
- Williams Mullen Attorneys Named to Virginia Business magazine?s 2014 ?Legal Elite?
- Dan Durst quoted in Times-Dispatch article about year-end tax planning
- Non-Tax Aspects of Business Succession Planning
- Important Tax Provisions Contained in Acts Extending Highway Trust Fund and Trade Preferences
- 106 Williams Mullen Attorneys named 2016 Best Lawyers in America
- 15 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named 2016 ?Lawyers of the Year? by The Best Lawyers in America
- Williams Mullen Welcomes Seven First-Year Associates
- 50 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named to Virginia Business magazine?s 2015 ?Legal Elite?
- Account Transcript May Serve As Estate Tax Closing Letter
- Form 8971: Consistent Basis Reporting Between Estate and Persons Acquiring Property From a Decedent
- Taxpayer Prevails in Family Limited Liability Company Case
- Williams Mullen Announces the Election of Eight New Partners
- Expanding Basis Consistency Reporting under the President?s Revenue Proposals for 2017
- 56 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named 2016 Virginia Super Lawyers; 22 Named 2016 Rising Stars
- IRS Notice 2016-19 Delays Due Date of Form 8971
- Consistent Basis Reporting Update: Treasury Issues Proposed Rules on Portability Returns, Final Values, and After-Discovered Property

- Williams Mullen Welcomes Trusts & Estates Attorney Shelly Harris
- ?Party Like It?s 1999? - But Don?t Forget to Create an Estate Plan
- Jim Head Prepares to Release New Book About America's Most Famous Jazz Age Painter
- 100 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named 2017 Best Lawyers in America
- IRS Provides Guidance on QTIP and Portability Elections
- Estate Planning Inflation Adjustments For Tax Year 2017
- Williams Mullen Ranked Nationally in 15 Legal Practices by U.S. News ? Best Lawyers ?Best Law Firms? 2017
- 50 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named to Virginia Business magazine?s 2016 ?Legal Elite?
- Williams Mullen Adds Trusts & Estates Attorney M.R. Litman
- Eight Williams Mullen Attorneys Named to Business North Carolina?s ?Legal Elite? in 2017
- Estate Administrative Update: IRS Notice Confirms Account Transcripts May Serve as Estate Tax Closing Letter
- IRS Allows Same-Sex Spouses to Recover Certain Transfer Tax Exemptions
- 54 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named to 2017 Virginia Super Lawyers List; 21 Named 2017 Rising Stars
- Trump Administration Releases Blueprint of Tax Reform
- Estate Administration Update: A Simplified Procedure for the Portability Election
- Treasury, IRS Deem Proposed Regulations Under Sec. 2704 Put Undue Burden on Taxpayers
- 114 Williams Mullen Attorneys Listed in The Best Lawyers in America 2018
- Framework for Tax Reform Released
- Section 2704 Regulations to be Withdrawn
- Williams Mullen Ranked Nationally in 14 Practice Areas by U.S. News ? Best Lawyers? ?Best Law Firms? 2018
- Estate Planning Inflation Adjustments for Tax Year 2018 & 2017-2018 Priority Guidance Plan
- 46 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named to Virginia Business Magazine's 2017 'Legal Elite'
- Congress Passes Tax Act
- Wealth Transfer Tax Planning Implications of the 2017 Tax Act
- Estate Planning Adjustments for Tax Year 2018 & Chained CPI Under New Tax Act
- 53 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named to 2018 Virginia Super Lawyers List; 20 Named 2018 Rising Stars
- 5 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named to 2018 Washington D.C. Super Lawyers List; 2 Named 2018 Rising Stars
- Revocable Trusts: Virginia
- IRS to Address Questions About
  Code § 67(G)
- Estate Planning Practice Recognized in 2018 Chambers High Net Worth Guide; Farhad Aghdami Rated ?Band 1'

- Williams Mullen Announces Qualified Opportunity Zones Resource Page
- Law360: 4 Tips For Estates To Cope Without Miscellaneous Deductions
- 110 Williams Mullen Attorneys Listed in Latest Edition of The Best Lawyers in America©
- 14 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named ?Lawyers of the Year? by The Best Lawyers in America©
- Seeking Guidance? QO Zone Regulations Imminent
- *Cahill* Case Sheds Light on Tax Court?s View of Intergenerational Split Dollar Agreements
- IRS Gets ?Bageled? in Tax Court Over Family Office Expenses
- Tax Planning for Real Estate
- Status Update on OZ Proposed Regulations
- Treasury and IRS Issue Proposed Qualified Opportunity Zone Regulations
- The Recent Qualified Opportunity Zone Guidance: What We Know, What We Don?t and What It All Means
- Williams Mullen Ranked Nationally in 15 Practice Areas by U.S. News ? Best Lawyers 'Best Law Firms' 2019
- Estate Planning Adjustments for Tax Year 2019
- Jim Head Article on Portrait Artist Howard Chandler Christy Published in U.S. Capitol Historical Society's Capitol Dome Magazine
- Gift and Estate Tax Update: Making Large Gifts Now Should Not Harm Estates After 2025
- 45 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named to Virginia Business Magazine?s Legal Elite for 2018
- M.R. Litman and Dan Durst Write Q&A Guide to Revocable Trusts in Virginia
- The Proposed Real Estate Safe Harbor for the Qualified Business Income Deduction
- Virginia Passes Legislation Narrowing Definition of "Resident Estate or Trust" for State Income Tax Purposes
- 47 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named to 2019 Virginia Super Lawyers List; 17 Named 2019 Rising Stars
- 6 Williams Mullen Attorneys Ranked on 2019 Top Lists by Virginia Super Lawyers
- Dan Durst Elected a Fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel
- 7 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named to 2019 Washington D.C. Super Lawyers List; 2 Named 2019 Rising Stars
- The Second Tranche of Opportunity Zone Regulations: Answers to ?Substantially All? of Our Lingering Questions
- Even the Best Laid Plans Can Go Awry: The ?Breakdown? of Tom Petty?s Estate Plan
- And Baby Makes Three: Estate Planning in the Age of ?ART?
- Jim Head Interviewed on CBS This Morning About Missing Painting of James Montgomery Flagg
- IRS Delivers Major Blow to Virginia?s Land Preservation Program
- Christine Piersall Certified as an Accredited Estate Planner by the National Association of Estate Planners & Councils
- Williams Mullen Recognized in 2019 Chambers High Net Worth Guide; Farhad Aghdami and Dan

Durst Ranked in Private Wealth Law

- 119 Williams Mullen Attorneys Listed in 2020 Edition of The Best Lawyers in America©
- 15 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named "Lawyers of the Year" by Best Lawyers®
- Estate Planning Adjustments for Tax Year 2020
- 55 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named to Virginia Business Magazine?s Legal Elite for 2019
- Jim Head Appointed President of the NVEPC
- The Morning After: Tax Planning for Lottery Winners
- Treasury Department Clarifies 90 Day Delayed Payment of Taxes Owed to Curb Impact of COVID-19
- Treasury and IRS Move April 15 Tax Filing Deadline Amid COVID-19 Emergency
- CARES Act - Changes to TCJA Provisions and other CARES Act Business Tax Provisions
- IRS Extends Filing Deadline for Federal Gift Tax and Generation-Skipping Transfer Tax Returns
- What Are the Rules Governing the Use of Electronic Signatures?
- IRS Expands COVID-19 Relief for Filing and Payment Deadlines to Include Fiduciary Income Tax Returns, Federal Estate Tax Returns and Related Forms
- 7 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named to 2020 Washington D.C. Super Lawyers List
- Signing Estate Planning Documents During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- 35 Williams Mullen Attorneys Named to 2020 Virginia Super Lawyers List; 13 Named 2020 Rising Stars
- Williams Mullen Recognized in 2020 Chambers High Net Worth Guide; Farhad Aghdami and Dan Durst Ranked in Private Wealth Law
- Williams Mullen Welcomes Tax Attorney Kevin Bender
- Giving the Average Investor the Keys to the Kingdom
- 116 Williams Mullen Attorneys Listed in 2021 Edition of The Best Lawyers in America©; Most Total Lawyers in Virginia
- Estate Planning Inflation Related Adjustments for Tax Year 2021
- Williams Mullen Nationally Ranked in Practice Areas by U.S. News ? Best Lawyers ?Best Law Firms? 2021
- Bender Authors ABA Article on Generation-Skipping Transfer Tax
- The Simplicity Trap: Estate Tax Return Filing Requirements in the Context of Portability
- ACTEC Fiduciary Litigation Committee Fiduciary Remedy and Damages Survey,
- Christine Piersall Elected a Fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel

Related Events

- Portability: 7 Years Later
- Fiduciary Case Law Update: What Planners (and Clients) Need to Know
- Tips to Avoid Becoming the Subject of Fiduciary Litigation

- Socially Distanced Estate Planning - 41st Annual Advanced Estate Planning and Administration Seminar
- Jim Head Appears on Financial Fitness Podcast from The Popovich Financial Group
- Virtual Tax Forum: Tax and Wealth Planning Updates
- Cryptocurrency and Blockchain Technology: What Financial Advisors Need to Know
- Webinar: Wealth Transfer Planning During the Pandemic: Change and Opportunity
- 11th Annual Fiduciary Focus
- Cryptocurrency and Blockchain Technology: What Life Insurance and Estate Planning Professionals Need to Know
- The American College of Trust and Estate Counsel - 2019 Southeast Regional Meeting
- The Probate Process from Start to Finish
- Capturing Enterprise Value: Creating Legacy Through Business Transactions
- Fall 2019 Tax Forum
- Digital Assets: The Forgotten Part of Your Estate Plan
- Wealth Transfer Planning with Qualified Opportunity Zone Fund Interests
- Fiduciary Income Tax Planning and Hot Topics of Estate Planning
- Fiduciary Income Tax Planning
- Spring 2019 Tax Forum
- 2019 Fiduciary Focus
- Estate Planning Meets The Qualified Opportunity Zone Tax Incentive
- The Qualified Opportunity Zone Tax Incentive
- Fiduciary Litigation: A Virginia Case Update & Poor Planning Horror Stories
- Getting Your Hands Dirty: Tax Planning for Real Estate Investors
- Gift, Estate and Fiduciary Income Tax Updates
- Winter 2019 Tax Forum
- Fall 2018 Tax Forum
- Business Succession Planning for Owners of Closely-Held Businesses
- Helping Clients Mitigate Income Taxes: New 199A Proposed Regs
- Business Succession Planning - Virginia Morticians Association, Northern Virginia District
- Community Property and the Migrant Client - 39th Annual Advanced Estate Planning and Administration Seminar
- Estate and Trust Planning After Tax Reform ? Including Income and Tax Basis Planning
- A World of Opportunity: The Practical Aspects of Decanting and Unique Benefits of the Uniform Trust Decanting Act
- Deciphering the New Tax Law: A Panel Discussion, Estate and Gift Taxes
- Fiduciary Focus 2018
- Estate Planning After the Reconciliation Act of 2017

- Decanting Comes of Age - Washington D.C. Estate Planning Council
- Virginia?s New Elective Share
- Estate Planning with Community Property
- Post Mortem Tax Planning - TCVSCPA's Annual Tax Day
- The Probate Process from Start to Finish
- Fall 2017 Tax Forum
- Which Dragon Do We Slay? Tax Issues in Estate and Gift Plans
- Estate Planning Hot Topics - 38th Annual Estate Planning & Fiduciary Law Program
- Decanting - ABA Real Property Probate and Trust Section STEP Program
- Hot Topics and Q&A Panel ? Virginia CLE Advanced Estate Planning Institute
- Recent Developments and Hot Topics, Including Possible Legislative Changes in the Trump Administration
- Charitable Gift Planning in Connection with a Liquidity Event
- Spring 2017 Tax Forum
- The Art of Collecting: A Conversation about Collecting, Financing, Protecting, and Gifting Art
- Fiduciary Litigation War Stories: Minimizing Risk and Solving Seemingly Unsolvable Trust and Estate Problems
- My Estate is Worth What? Best Practices and Pitfalls of Working with Appraisers and Valuation Experts
- Death and Divorce 101: What Estate Planners and Family Lawyers Wish the Other Knew
- Fall 2016 Tax Forum
- 2016 Not-For-Profit Accounting Conference
- 2016 Richmond Fiduciary Focus
- Collecting, Protecting and Gifting Art
- Community Property Law vs. Common Law - Webinar
- Business Succession Planning Workshop
- Fall 2015 Tax Forum
- Seminar: Tax and Non-Tax Aspects of Business Succession Planning
- RVA Family Office Forum
- 2015 Raleigh Fiduciary Focus
- Seminar: New Estate Tax Rules & Why Most Estate Plans Should Be Revised
- Winter 2015 Richmond Tax Forum
- Mastermind Study Group: Estate Planning Essentials and Issues for Insurance Professionals
- Fall 2014 Tax Forum
- Treasures of the '20s: Appraising and Protecting Your Collection
- 2014 Raleigh Fiduciary Focus
- Williams Mullen Spring 2014 Tax Forum - Richmond

- 2011 Raleigh Fiduciary Focus
- 2012 Richmond Fiduciary Focus
- 2012 Raleigh Fiduciary Focus
- 2014 Richmond Fiduciary Focus
- Williams Mullen Winter 2014 Richmond Tax Forum
- Williams Mullen Fall 2013 Richmond Tax Forum
- Williams Mullen Spring 2013 Richmond Tax Forum
- 2013 Richmond Fiduciary Focus
- Williams Mullen Winter 2013 Richmond Tax Forum
- Happy Holidays: Historic Wealth Transfer Tax Relief Teleconference
- Happy Holidays: Historic Wealth Transfer Tax Relief Teleconference - January 6, 2011
- It's Time to Trust Virginia Law: 2012 Legislation Brings Wealth Transfer Opportunities
- Williams Mullen Fiduciary Focus 2011
- Advanced Estate Planning and Administration
- Williams Mullen Hampton Roads Fiduciary Focus 2011

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