



Laura A. Kelly

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Trusts, Estates & Private Clients

Laura Kelly works closely with clients to design personalized trust and estate plans that maximize and preserve their assets for future generations.

Laura has advised high net worth individuals and families in planning and administering their complex trusts and estates for 25 years. With an emphasis on sophisticated estate, gift, generation-skipping transfer, and income tax planning, she works with clients to transfer their businesses, real estate, life insurance, and other assets in accordance with their wishes to family members, friends, and charity. Her career began at a multiservice Boston law firm with a dedicated trust department that managed the investments of and administered the trusts in its care. This situation, unique to Boston firms, allowed Laura to observe the practical administration of trusts as she was being trained in the drafting of complex documents.

Laura is a sought-after speaker on a variety of estate-planning topics. She is a regular presenter on state estate taxes at New York University's Summer Institute in Taxation, has spoken on the topic of private letter rulings for the New Jersey Institute of Continuing Legal Education (NJ ICLE), and has been a guest lecturer at New York Law School's LLM program on the subject of estate taxes. For several years, Laura taught the estate-planning session presented by NJ ICLE as part of a required course for all attorneys newly admitted to the New Jersey Bar. She was also an instructor in a six-part series of lectures on estate planning sponsored by Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education.

Laura was elected a fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel in 2015, a nonprofit association of legal professionals who have made substantial contributions to the field of trusts and estates law through writing, teaching, and bar leadership. She was appointed to the Board of Consultors for the New Jersey State Bar Real Property and Trusts and Estates Section. She was honored by the Junior League of Bergen County for her service to the League in 2017. Volunteer Lawyers for Justice named her as Volunteer of the Month in December 2017 for her multiyear service in taking pro bono estate cases for full representation and by speaking at the organization's clinics to train volunteer attorneys.

Immersed in her community, Laura serves as secretary of the Board of Trustees of The Forum School Foundation, a private, nonprofit school in Waldwick, NJ, that serves children with disabilities. She is a former vice chair of the Board of Directors of the Girl Scouts of Northern New Jersey, where she now serves as a member of the Board Development Committee. Laura is a past president and a current sustaining member of the Junior League of Bergen County. She has also served as a member of the Professional Advisory Committees of Valley Hospital, Hackensack University Medical Center, and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra.

Representative Matters

Family business—Estate planning

Developed a sophisticated estate plan that transferred shares of the family business to the next generation in a tax-effective manner, using trusts to preserve the family wealth for succeeding generations.

Religious institution—Trust planning

Created a trust for the benefit of retired and elderly members of a religious order to protect the proceeds of the sale of the order's real estate, coordinating with a specialist to comply with canon law.

Private client—Historic family trust

Reformed a historic family trust to adapt the trust terms and its trustee appointments to the current needs of the family.

Business owner—Estate administration

Administered the multimillion-dollar estate of a deceased business owner, preparing federal and state estate and inheritance tax returns and overseeing the distribution of assets to charitable and individual beneficiaries and continuing trusts.

Education

University of Virginia School of Law, JD, 1994

Wellesley College, BA, *magna cum laude*, 1991

- Phi Beta Kappa

Bar Admissions

New Jersey

New York

Massachusetts

Memberships & Certifications

The American College of Trust and Estate Counsel

American Bar Association

Boston Bar Association

New Jersey State Bar Association

Board of Consultants, Real Property and Trusts and Estates Section

Alumni of Bergen LEADS

Girl Scouts of Northern New Jersey, Inc.

Vice Chair, Board of Directors and Board Development Committee

The Forum School

Board of Directors

Junior League of Bergen County

Past President and Sustaining Member

Hackensack University Medical Center

Planned Giving Advisory Committee

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

Professional Advisors' Committee

Valley Hospital

Professional Advisory Committee

Recognitions

ROI Influencers: Law, *ROI-NJ*, 2022

Martindale-Hubbell AV Preeminent Rated 5.0 out of 5

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Articles

Understanding and Using Trusts: Chapter 16, Trust Termination, 3rd Edition, Massachusetts Institute of Continuing Legal Education , 1.1.2014

Speaking Engagements

Estate Planners Day 2019, Estate Planning Council of Bergen County, 10.24.2019

Decedents' Accounts: A Review of the NJ Estate Tax Lien, Waiver Documentation Requirements, Procedures for Closing a Decedent's Account, and Powers of Attorney, New Jersey Bankers Association, 3.30.2017

The Misnomer of the "Boilerplate", Wilmington Trust Company's 2015 Trust Symposium, 10.7.2015

Quoted

Family Matters: Why The Wealthy Are Reconsidering Their Estate Plans, *ESTATEENVY*, 9.4.2020

Windfall Recipients May Need Lawyers to Help Protect Them From Themselves, *ABA Journal*, 12.1.2016

Wills & Estates: Control How Your Assets Will Be Distributed, *New Jersey Business Magazine*, 2.8.2016