

Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning

Our trusts and estate planning group works with clients and clients' advisory team members to identify personal goals. We then customize an estate plan to achieve these objectives. Our broad and sophisticated trusts and estate planning practice addresses tax and estate planning opportunities for individuals and businesses of all sizes.

Estate Planning

Many individuals perceive estate planning to be a daunting process. Our attorneys explain estate planning options in detail, making sure clients are well informed and understand the documents used to implement their goals. Our experience enables our clients to reduce or eliminate estate, gift, and generation-skipping transfer taxes, to avoid or minimize the probate process, and to provide tools to adapt to unforeseeable circumstances.

In addition to creating estate plans, we strive to develop strong relationships with our clients. At our clients' request, we periodically review their estate plans and make certain the plan evolves with changing financial and personal circumstances, as well as changes in the law.

Estate Administration

We realize that even a well-drafted plan may lead to estate disputes. We work closely with estate and trust fiduciaries to ensure their obligations are met. In the event an estate dispute cannot be peacefully resolved, our attorneys guide fiduciaries and beneficiaries through litigation to enforce their rights and recover what they are entitled to.

Wealth Management

Our trusts and estate planning practice utilizes legal and tax techniques to achieve the financial objectives of our clients. Our team of attorneys work in concert with our clients' other advisers to develop a plan that encompasses our clients' goals, relationships, commitments, and resources.

Business Planning

We have substantial experience in the area of business planning for owners of closely held businesses, including extensive experience in transfer and partnership issues. We assist clients in the integration of business planning techniques and estate planning by providing advice on the tax and non-tax

PROFESSIONALS

Jacqueline L. Messler
Partner

Steven L. Baerson
Of Counsel

Timothy A. Cisler
Senior Counsel

Anne K. Connolly
Paralegal

Sharon L. DeVault
Of Counsel

Kevin L. Eismann
Partner

Gregory A. Frezados
Partner

Kayla M. Gerrits
Paralegal

Lawrence J. Gregory
Of Counsel

Gini L. Hendrickson
Senior Counsel

Cheryl A. Herrick
Paralegal

Natalie D. Hood
Associate

Susan Hornes
Paralegal

Mark G. Kmiecik
Partner

Howard M. Lang
Of Counsel

Andrew C. MacDonald
Senior Counsel

Charles G. Maris
Retired Partner

issues related to the transfer of family businesses, including capital structure reorganizations, buy-sell arrangements, gift programs, and valuation issues.

Areas of Focus

Our attorneys understand that creating and maintaining estate planning documents is an important step in the process in order to ensure our clients' wishes are properly carried out, that their assets are properly handled, and that their business and other interests are properly managed. To assist clients in this process, the attorneys in our estate planning practice regularly draft and administer complex estate plans for families and businesses, including:

- Wills and Related Transfer Documents
- Living Trusts
- Life Insurance Trusts
- Private Foundations
- Charitable Trusts
- Gift Trusts
- Dynasty Trusts
- Family Limited Partnerships
- Intentionally Defective Trusts
- Marital Property Agreement
- Power of Attorney

In addition to preparing and administering these documents, we routinely consult with clients on strategic business planning among generations and provide counsel on:

- Asset Protection Planning
- Business Continuity and Succession Planning
- Planning with Executive Compensation Benefits and Qualified Plans
- Charitable Planning and Philanthropic Giving
- Tax Minimization Strategies
- Selection of Trustees
- Non-Traditional Family Planning

Experience

Successfully Transferred a Liquor License for a Wisconsin Establishment to the Executor of the Owner's Estate

Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning

Claire A. McDonough
Associate

Jane H. Park
Of Counsel

Ann M. Rieger
Partner

Allen M. Salomon
Partner

Michael V. Shaw
Associate

Thomas A. Strandberg
Partner

Peggy A. Thompson
Paralegal

H. Randolph Williams
Of Counsel

Tim Zaborowski
Paralegal

Danielle M. Zimmerman
Paralegal

AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

Fiduciary, Trust & Probate
Litigation

Successfully Received the Requisite Authority From the Court for a Hospitality Business to Continue Operation Out of an Estate During a Probate Administration

Advised a Blended Family on Creating Their Estate Plan

Represented a Closely Held Family Business Design, Implement and Update their Business Succession Plan

Established a Custodial Trust for a Minor Beneficiary of a Significant Personal Injury Settlement

Engaged by a Decedent's Survivors to Get Control of an Estate

Guided a Business Owner in Selling his Company Interest to Irrevocable Trusts

Firm News

Gregory "Greg" Frezados Joins Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning Service Group

Firm News, January 12, 2026

Congratulations to Our 2025 Wisconsin Super Lawyers and Rising Stars!

Firm News, November 25, 2025

Several Amundsen Davis Service Groups Named in the 2026 Edition of Best Law Firms®

Firm News, November 6, 2025

130 Amundsen Davis Attorneys Recognized by Best Lawyers® in 2026 in America

Firm News, August 21, 2025

Attorney Jane Park Joins Amundsen Davis

Firm News, June 20, 2025

Amundsen Davis Welcomes Natalie D. Hood to Brookfield Office

Firm News, December 23, 2024

Congratulations to Amundsen Davis Attorneys Included on the 2024 Wisconsin Super Lawyers and Rising Stars Lists

Firm News, November 14, 2024

Several Amundsen Davis Service Groups Named in the 2025 Edition of Best Law Firms®

Firm News, November 7, 2024

93 Amundsen Davis Attorneys Recognized by Best Lawyers® in 2025 in America

Firm News, August 15, 2024

Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning

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Amundsen Davis Attorneys Included in 2023 Wisconsin Super Lawyers and Rising Stars Lists!

Firm News, November 16, 2023

Amundsen Davis Named in the 2024 Edition of Best Law Firms®

Firm News, November 2, 2023

77 Amundsen Davis Attorneys Recognized by Best Lawyers® in 2024 in America

Firm News, August 17, 2023

Thomas Strandberg Joins Amundsen Davis's Brookfield Office

Firm News, April 24, 2023

Michael Shaw Joins Amundsen Davis's Appleton Office

Firm News, April 10, 2023

Amundsen Davis Attorneys Included in the 2022 Wisconsin Super Lawyers and Rising Stars List

Firm News, *Amundsen Davis*, November 15, 2022

U.S. News & World Report – Best Lawyers® "Best Law Firms" 2023

Firm News, November 3, 2022

28 Amundsen Davis Attorneys Recognized by *Best Lawyers in America*© 2022

Firm News, August 19, 2021

Amundsen Davis Ranks on Crain's Chicago Business' 2018 Largest Law Firms List

Crain's Chicago Business, October 25, 2018

Amundsen Davis Ranks on Crain's Chicago Business' Largest Law Firms List

Crain's Chicago Business, September 15, 2017

Amundsen Davis Ranks on Crain's Chicago Business' Chicago Largest Law Firms List

Firm News, *Crain's Chicago Business*, September 10, 2016

In the Media

Jacqueline Messler Discusses Updates to Transfer-on-Death Documents

Media Mention, *InsideTrack*, February 15, 2023

Alerts

GRATs and CLATs: Trust Strategies to Maximize Wealth Transfer

Article, *Amundsen Davis Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning Alert*, January 29, 2026

Estate Planning Considerations for Blended Families

Article, *Amundsen Davis Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning Alert*, December 10, 2025

Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning

7 Factors to Consider When Choosing Guardians for Minor Children
Article, *Amundsen Davis Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning Alert*, November 18, 2025

Common Misconceptions in Estate Planning: Wills Avoid Probate
Article, *Amundsen Davis Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning Alert*, June 17, 2025

Preserving Harmony at the Family Cottage with an LLC
Article, *Amundsen Davis Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning Alert*, July 30, 2024

Planning for the Future: Managing Your Healthcare with Advance Directives
Article, *Amundsen Davis Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning Alert*, July 22, 2024

Estate Planning for Young Adults: Essential Documents as Your Child Heads to College
Article, *Amundsen Davis Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning Alert*, May 20, 2024

Navigating the Future: Essential Steps for Estate Planning After the Loss of a Loved One
Article, *Amundsen Davis Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning Alert*, April 18, 2024

New Gift and Estate Tax Exemption Limits for 2024
Article, *Amundsen Davis Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning Alert*, December 19, 2023

Is it Time to Update Your Estate Plan?
Article, *Amundsen Davis Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning Alert*, June 6, 2023

Planning for College? Why Your 18-Year Old Needs a Durable Power of Attorney
Article, *Amundsen Davis Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning Alert*, May 8, 2023

The IRS Extends Time to Make Portability Election
Article, *Amundsen Davis Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning Alert*, August 18, 2022

In the Crosshairs: Guns in Estate Planning
Article, May 9, 2022

When Congress Says, "Never Mind", Does It Mean It? The latest news regarding changes to the Gift and Estate Tax Laws.
Article, October 29, 2021

How Might Joe Biden's Tax Proposals Affect You?
Article, May 14, 2021

Act Now – Estate Tax Planning Under the Biden Administration
Article, January 25, 2021

Individual Tax Planning Following the November 2020 Elections
Article, November 30, 2020

Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning

IRS Clarifies Stimulus Checks Sent to Deceased Taxpayers Must Be Returned
Article, May 8, 2020

6 Estate Planning Steps to Take in Your Free Time
Amundsen Davis Estate Planning Alert, April 14, 2020

CARES Act: Historic Senate Legislation to Provide Individuals with Personal Tax Rebates Among Other Tax Advantages (Updated March 27, 2020)
Article, March 26, 2020

Due Date for Payment of Certain Taxes Due April 15, 2020 Postponed to July 15, 2020 Pursuant to IRS Notice 2020-17
Article, March 18, 2020

An Essential Conversation: Your Burial Rights and Wishes
Amundsen Davis Estate Planning Alert, March 10, 2020

The Validity of Handwritten Wills
Amundsen Davis Estate Planning Alert, January 21, 2020

Stage Is Set for Significant Retirement Bill to Pass by Year End (SECURE Act)
Article, December 18, 2019

Pet Guardians: 5 Steps to Help Care for Man's Best Friend During the Unexpected
Amundsen Davis Estate Planning Alert, June 25, 2019

Advance Directives: Planning Your Medical Care and Treatment
Amundsen Davis Estate Planning Alert, April 18, 2019

Estate Planning Lessons We Can Learn from Luke Perry
Amundsen Davis Estate Planning Alert, March 14, 2019

What to do When a Loved One Dies: A Checklist for Survivors
Amundsen Davis Estate Planning Alert, February 27, 2019

Estate Planning For Your Pets
Article, February 18, 2019

3 Mistakes to Avoid in a Revocable Living Trust
Amundsen Davis Estate Planning Alert, December 3, 2018

'Til Death do Us Part: Marriage and Estate Planning
Amundsen Davis Estate Planning Alert, September 18, 2018

Navigating Special Needs Trusts for Children with Disabilities
Amundsen Davis Estate Planning Alert, August 23, 2018

How Often Should I Review My Estate Plan?
Amundsen Davis Estate Planning Alert, August 8, 2018

Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning

What to Consider Before Hiring an Estate Planning Attorney
Amundsen Davis Estate Planning Alert, July 27, 2018

Are Your Kids Heading off to College? Consider Setting Up A Power of Attorney
Amundsen Davis Estate & Business Planning Alert, July 10, 2018

Having a Baby Changes Everything: Guardianship Considerations for Parents
Creating Wills
Amundsen Davis Estate & Business Planning Alert, June 27, 2018

Why Do I Need an Estate Plan?
Amundsen Davis Estate & Business Planning Alert, June 12, 2018

Business Succession Opportunities after Tax Reform
Amundsen Davis Corporate Alert, March 2, 2018

IRS Announces 2018 Estate and Gift Tax Limits
Article, November 6, 2017

Tax Reform Update
Article, November 3, 2017

Estate Planning for Your Digital Property
Article, June 2, 2017

Tax Reform In the Making: A Comparison of the Potential Revisions
Article, March 2, 2017

Attention to How Your Farm Business is Organized Pays Off for the Heirs at Tax Time
Article, *Amundsen Davis Agribusiness Alert*, March 7, 2016

Events

Advisor Series - Estate Planning Essentials for Young Families
Event, Amundsen Davis, Appleton Office, February 3, 2026

Advisor Series - Wills vs. Trusts
Event, Amundsen Davis, Appleton Office, December 2, 2025

Advisor Series - Discover the Impact of the One Big Beautiful Bill on Estate Planning
Event, Amundsen Davis, Appleton Office, November 4, 2025

Let's Talk: Wills, Trusts, & Estate Planning
Speaking Engagement, Cornerstone Financial Group LLC, Seminar; Appleton, WI, February 12, 2025

Spots on the X-Ray: Identifying Ways to Add Value to Clients
Speaking Engagement, Milwaukee, WI, May 15, 2024

Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning

Protect Your Estate

Speaking Engagement, Appleton, WI, January 15, 2024

In the Crosshairs: Guns in Estate Planning

Speaking Engagement, Appleton, WI, January 12, 2023

Proposed Wealth Tax Changes Under the Biden Administration

Speaking Engagement, BizTimes, Family & Closely Held Business Summit;
Brookfield, WI, June 29, 2021

An Attorney, a CPA and an Insurance Agent walk into an Investor Meeting...

Speaking Engagement, Appleton REIA, Seminar; Appleton, WI, June 8, 2021

Key Components of an Effective Buy-Sell-Agreement

Speaking Engagement, Exit Planning Institute, Webcast, May 27, 2021

Planned Giving: Explore the Benefits to Society

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Zoom, November 10, 2020

Next Generation Manufacturing Summit 2019

Speaking Engagement, Wisconsin Exposition Center; West Allis, WI, October 9, 2019

Preserving the Family Legacy Through Estate Planning

Speaking Engagement, Italian Community Center; Milwaukee, WI, June 13, 2019

Estate Planning Basics

Amundsen Davis, Webcast, May 8, 2019

Advanced Estate Planning: Craft More Effective and Sophisticated Plans for Your Clients

National Business Institute, March 5, 2019

Gifting Techniques Using Trusts and The Use of Family Limited Partnerships/LLCs in Estate Planning

Speaking Engagement, Radisson Milwaukee West Hotel; Milwaukee, WI, February 28, 2019

Estate Planning for Your Animal-Loving Clients

Speaking Engagement, Association for Women Lawyers, January 16, 2019

Succession Planning: Continuing Your Legacy

Speaking Engagement, Association of General Contractors (AGC) of Greater Milwaukee; Milwaukee, WI, November 15, 2018

Family & Closely Held Business Summit 2018

Event, BizTimes Media; Milwaukee, WI, June 14, 2018

Step-by-Step Estate Planning II

Event, State Bar of Wisconsin Seminar Series; Milwaukee, WI, February 23, 2018

Trusts, Estates & Succession Planning

What Does Tax Reform Mean for You and Your Business?
Event, Northern Trust Economic Trends 2018; Milwaukee, WI, January 19, 2018

Next Generation Manufacturing Summit 2017
Speaking Engagement, Wisconsin Exposition Center at State Fair Park; West Allis, WI, October 4, 2017

Family & Closely Held Business Summit 2017
Speaking Engagement, Potawatomi Hotel & Casino; Milwaukee, WI, July 12, 2017

Gifting Techniques Using Trusts and The Use of Family Limited Partnerships/LLCs in Estate Planning
Speaking Engagement, State Bar Center; Madison, WI, February 23, 2017

Published Works

State of Illinois Force Majeure Law Compendium (during COVID-19 pandemic)
USLAW, June 5, 2020

Stalled SECURE Act Finally Enacted Into Law
Publication, *Illinois Bar Association Newsletter*, January 2020

The SECURE Act Poised to Eliminate Common Estate Planning Technique
Publication, *ISBA Estate Planning Newsletter*, July 30, 2019

Blog Posts

What the Show Succession Teaches Us About Planning for a Family Business
Corporate News: A Legal Update, September 7, 2023