

# **ESTATE PLANNING STRATEGIST**

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## **FOREWORD**

For the past 50 years, the New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education (NJICLE) has endeavored to serve the continuing legal education needs of the New Jersey bench and bar. Our seminars, publications, CD-ROMs, and other educational materials are designed to facilitate the practice of law and to enable judges and lawyers to more effectively exercise their responsibilities.

As we are poised to enter our second half-century of service, NJICLE has recently become a division of the NJ State Bar Association. We are excited about becoming a part of the state's leading lawyer organization and serving the CLE needs of its leadership and members.

Our success in bringing the legal community the very best in educational materials would not be possible without the judges and lawyers who volunteer their efforts to serve as lecturers and authors. NJICLE is the conduit through which they share their knowledge, skills, and expertise with their fellow professionals.

ESTATE PLANNING STRATEGIST was developed by Jerome Deener, Esq., who recognized the need for a practical guidebook to help practitioners successfully navigate the sometimes complex and troubled waters of estate planning. Without his commitment to continuing legal education and, in particular, this ever-evolving area of the law, this publication would not be possible. NJICLE is extremely grateful for his efforts.

A publication such as this would also not be possible without a dedicated publishing staff. It is, therefore, fitting to acknowledge the efforts of Michael Weisberg, Esq., our Publications Director, Donna Chamberlain, our Publications Administrator, and Dudley Engram, also of our staff, who together assure that orders are processed quickly and courteously.

Your satisfaction with the CLE products that we provide is very important to us. So that we may continue to serve you to the very best of our abilities, NJICLE always welcomes any comments or suggestions that you may have.

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## PREFACE

I have been practicing in the estate planning field since 1968, some 46 years, and have dealt with clients of differing ages, economic, and educational backgrounds; families of first, second, and even third marriages; loving family relationships; and totally dysfunctional families.

I have seen the federal estate tax exemption increase from \$60,000, with a marital deduction limited to 50% of the adjusted gross estate, to the current \$5,340,000 federal exemption and unlimited marital deduction.

In 1968, with a \$60,000 exemption, almost every client was in need of federal estate tax planning. For 10 years, ending in 2012, the federal estate tax law was based on a sunset provision that made planning beyond 2012 pure guesswork to the practitioner. In 2012 Congress finally enacted a law that provides us with a degree of permanency, but one which will affect substantially fewer clients. With the increased exemption to \$5,340,000, it has been estimated that in the entire United States, only 2000 estates will actually incur and pay a federal estate tax in the year 2014.

Despite the increased federal exemption, the lower New Jersey and New York exemptions (\$675,000 and \$1,000,000 respectively), as well as the higher income tax rates in 2013 and beyond, tax planning has become an even greater challenge. We are no longer estate planners that focus solely on federal estate tax issues. We need to view ourselves as tax planning professionals, which includes estate tax planning and income tax planning. The mantra or paradigm is “flexibility” in a plan so that ultimate choices can be deferred for as long as possible. To do this successfully, we need to know our clients, their specific objectives, and tie in those objectives to any federal, state, estate, and income tax issues associated with the plan.

All of this presents some of the greatest challenges I have witnessed in my 46 years of practice.

This new, fourth edition of *ESTATE PLANNING STRATEGIST* is designed to assist practitioners in meeting these challenges. Obviously, independent thought and discussions with our clients will be needed to successfully implement any plan.

The oxymoron of the day is: “permanency of the federal estate tax requires more flexibility than ever in the planning process.”

This publication was enhanced by the invaluable input of, and collaboration with, my partners Debra Hirsch, Esq., and Adam Grenker, Esq. In addition, I would like to thank and acknowledge the assistance of Sara Weinberg, Esq., Associate, Fox Rothschild, LLP, who has made substantial contributions to this treatise.

Jerome Deener, Esq.  
February 3, 2014



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### INTRODUCTION

I.	Recent Legislation.....	IN-1
II.	Income Taxation .....	IN-1
III.	State Transfer Taxation.....	IN-2
IV.	Achieving Flexibility .....	IN-3
	A.    Disclaimer Planning .....	IN-3
	B. <i>Clayton</i> QTIP Trust Planning .....	IN-4
	Form A, Sample Disclaimer Trust .....	IN-5
	Form B, Sample “ <i>Clayton</i> ” Trust.....	IN-13

### CHAPTER 1 LIFE INSURANCE TRUSTS

I.	Introduction.....	1-1
II.	Exclusion from Estate .....	1-2
	A.    Funding of Estate Tax .....	1-2
	B.    Incidents of Ownership .....	1-3
III.	Gift Tax Consequences .....	1-4
	A.    Amount of Gift.....	1-4
	B.    Use of Annual Exclusions.....	1-4
	C.    Creation of Demand Powers .....	1-5
	1. Duration of Power.....	1-5
	2. Notice of Power .....	1-6
	3. Number of Power Holders .....	1-7
	D.    Generation Skip Allocations .....	1-8
IV.	Gift and Estate Tax Issues Caused by the Lapse of a Demand Power.....	1-9
	A.    Spouse as Holder of Power of Withdrawal.....	1-9
	B.    Non-Spouse Power Holder.....	1-10
	1. “5/5” Limit .....	1-10
	2. General Power of Appointment .....	1-11
	3. Hanging Power.....	1-11
	C.    GST Issues .....	1-13
	1. Allocation of GST Exemption for Post-2000 Transfers.....	1-13
	2. [Reserved for Future Use]	
V.	Income Tax Consequences.....	1-18
VI.	Substantive Trust Provisions.....	1-20
VII.	Problems with Irrevocable Trusts .....	1-20
VIII.	Choice of Trustees.....	1-21
IX.	Conclusion .....	1-22
	Form A, Sample Insurance Trust .....	1-23
	Form B, Sample Gift Tax Return .....	1-53

### CHAPTER 2 QUALIFIED PERSONAL RESIDENCE TRUSTS

I.	Introduction.....	2-1
II.	Form of the Trust .....	2-2

## **ESTATE PLANNING STRATEGIST**

A.	Grantor as Owner for All Income Tax Purposes.....	2-2
B.	Treatment of Mortgages.....	2-3
C.	Definitions and Trust Administration .....	2-4
III.	Tax Risk.....	2-7
IV.	Cessation of QPRT Status.....	2-7
V.	Residence Jointly-Owned by Husband and Wife .....	2-8
VI.	Continuing Control over Trust Property Following Trust Termination.....	2-9
VII.	Conclusion .....	2-13
	Form A, Sample QPRT with Subsequent Grantor Trust.....	2-15
	Form B, Sample Gift Tax Return.....	2-37

### **CHAPTER 3 GRANTOR RETAINED ANNUITY TRUSTS, PART I**

I.	Introduction.....	3-1
II.	Present Value Concepts .....	3-1
	A. Annuity Trusts and Unitrusts .....	3-4
	B. Qualified Retained Interest .....	3-4
III.	Comparison of a GRAT and a GRUT.....	3-5
IV.	Comparison of GRAT/GRIT .....	3-6
V.	“Zeroed-Out” GRATs.....	3-9
VI.	GRATs and Limited Partnerships.....	3-10
	A. Governing Instrument Requirements.....	3-11
	B. Consequences of Grantor’s Death .....	3-11
	C. Serious Illness .....	3-15
VII.	Conclusion .....	3-16
	Form A, Sample GRAT .....	3-17
	Form B, Sample GRAT Disclosure for Gift Tax Return .....	3-33
	Form C, Sample Marital GRAT.....	3-41

### **CHAPTER 4 GRANTOR RETAINED ANNUITY TRUSTS, PART II (SHORT TERM GRAT)**

I.	Introduction.....	4-1
II.	Present Value Concepts .....	4-1
	A. Use of Separate GRATs.....	4-1
	B. Short-Term GRATs and Layering .....	4-3
III.	Zeroed-Out GRATs –the <i>Walton</i> Case .....	4-8
IV.	Conclusion .....	4-8

### **CHAPTER 5 SALE TO A GRANTOR TRUST**

I.	Introduction.....	5-1
II.	Comparison of IDIT and GRAT .....	5-1
	A. Advantages.....	5-2
	B. Disadvantages and Risks with the IDIT.....	5-10
III.	Grantor Trust Provisions.....	5-17

## ESTATE PLANNING STRATEGIST

IV.	Gift Tax Disclosure .....	5-17
V.	Conclusion .....	5-18
	Form A, Illustration of Sale of Limited Partnership Units to a Grantor Trust .....	5-19
	Form B, Sample Grantor Trust.....	5-21
	Form C, Sample Purchase Agreement .....	5-41
	Form D, Sample Promissory Note .....	5-45
	Form E, Sample Purchase Agreement.....	5-49
	Form F, Sample “Wandry” Formula Clause .....	5-51

### **CHAPTER 6 SELF-CANCELING INSTALLMENT NOTES AND PRIVATE ANNUITIES**

I.	Introduction.....	6-1
	A.    Private Annuity .....	6-1
	B.    Self-Cancelling Installment Notes (SCINs).....	6-2
II.	Valuing Private Annuities .....	6-3
III.	Valuing SCINs .....	6-5
IV.	Income Tax Ramifications of SCINs and Private Annuities.....	6-8
	A.    During the Lifetime of the Seller .....	6-9
	B.    Upon the Death of the Seller.....	6-10
	C.    Transferee’s Basis .....	6-12
V.	Gift Tax Implications .....	6-13
	A.    Bona Fide Transaction .....	6-14
	B.    Deferred Annuity Payments –the <i>Kite</i> Case.....	6-16
	C.    The Exhaustion Test.....	6-17
	D.    Importance of Filing a Gift Tax Return to Report the Sale.....	6-18
VI.	Estate Tax Consequences .....	6-18
VII.	Conclusion .....	6-20
	Form A, Sample Purchase Agreement .....	6-23
	Form B, Contingent Obligation SCIN Purchase Agreement with Promissory Note .....	6-29

### **CHAPTER 7 FAMILY LIMITED PARTNERSHIPS**

I.	Introduction .....	7-1
II.	Structure .....	7-1
III.	Non-Tax Benefits of FLPs .....	7-3
IV.	Valuation of Limited Partner Units.....	7-4
	A.    Revenue Ruling 93-12 .....	7-6
	B.    IRC § 2704.....	7-9
	C.    IRC § 2703 .....	7-11
	D.    Mere Assignee Interests .....	7-12
V.	Section 2036 Attack .....	7-13
	A.    Section 2036(A)(1) .....	7-13
	B.    Section 2036(A)(2) .....	7-23
	C.    Effect of <i>Strangi II</i> on Estate Planning .....	7-27
VI.	Internal Revenue Service Response: Gift Tax – Annual Exclusions .....	7-31
	A.    IRS Rulings and Recent Caselaw.....	7-31

## **ESTATE PLANNING STRATEGIST**

B.	Planning Recommendations for Annual Exclusions.....	7-35
VII.	Planning with FLPs.....	7-38
VIII.	Income Tax Issues.....	7-42
IX.	FLP vs. LLC.....	7-45
X.	Conclusion .....	7-45

## **CHAPTER 8 CHARITABLE LEAD TRUSTS**

I.	Introduction.....	8-1
II.	Description.....	8-1
III.	Mandatory Provisions of Charitable Lead Trusts .....	8-2
A.	Annuity Trust.....	8-2
B.	Unitrust.....	8-3
C.	Comparison of Annuity Trust and Unitrust .....	8-3
IV.	Reversionary v. Non-Reversionary Trust.....	8-4
V.	Grantor versus Non-Grantor Charitable Lead Trust .....	8-4
A.	Grantor Trust Status: Section 675(4)(C).....	8-6
B.	“Supertrust” Ruling.....	8-8
C.	Family Limited Partnership Ruling.....	8-10
D.	Recapture .....	8-12
E.	Planning for the Ill Client.....	8-12
VI.	Conclusion .....	8-13
Form A,	Illustration Regarding Economics of Fixed-Term CLAT.....	8-15
Form B,	Illustration Regarding Economics of Lifetime CLAT .....	8-16
Form C,	PLR 9224029 .....	8-17
Form D,	PLR 9810019.....	8-25
Form E,	Sample Charitable Lead Annuity Trust.....	8-33
Form F,	Sample Gift Tax Return .....	8-49

## **CHAPTER 9 CHARITABLE REMAINDER TRUSTS**

I.	Introduction.....	9-1
II.	Qualification as a Charitable Remainder Trust .....	9-1
A.	Charitable Remainder Annuity Trusts .....	9-1
B.	Charitable Remainder Unitrusts.....	9-2
C.	Comparison of CRAT with CRUT .....	9-3
D.	Governing Instrument and Regulatory Requirements.....	9-4
III.	Planning Benefits of Charitable Deduction.....	9-5
A.	Income Tax Consequences.....	9-5
B.	Estate and Gift Tax Consequences.....	9-9
IV.	Retirement Plan/Wealth Replacement .....	9-10
V.	Statutory and Regulatory Changes.....	9-11
A.	Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 (Pub. L. No. 105-34, § 1089) .....	9-11
B.	The Final Regulations .....	9-12
VI.	Choice of Trustee .....	9-15
VII.	Problem Assets.....	9-16

## ESTATE PLANNING STRATEGIST

VIII.	Conclusion .....	9-17
Form A,	Sample Charitable Remainder Annuity Trust.....	9-19
Form B,	Sample Charitable Remainder Unitrust .....	9-31
Form C,	Sample NIM-CRUT .....	9-45

### **CHAPTER 10 QUALIFIED SUBCHAPTER S TRUSTS AND ELECTING SMALL BUSINESS TRUSTS**

I.	Introduction .....	10-1
II.	The Qualified Subchapter S Trust.....	10-1
A.	Requirements for Qualification.....	10-1
B.	QSST Election Procedure .....	10-4
C.	Tax Treatment.....	10-5
D.	Planning with QSSTs.....	10-5
III.	Electing Small Business Trusts.....	10-7
A.	Requirements for Qualification.....	10-7
B.	ESBT Election Procedure .....	10-9
C.	Potential Current Beneficiary.....	10-10
D.	Taxation of an ESBT — Tax at Highest Brackets .....	10-11
IV.	Comparison of Planning with ESBTs and QSSTs .....	10-12
V.	Conclusion .....	10-13
Form A,	Sample QSST Election .....	10-15
Form B,	Sample QTIP Trust which Qualifies as a QSST .....	10-19
Form C,	Sample Credit Shelter Trust Pouring into a Generation Skip Trust, both of which Qualify as an ESBT.....	10-23
Form D,	Sample ESBT Election .....	10-31

### **CHAPTER 11 SPOUSAL LIFETIME ACCESS TRUST (SLAT)**

I.	Introduction .....	11-1
II.	Structure and Advantages .....	11-1
III.	Reciprocal Trust Doctrine .....	11-2
IV.	Gift-Splitting .....	11-3
V.	Conclusion .....	11-5
Form A,	Sample Last Will and Testament.....	11-7

### **CHAPTER 12 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS CREATE PLANNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPOUSAL JOINT PROPERTY**

I.	Introduction .....	12-1
II.	Discount on Division of Joint Property.....	12-1
III.	Disclaimers.....	12-3
IV.	Stepped-Up Basis for Spousal Joint Property .....	12-4
V.	Planning Strategy .....	12-6
VI.	Conclusion .....	12-6

## **ESTATE PLANNING STRATEGIST**

### **CHAPTER 13 REDUCTION OF ESTATE TAX THROUGH RELATED PARTY LOANS**

I.	Introduction.....	13-1
II.	Caselaw .....	13-1
III.	Using <i>Graegin</i> -Type Notes.....	13-3
	Form A, Sample Loan Agreement .....	13-5
	Form B, Negotiable Promissory Note .....	13-13

### **CHAPTER 14**

#### **FULL UTILIZATION OF TWO SPOUSES' EXEMPTION THROUGH POWERS OF APPOINTMENT**

I.	Introduction.....	14-1
II.	Potential Solution: Planning Solutions Using General Power of Appointment Instead of Actual Assets.....	14-2
	A. Private Letter Ruling Approval.....	14-2
	B. The PLR Plan .....	14-3
	C. Alternatives .....	14-4
III.	Estate and Gift Tax Consequences.....	14-4
	A. During WS and PS's Joint Lifetime.....	14-4
	B. WS Dies before PS.....	14-4
	C. PS Dies before WS.....	14-4
	Form A, Sample Revocable Living Trust .....	14-9
	Form B, Sample Irrevocable Trust.....	14-29

### **CHAPTER 15**

#### **PORABILITY VS. CREDIT SHELTER TRUST TO USE TWO SPOUSES' EXEMPTIONS**

I.	Introduction.....	15-1
II.	Portability Procedural Rules .....	15-1
III.	Choice between Portability and Credit Shelter Planning .....	15-2
	A. Advantages of Portability.....	15-2
	B. Advantages of Credit Shelter Trust Planning.....	15-3
IV.	Recommendations – Deferral of Decision and Flexible Drafting.....	15-6
	A. Disclaimer Plan .....	15-6
	B. Single QTIP-able Trust .....	15-7
	C. <i>Clayton</i> QTIP Trust.....	15-7
	Form A, Sample Insert to Pre-Nuptial Agreement.....	15-9
	Form B, Sample DSUE Provision for Spouse's Will.....	15-10

## TABLE OF DISK FILE NAMES

### **Introduction**

Form A, Sample Disclaimer Trust ..... introformA.docx  
Form B, Sample “*Clayton*” Trust ..... introformB.docx

### **Chapter 1**

Form A, Sample Insurance Trust ..... ch01formA.docx  
Form B, Sample Gift Tax Return ..... ch01formB.pdf

### **Chapter 2**

Form A, Sample QPRT with Subsequent Grantor Trust ..... ch02formA.docx  
Form B, Sample Gift Tax Return ..... ch02formB.docx  
Form 709 ..... ch02formB2.pdf

### **Chapter 3**

Form A, Sample GRAT ..... ch03formA.docx  
Form B, Sample GRAT Disclosure for Gift Tax Return ..... ch03formB.docx  
Form 709 ..... ch03formB2.pdf  
Form C, Sample Marital GRAT ..... ch03formC.docx

### **Chapter 4**

NONE

### **Chapter 5**

Form A, Illustration of Sale of Limited Partnership Units to a Grantor Trust ..... ch05formA.docx  
Form B, Sample Grantor Trust ..... ch05formB.docx  
Form C, Sample Purchase Agreement ..... ch05formC.docx  
Form D, Sample Promissory Note ..... ch05formD.docx  
Form E, Sample Purchase Agreement ..... ch05formE.docx  
Form F, Sample “*Wandry*” Formula Clause ..... ch05formE.docx

### **Chapter 6**

Form A, Sample Purchase Agreement ..... ch06formA.docx  
Form B, Contingent Obligation SCIN Purchase Agreement with Promissory Note ..... ch06formB.docx

### **Chapter 7**

NONE

### **Chapter 8**

Form A, Illustration Regarding Economics of Fixed-Term CLAT ..... ch08formA.docx  
Form B, Illustration Regarding Economics of Lifetime CLAT ..... ch08formB.docx  
Form C, PLR 9224029 ..... ch08formC.docx  
Form D, PLR 9810019 ..... ch08formD.docx  
Form E, Sample Charitable Lead Annuity Trust ..... ch08formE.docx  
Form F, Sample Gift Tax Return ..... ch08formF.pdf

### **Chapter 9**

Form A, Sample Charitable Remainder Annuity Trust ..... ch09formA.docx  
Form B, Sample Charitable Remainder Unitrust ..... ch09formB.docx  
Form C, Sample NIM-CRUT ..... ch09formC.docx

### **Chapter 10**

Form A, Sample QSST Election ..... ch10formA.docx  
Form B, Sample QTIP Trust which Qualifies as a QSST ..... ch10formB.docx

Form C, Sample Credit Shelter Trust Pouring into a Generation Skip Trust, both of  
which Qualify as an ESBT ..... ch10formC.docx  
Form D, Sample ESBT Election ..... ch10formD.docx

**Chapter 11**

Form A, Sample Last Will and Testament.....ch11formA.docx

**Chapter 12**

NONE

**Chapter 13**

Form A, Sample Loan Agreement .....ch13formA.docx  
Form B, Negotiable Promissory Note.....ch13formB.docx

**Chapter 14**

Form A, Sample Revocable Living Trust .....ch14formA.docx  
Form B, Sample Irrevocable Trust.....ch14formB.docx

**Chapter 15**

Form A, Sample Insert to Pre-Nuptial Agreement.....ch15formA.docx  
Form B, Sample DSUE Provision for Spouse's Will.....ch15formB.docx