



HUNTER HODGES
Attorney at Law

PROBATE GUIDE



Please accept my sincerest condolences to you in this difficult time. In addition to the pain of losing a loved one, there is often confusion as to the required steps to wind up the affairs of the deceased. My goal is to – as much as possible – ***reduce the stress*** of administering the estate off of the family.

The purpose of this Probate Guide is to provide you with information to better ***understand the legal process*** following the death of a family member. At this point, you may be interviewing attorneys to handle the estate or trying to determine whether probate is necessary at all. Either way, this can be your starting point.

While this Guide is not meant to be comprehensive, I hope you will find the general information helpful. This can help you prepare for our initial consultation and provide clarity for the attorney-client relationship. I hope we have the opportunity to work together. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Hunter Hodges

No representation is made that the quality of legal services to be provided is greater than the quality of services provided by other lawyers.

THE PROBATE PROCESS

Probate is the legal process of administering a deceased person's estate, either according to their Last Will & Testament (if they have one) or according to Alabama law (if they don't). It can be a complicated process that unfortunately occurs at an often emotionally fraught time, and I am here to help guide you through it. I want to help make things as seamless and simple as possible for you during this time, and have broken the probate process down into 3 easy steps. Every probate is different, and once all the initial documents have been drafted and submitted, you and I can take stock of the direction of your particular probate.

INTAKE PROCESS

You will begin by completing an intake form / questionnaire. This step is important as I will need accurate information in order to draft the probate documents.

INITIAL MEETING

This is usually a 30-to-60-minute consultation during which we can review your intake form submitted prior to the meeting, any pertinent documents, questions you might have, and what your particular probate will look like. This can be done by phone, videoconference or in-person.

DOCUMENT DRAFTING

After the initial meeting and after the intake form has been received, I will prepare the documents necessary to open a probate estate. Once drafted, I will send them to you for review, and once you have reviewed and approved them I will file them for you.

TIMELINE

The timeline will vary depending on the facts of your probate case. For a relatively simple, uncontested estate with no complicating factors, you can typically expect between 6-9 months. An estate with a Last Will & Testament is usually expected to settle before a comparable estate without a Last Will & Testament. Many factors impact the probate timeline, such as whether there are minor or incompetent beneficiaries/heirs. After our initial consultation, I should be able to provide an estimated probate timeline.

FEES

Retainers start at \$1,400 to probate a Will and at \$1,500 to probate an estate when there is no Will. I bill against the retainer at my hourly rate, which will be set out in my engagement letter or our fee agreement. Depending on the circumstances, there may be an option for a flat-rate attorney fee. Further, if funds are not available for a typical retainer, contact me to discuss whether a lesser retainer may be an option. I do my best to work with families to ensure the deceased's intentions are carried out.

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

I communicate by phone, email, videoconference and in-person meetings. I try to customize the communications according to my client's preferences and situation. My goal is to return all phone calls within 48 hours and respond to emails within 48 hours.

TUSCALOOSA OFFICE:

(Primary Location)



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