

## Alzheimer's affects rich, poor alike

The scourge of Alzheimer's disease leaves its mark on many families. According to Alz.org, 5.3 million Americans are currently diagnosed with Alzheimer's and it is estimated 16 million will be diagnosed by 2050. Alzheimer's disease is also currently the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. Actually, the disease cannot be confirmed until a biopsy or autopsy of the brain tissue is performed. Researchers rely heavily on documentation of the mental decline in Alzheimer's patients and hope to find an easier accurate way to detect the disease. New tests are currently being developed for early detection; however, there is no cure.

The effect on the victims and their families is enormous. The disease may go through up to seven stages before death. Those afflicted will slowly lose their memory and if they live long enough, forget all of the most important memories, including being able to identify their own family members.

The progression can be devastating. The person may get agitated easily and may require much hands-on care. Although family caretakers may do their best to keep the person at home a transfer to a facility such as a memory care center or a locked facility may be inevitable.

It's important to make sure the loved one has all of the appropriate estate planning documents in place while they still have the requisite legal capacity to execute such. To do otherwise, may result in the individual being subject to an expensive, intrusive and public guardianship proceeding which in many cases may be avoided with proper planning. For purposes of future asset preservation in connection with Medicaid, quality advice and documents are imperative.

The most famous person in modern time who suffered from Alzheimer's disease was President Ronald Reagan. He announced he had the disease and then sought privacy until he passed away.

Recently, the famous entertainer, Glen Campbell, announced that he also has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Campbell sold 50 million records during his career and in 1969 sold more records than The Beatles, the most famous of which is Rhinestone Cowboy. He and his family decided to take his battle with the disease public in order to raise awareness for the benefit of others. They produced an outstanding documentary about the singer's struggle with the disease during a period he performed a "Goodbye Tour" across the United States.

His daughter, Ashley Campbell testified before Congress to encourage an increase in funding for Alzheimer's research. Although Congress increased the budget by \$25 million there will be much more needed in order to conquer this disease. Glen Campbell's documentary, "I'll Be Me" can be accessed on Netflix and glencampbellmovie.com.

Don't wait until it's too late to plan your estate. Contact a Certified Elder Law Attorney today and make sure your Will and ancillary documents are up to date.

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