

## The Process of Estate Probate

Many people call my office after having failed to complete the administration of a loved one's estate – that is, the “probate process”. Usually these callers say they couldn't make heads or tails of the process or the court documents. My next few articles will attempt to simplify the probate process, but we need to first understand the “simple forms” the court clerk may hand you.

Many forms used in the probate of estates are “standardized” among probate attorneys. Rather than every attorney in Washington drafting what they believe will satisfy the Probate Department, it has worked much better to use and share standardized forms. These forms may seem to ask for too much information, but they do ask for the right information to move the estate through the process (most of these forms have a space for “other”, where we can individualize the information we'd like to present to the court). The use of standardize forms also avoids errors and oversight, by the petitioner and the court.

These forms aid to process the estate, from beginning to end; from the appointment of the personal representative to an Order closing the estate. There are a myriad of court documents between these ends and, when you routinely handle estate matters, each of these forms makes sense and actually speeds the process through the court. In my next article I'll focus more on the probate process.