

C·O·R·E ELEMENTS

New flooring for your business or workspace is easy as 1-2-3!

- STEP 1** SELECT YOUR SPACE
Identify your business segment and view sample boards featuring high-performance flooring products, specially selected to satisfy your unique needs.
- STEP 2** CHOOSE YOUR COLOR STORY
Professionally-designed, mix and match color schemes suit your space, your style and one another!
- STEP 3** PICK YOUR PRODUCTS
We extend the manufacturer's warranty on each flooring option and streamline the selection to make choosing easy!

Core Elements: Quite possibly the easiest business decision you'll make today!

CHES-MONT CARPET ONE FLOOR & HOME

Route 724, Parker Ford, PA 19457

5 minutes from the Limerick exit of Route 422

610-495-6211

www.chesmontcarpetone.com

LIC# PA0081672



LET'S GET "WRITE" TO IT...

Eliminating Cursive Writing from Public School Curriculum and its Potential Effect on Estate Planning Documents

LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

By Jessica R. Grater, Esq., Wolf, Baldwin & Associates, P.C.



I know, that is a really bad pun, but I could not resist using it. As an Estate practitioner, on an almost daily basis, I meet with folks for the sole purpose of executing estate planning documents such as Wills, Power of Attorneys, and Living Wills. Most of the time, those appointments are pretty routine. I review the documents with the clients, answer their questions, and once the clients are satisfied and understand the documents, they sign their names where they are instructed to sign. Oftentimes, to break the awkward silence, we engage in small talk as the documents are being signed, and we poke fun at our own signatures. As an attorney, having to sign my name countless times over the years, my once perfect penmanship and signature has devolved into a bunch of scribbles that resemble random pen strokes made by a toddler.

Recently, a recurring topic of conversation during these signing sessions has been about the elimination of cursive writing from public school curriculum. That one day, if this becomes more widespread, we will have a generation that will not know how to sign their names, that they will print their names instead of using a cursive signature. I had heard about this, and admittedly I initially dismissed it, because cursive is taught at the public school where my children attend. I figured it was some sort of "fake news" spread on social media like the nonsense about pledging allegiance to the flag in classrooms is being eliminated because people were finding the act to be offensive. (Truth be told, it's not being eliminated and is actually a required practice in Pennsylvania schools, so please people, stop posting those memes). However, the topic of teaching cursive writing has come up so frequently that I thought it merited more investigation on my part, and there is truth to this.

I came upon an article from April 4, 2013 in the *Washington Post* by T. Rees Shapiro, which discussed how cursive is being eliminated in public schools, because some consider it to be obsolete. Students take

notes on laptops and tablets. They do not write notes, but send text messages or e-mails. And, with the adoption of the Common Core, which does not require the instruction of cursive writing, local schools are left to decide whether it will be taught. The schools who decide not to teach it cite to time management and resources as the reason for its elimination. Shapiro's article states that proponents of cursive argue that the younger generation will not be able to understand documents written in cursive, including historic documents such as the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution, but that argument is countered in the article by an expert who basically says, meh who really reads that stuff anyway?

More recently, however, the Associated Press published an article on March 3, 2017 by Karen Matthews about how cursive is making a comeback in elementary schools. It discussed that Alabama and Louisiana passed laws in 2016 mandating cursive proficiency in public schools, the latest of 14 states that require cursive. (Pennsylvania has adopted Common Core, so it is up to the individual school districts in our state.)

(Continued on page 56)

*Congratulations on
Boyertown's 150*

From **ALL COUNTY & ASSOCIATES**
Land Surveying • Civil Engineering
Environmental Permitting



Building Permit Plans...
The Maze.

BE SURE TO ASK THESE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS!

- | | |
|---|---|
| How Do I know if I need a Building Permit Plan?
What does the typical Building Permit Plan consist of?
What grading or elevation needs to be shown? | What other Agencies will be involved?
How long of a process is this?
How much does a Building Permit Plan cost? |
|---|---|

Where do I find the help I need to get a Building Permit Plan done? You need to look no further than All County & Associates, Inc. (ACA). ACA is a professional Land Surveying, Civil Engineering and Environmental Permitting firm located in southeastern Pennsylvania ready to serve your Building Permit needs. Our experienced staff works throughout Pennsylvania and has done so since our inception in 1992. As a full service company, ACA has the knowledge and experience to make your goals become a reality.

We offer many other services, including:

- Subdivision/Land Development Design
- Environmental Permitting
- Hydraulic Load Testing
- On-site Sewage Disposal System Inspections
- Boundary Surveys
- Wetland Investigations

On-site Sewage Disposal System Inspections...Let it flow.

BE SURE TO ASK THESE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS!

- | | |
|---|---|
| Are you buying a house served by a septic system?
What type of Septic System do I have?
Where are the components of my Septic System located?
What is a septic tank? | What is a drainfield?
Should the septic system be inspected?
How much does on On-Site Sewage Disposal System Inspection cost? |
|---|---|

Where do I find the help I need to get an On-site Sewage Disposal System Inspection done? You need to look no further than All County & Associates, Inc. (ACA). ACA is a professional Land Surveying, Civil Engineering and Environmental Permitting firm located in southeastern Pennsylvania ready to serve your On-site Sewage Disposal System Inspection needs. Our experienced staff performs inspections throughout eastern Pennsylvania and has done so since our inception in 1992. As a full-service company, ACA has the knowledge and experience to make your goals become a reality.

We offer many other services, including:

- Subdivision/Land Development Design
- Environmental Permitting
- Boundary Surveys
- Hydraulic Load Testing
- Wetland Investigations
- Building Permit Plans

Land Surveying • Civil Engineering • Environmental Permitting
www.all-county-assoc.com • e-mail: info@all-county-assoc.com • 1-800-220-9165
P.O. Box 472, St. Peters, PA 19470 • 610-469-3830 • fax: 610-469-6385 •
P.O. Box 242, Oley, PA 19547 • 610-987-9165 • fax: 610-987-9787

JWM
Business Services

JWM Direct
Way Cool Email
Kinetic Web Solutions

we put your marketing in motion

Proper implementation of your marketing ideas are a key ingredient to success.



www.jwmbusiness.com
610-831-9030

THE PCTV NETWORK

*Your Hometown Station...
We're Home For You!*

NOW OFFERING:

- *Streaming on Three Channels. 24/7*
- *Unbeatable Pricing for Commercial Productions and Airtime*
- *Webisode Productions*
- *Internet Placement*
- *Live Remote Broadcasts at The Location of Your Choice*
- *Local Sports Advertising Packages*



ThePCTVNetwork.com
ThePCTVNetwork@gmail.com • 610.327.1866

We make it EASY to talk with a lawyer.



Workers' Compensation
Estate Planning & Administration
Civil Litigation • Municipal Law

Small Business Representation
Real Estate, Land Use & Zoning
Divorce • Custody • Support

Your Local Lawyers for over 40 years

www.wolfbaldwin.com



ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW



Pottstown
610-323-7436
800 East High Street
Pottstown, PA 19464

West Chester
610-436-8300
13 W. Miner Street
West Chester, PA 19382

Reading
610-374-2400
606 Court Street, Suite 203
Reading, PA 19601

LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

(Continued from page 54)

And last fall, the 1.1 million-student New York City schools, the nation's largest public school system, encouraged the teaching of cursive to students, generally in the third grade. So, this begs the question, what made the educational powers that be change their minds? The article implies that the reason for this (or at least part of it) is what this article is about—signing legal documents. Truthfully, people need to be able to sign their names for a number of reasons on many types of documents. Particularly, if you want to do a Will, you must be able to sign your name.

In Pennsylvania, a Will is "required to be in writing and shall be signed by the testator at the end thereof..." 20 Pa.C.S. § 2502. If, for some reason, a person cannot sign the document, Pennsylvania law allows for someone to sign by "mark": "if the testator is unable to sign his name for any reason, a will to which he makes his mark and to which his name is subscribed before or after he makes his mark shall be as valid as though he had signed his name thereto: Provided, that he makes his mark in the presence of two witnesses who sign their names to the will in his presence." 20 Pa.C.S. § 2502 (2).

If we have a generation of people who do not know how to write in cursive, this may lead to an increase in litigation about proper

execution of a will, the genuineness of a signature, and forgery of a signature. If the genuineness of a signature is in dispute (and please know that the original will needs to be presented at the time of probate, otherwise the presumption is that the original will was revoked by the testator) under the law, this is a question for the jury (folks like you) to decide. How would you decide if everyone's writing pretty much looks the same if we all used block printing? In cases where there are no witnesses to the signing of the will, two witnesses who are acquainted with the handwriting of the testator may attest to the testator's signature (these are called non-subscribing witnesses). Would this be acceptable if the testator used block printing? Is block printing a "mark" or a signature?

What is a "signature" anyway, (legally speaking)? The law uses the ordinary definition of what a signature is, and it does not require perfect penmanship, so the random looking pen strokes that are my signature are acceptable. When the statute was written, the legislature contemplated that a person's signature is made when that person takes pen to paper and writes his or her name in a manner in which only that person is capable of writing, normally in cursive or something that is supposed to look like it.

(Continued on page 58)



Gerhart, Hartman & Ritner, LTD.

www.coveragenow.com



VOTED #1 INSURANCE AGENCY



Area's #1 Insurance Agency for the 4th Consecutive Year!



A Special Thank You to all our Clients and Friends



Two Convenient Offices and 18 Professional Agents are Here to Serve Your Needs. Our Goal is to "Exceed Your Expectations Every Day."

• BOYERTOWN OFFICE:

138 S. Reading Ave., Boyertown, PA 19512 • 610-367-2544

RED HILL OFFICE:

262 Main St., Red Hill, PA 18076 • 215-679-7345

Give your business a BOOST! Advertise in CLIP-it.



CLIP-it is the most read special section in the Reading Eagle.* *2016 Nielsen market survey



Next edition: Dec. 1 | Ad deadline: Nov. 15

To advertise: Contact Andrew Kearney at 610-371-5123 or akearney@readingeagle.com

READING EAGLE



Harleysville SINCE 1915 BANK

Upper Providence Branch 1889 East Ridge Pike, Royersford, PA 19468

harleysvillebank.com 610-454-0391



LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

(Continued from page 56)

A "mark" is oftentimes thought of as a simple "X" on the signature line. There is nothing particularly unique about an "X." My "X" and anyone else's "X" probably look the same. Due to the potential for fraud and forgery with signing a will by a mark, the legislature required that the signature by mark be witnessed by two people to help prevent the fraudulent execution of a Will.

Moreover, a signature and a mark are not the same thing under Pennsylvania law. The mere fact there are two separate sections in the Decedents, Estates, and Fiduciaries Code, one relating to signatures and the other to a "mark," is evidence that they are not the same thing in the eyes of the law. Therefore, we must ask: is printing your name in block letters the same as a "mark?" Is one person's printing that much different than the printing of another? If everyone uses block printing, how difficult would it be to prove that a signature was forged? In Pennsylvania, when forgery is alleged, the burden of proving it rests on the party making the allegation, and it must be proven by clear and convincing evidence. This burden of proof is a higher standard to meet in civil cases, because the person needs to prove what they are alleging is substantially

more likely than not to be true. How would a forgery be proven under this standard if our signatures became block letters?

As you can see, there are many real-world implications to the elimination of cursive writing from public school curriculum. Aside from other reasons and studies showing there are other benefits to teaching cursive, when it comes to legal documents, (particularly a will) being able to write in cursive is a very valuable (arguably essential) skill. It has a lifetime of applications. I use cursive writing on a daily basis. Honestly, I can't say the same thing about trigonometry or physics, and I'm quite certain I haven't diagrammed a sentence in several decades, but that does not mean there is no value in this knowledge, or that these subjects should be eliminated from public school curriculum. The same should apply to cursive writing.

Jessica R. Grater, Esquire, is an attorney with the law firm of Wolf, Baldwin & Associates, P.C., with offices in Pottstown, West Chester, and Reading. Ms. Grater concentrates her practice in Wills, Estates, Probate, Orphans' Court, and Social Security Disability, and litigation related to such matters. She may be reached at 610.323.7436 or by e-mail to jgrater@wolfbaldwin.com.

A Honey Dipper SEPTIC SERVICE J. Brehm, Inc. WE PUMP WHAT YOU DUMP Prompt, Reliable, and Quality Service! Residential • Commercial • Industrial Septic Pumping • Field Services • Bulk Hauling 610.327.1699 • www.honeydipperseptic.com