Michael C. Looby '75, Gift Planning Director

I was talking with a friend of mine and the conversation topic fell on the subject of wills. She said that she and her husband were reviewing the will they prepared 10 years ago. They asked themselves "What were we thinking?" when they named a relative as the executor and a couple (who they had not talked to in the last 5 years) to be guardian for their child who is now 20 years old. They quickly realized that changes needed to be made.

Times change. Relationships change. Incomes change. Children have different needs as they grow older. According to Ted Bond, Jr. '84, a practicing attorney, their story is not unusual. He said a regular review of your will and estate plan is an important effort to ensure the security and welfare of your family. Ted said that many people have the best of intentions to create and later review their wills, but many fail to complete the process. "I have a stack of wills that were started as many as three years ago but they have yet to complete them," he said.

An interesting statistic from a survey by the National Council on Planned Giving cited that the average age for a person to create their first will is at age 49. When you think about it, creating a will at this age is not being very responsible. By age 49, many of us have children who should have a named guardian and defined the distribution of assets such as a home, cars, cash and a variety of possible investments. There are numerous other issues that need to be addressed through a solid estate plan and will. Whether married or single, who will receive your hard-earned assets – the government (in the form of taxes) or deserving family members, relatives and charities that are important to you?

Create your will in your late 20s or early 30s

I must admit, I did not think of creating a will at this age. However, a will at this age is not just about distributing your assets but perhaps more about naming a guardian for your young children. You will also reduce the burden and anxiety of closing your estate by your parents or siblings. Perhaps you started your own business. Who will close the business, distribute assets and pay creditors?

Late 30s or early 40s

Generally people are starting to accumulate assets and if they have children, their needs change as they are about to become teenagers. Is the named guardian still the right person or persons for your child or children? Does the asset distribution still make sense? As you become more involved in your community, is there a charity you would like to support through a bequest or as a contingent beneficiary? Is this a good time to establish a trust? Have you started retirement plans yet? If you have sufficient resources, will a planned gift to a charity or charities be an option for you?

Early to mid 50s

Perhaps your children are now college-age; their needs have changed again. Is the executor still the right person for your estate? Are assets still directed toward children, spouse, relatives or charities in a manner that satisfies you? How does your estate plan fit with your retirement plan? If you have a close relationship with a charity or cause over a period of time, perhaps a planned gift directed to the organization might be a way to give back a substantial gift and at the same time provide a source of income during retirement or help you avoid capital gains taxes on appreciated assets.

Mid 60s

Your children are holding their own jobs and starting their own families. Are your children financially secure through their current income and perhaps you wish to bequest assets to your grandchildren? Are your assets still directed toward children, spouse, relatives or charities in a manner that satisfies you? If your retirement is fully funded, should you consider more charitable giving? Would a planned gift directed toward your favorite charity or charities make sense to increase productivity of an asset or remove unneeded income from your estate?

70s or older

You have changed your life patterns in retirement and you wish to make adjustments because of health, new interests or have the satisfaction that "everything is in place". You now know whether your children and grandchildren are financially secure or need additional help. Perhaps you and your children no longer want the vacation home. You might wish to remove it from your estate to help your heirs avoid estate taxes and relieve them of the burden of selling the property. Would a planned gift allow you to give back to an organization you feel committed to and at the same time provide savings for you and your heirs by donating the vacation home?

There are life's milestones that should make you pause to review your will and estate plans. Ted urges his clients to review their estate plans at least every 10 to 15 years.

The table at the left are just a few questions you can ask yourself, your attorney and financial advisor as each milestone is achieved. In your discussion with one of these professionals you might find more questions or more options that better fit your situation in life. As your children grow older, having a discussion about your estate plan is important to make sure they understand your wishes. If you are single, many of these issues still apply with the exception of children. However, instead of your own children, you may wish to support siblings, nieces and nephews or other people and organizations important to you.

I recently went through the process of creating a will. As Ted's reluctant clients attest, this is not an easy effort, but when completed, I was left with a satisfying feeling that I did my best to take care of people and organizations important to me. Most of all, I will not have to worry about my heirs saying, "What was he thinking?" when they would have had to go through the extra expense and effort to close my estate without a will. Now, I hope I have you thinking: "Why haven't I done this yet?" Your heirs will thank you for your foresight.

If you need help in starting the estate planning process or if you are thinking of making a planned gift to Carmel, you can call Mike at 847-388-3338 or email him at mlooby@carmelhs.org.

DC Alumni Event Celebrates CC

On November 2nd, Dr. Judith Mucheck, CCHS President, a
CCHS's Advancement Office, traveled to Washington, DC t
enjoyed a great night in DC at Gordon Biersch Restaurant a
CCHS's 4th Blue Ribbon Award. The event was attended b
the classes of '67-'07! The event would not have been possi
help of our local alumnae hosts Sue (Ladurini) Klinkhamer
Pavlus '97.