SOUTHERN MINNESOTA
INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

Now that you've taken the time to thoughtfully complete your will, follow these instructions to make your will legal and valid.

Read

- Read your will carefully, and make sure you understand everything.
- If there's anything you feel like you don't understand, please speak with a lawyer

Sign

- Find two witnesses and a notary
  - Your witnesses must be at least 18, mentally competent, and someone other than the notary. Neither witness, nor their spouses, should receive any gifts in your will. A notary is a person authorized to perform certain legal formalities, including serving as an impartial witness who attests or certifies writings (such as a will or deed) to make them authentic. Many banks and law offices have a notary on staff.
- You and your witnesses must sign and date your will in the same session.
- While in the presence of your witnesses and notary, verbally acknowledge that this is your Last Will and Testament. For example, you could say, "This is my Last Will and Testament that I am signing, and it represents my wishes for the distribution of my property at the time of my death." Then:
  - Sign your name on each page of the will using the signature boxes provided. On the last page, also fill in the date where indicated.
  - Then have your witnesses sign and date where indicated.
- Finally, ask the notary to complete the notarial acknowledgement.

Keep safe

- Keep your original, signed will in a safe and accessible place, such as a fireproof box in your home.
- Be careful not to remove any staples from your will, or allow pages to be ripped, as this may raise concerns in the probate court that your will has been altered.
- Notify your executor nominees of the location of your will, and make sure they have access.
- You can make and distribute copies of your signed will for reference to loved ones. However, if your original, signed will cannot be found upon your death, the probate court may raise questions as to whether you intentionally destroyed your original will, and may not accept a copy of your will as proof of your wishes.
- If you have additional documents with other notes, such as your funeral wishes, keep these with your will.

Content above provided by FreeWill

Update

- It is a good idea to update your will when you marry, have children, divorce, outlive your spouse, move or go through other major life changes.
- If you would like to update your will, you can log into your FreeWill account at www.freewill.com and make any changes you'd like. Or, if your estate is particularly large or complicated, speak with a qualified attorney.
- Do not attempt to amend your will by adding, crossing out, or modifying text in your existing will.
- To avoid confusion, you may want to destroy any old wills you have created.

Important Next Steps

- Having a valid will in place is a great first step, but there are many important assets that your will does not handle.
- Assets that will pass on outside of your will are called non-probate assets, and typically include IRAs, 401(k)s, pensions, payable-on-death bank and brokerage accounts, and life insurance policies.
- FreeWill can help you organize and plan your beneficiaries for your non-probate assets. Visit www.freewill.com/beneficiaries to get started.

Need Help?

- For technical assistance or to learn more, please visit www.freewill.com, email help@freewill.com, or speak with a qualified attorney.

Disclaimer

FreeWill is not a law firm and does not provide legal advice. The same holds true for SMIF. While FreeWill strives to ensure that its automated services are complete, they are meant purely as self-help forms. The materials and services are not substitutes for the advice of an attorney.

Content above provided by FreeWill

Below is a sampling of attorneys within Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation's region that specialize in estate planning:

Krahmer Law Firm, PLC

Fred W. Krahmer

204 Lake Avenue, Suite 201

Fairmont, MN 56031

P: 507 235 3524

E fredwk@krahmerlaw.com

The Blackridge Group – Morgan Stanley

David Olson

14 2nd St SW Suite 201

Rochester, MN 55902

P: 507-281-0403

E: David.A.Olson@morganstanley.com

Law Office of Shawn Vogt Sween LLC

Shawn Vogt Sween, Attorney

104 Main St S

Grand Meadow, MN 55936

P: 507-754-4555

E: shawn@svslawoffice.com

www.svslawoffice.com

We believe that all people and families deserve opportunities to thrive, including building financial security. Planning ahead is critical to protecting who you love and what you care about, and increasing access to estate planning breaks down barriers that might stand in the way of this important task.

For general questions regarding the FreeWill process or other planned giving inquiries, contact Alissa Oeltjenbruns, Vice President of Philanthropy at Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, at 507.214.7023 or alissao@smifoundation.org. Thank you for your thoughtful planning.