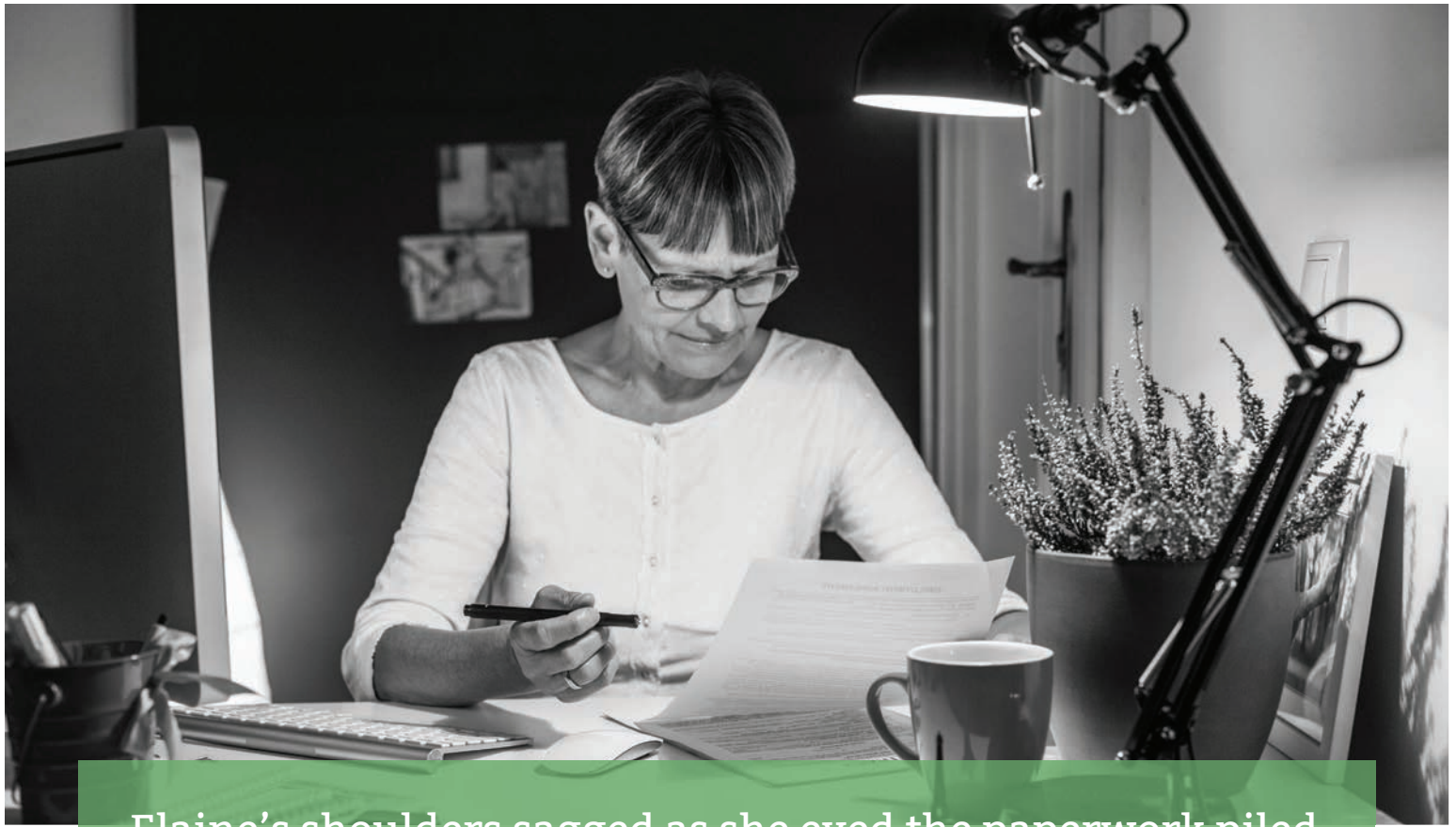




WEALTH MANAGEMENT FOR WIDOWS





Elaine's shoulders sagged as she eyed the paperwork piled on the dining room table she and Ed bought to celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary. That was nearly two decades ago.

When Ed passed away, Elaine was forced to start over. But where would she begin?

Almost everyone Elaine knew—her son, neighbors, and tennis partner, among others—had his or her own ideas about how to wade through and manage the retirement accounts, insurance policies, and bank statements Ed had so carefully taken care of before he got sick. When Ed died, the last thing on Elaine's mind was dealing with the couple's finances. But now, with the funeral over, the casseroles eaten, and the relatives gone home, Elaine's future was heavy on her mind. "What do I do now?" she wondered.

Elaine's story is a common one. The death of a spouse brings to an end the teamwork, communication, and decisions that build not only a marriage but also a life. Suddenly you—like Elaine—are on your own. Moving on seems impossible. And handling finances at a time like this? Forget it. But the truth is, one of the most

important decisions a widow can make is how to deal with her financial situation. Make no mistake, there's a lot to deal with, including life insurance policies, unpaid bills, retirement accounts, and taxes. The financial plans a woman had made with her husband may need to change—sometimes drastically—following his death.

Elaine had a myriad of questions: How long will my money last? Who will make decisions for me if I get sick? Where will my money go when I die?

Sorting through all the details can be challenging even if your spouse was organized, like Ed, but it can be especially challenging if he lacked a formal financial plan at the time of his death. No matter what your circumstances, your first step should be to determine what needs to be taken care of immediately and what can wait.

The following list will help you and people like Elaine deal with their finances after the passing of a spouse:

Phase 1: During the First Month

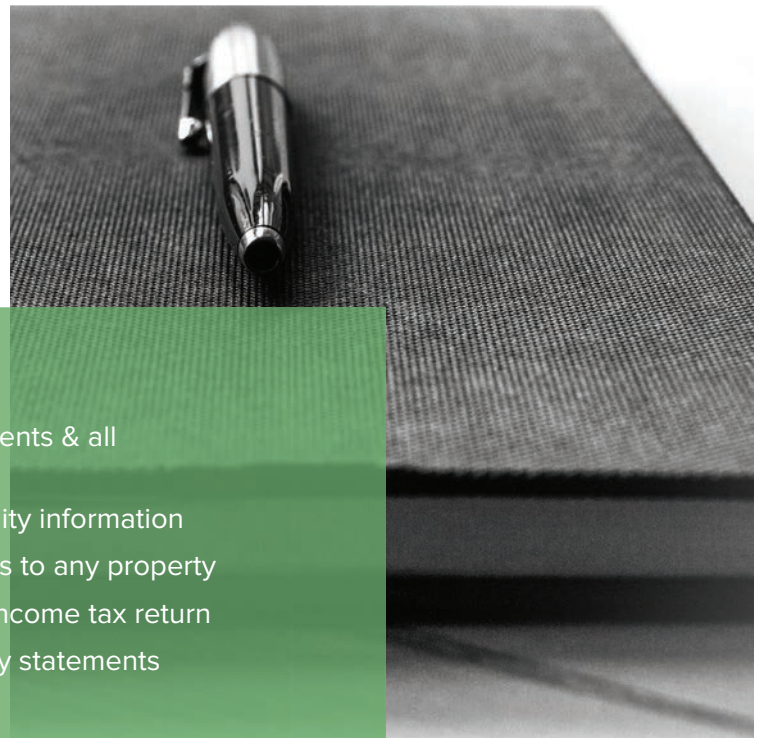
- Obtain 15-20 copies of the death certificate.
- Ensure that sufficient liquidity is in place for day-to-day expenses until benefits are claimed and the estate is settled.
- Locate important documents; be sure to check the contents of a safe deposit box, if you have one.
- Identify benefits that need to be claimed: Social Security, life insurance, pension, and employer benefits (such as vacation, sick leave, and expense reimbursement).
- Notify your financial advisor, attorney, accountant, and insurance agent about the death.
- Separate bills into yours, your spouse's, and joint. You shouldn't pay bills that are in your spouse's name with your own funds; that's the estate's responsibility. Notify your creditors if you have issues making payments.
- Pay for your spouse's funeral expenses, payable by the decedent's estate. They are reimbursable if those funds are not yet available from the estate.
- Meet with an estate and trust attorney to determine what must be done with respect to the estate or trust administration.
- If necessary, open a bank account in the name of the estate.
- Check with creditors to see if there are death payments on loans or credit card accounts.
- Cancel services that will no longer be used (such as cell phone plans or gym memberships.)

Phase 2: During the First Six to Nine Months

- Document and determine your cash flow.
- Create a budget.
- Determine the value of the estate.
- Settle the estate. Probate the will, re-title assets, and roll over/consolidate accounts.
- File any necessary estate or tax forms.
- Update your estate plan and designate new beneficiaries.
- Update your safe deposit box, possibly adding a joint owner such as a child or sibling.

Phase 3: Beyond Nine Months

- Continue to monitor and adjust your new financial plan.
- Make lifestyle changes (such as changing your job or pursuing education).
- Sell your home, if desired.
- Decide on gifts to children or charity.
- Monitor your own estate plan to ensure that your goals and objectives are met.
- Attend to your spouse's personal items.



DOCUMENTS TO LOCATE QUICKLY

- Letter of instruction
- Death certificate
- Marriage certificate
- Birth certificate
- Social Security Card
- Military discharge papers
- Last Will & Testament
- Trust Agreements & all amendments
- Pension/annuity information
- Deeds or titles to any property
- Most recent income tax return
- Social security statements

Lean On The Experts

Most widows, even those who were actively involved in the family's finances before her spouse's death, will likely need to consult with a team of professionals. During the emotional time after a spouse's death, these experts can help ensure that important tasks are completed and that necessary details are not overlooked. Professionals most commonly consulted include the following:

CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER (CFP®):

CFP® professionals possess a broad skill set to guide you through investments, insurance, estate planning, tax planning, retirement planning, and more. A good planner takes a holistic approach and will consult other experts to ensure that you get the best possible advice.

ESTATE AND TRUST ATTORNEY:

Whether your estate is small or large, an experienced attorney versed in estate and trust law may be beneficial. An estate and trust attorney will have the knowledge and expertise to guide you through the estate administration process and help you protect and preserve your assets through estate planning for yourself. A good estate and trust attorney will have extensive knowledge of probate laws, trust laws, and tax laws and will use that knowledge to assist you in establishing the best-possible plan to meet your estate planning goals and objectives.

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT (CPA):

When your spouse dies, your tax status changes, often necessitating a level of planning not previously required. CPAs are crucial resources in ensuring that you comply with Internal Revenue Service guidelines. They can also help you protect as much of your assets' value as possible from needless taxation. The complexity of the ever-changing tax and regulatory environment makes the CPA's role in your future invaluable.

LIFE INSURANCE AGENT:

Insurance protects you from catastrophic losses. Review your current insurance coverage to determine its adequacy, because you may discover that you are now over- or underinsured. A life insurance agent can help ensure that you have proper coverage at a reasonable price.

Go at Your Own Pace

Taking care of tasks and coordinating with professionals after the death of a spouse can be daunting. You'll have a lot of balls in the air—so there's a greater risk of dropping one. Many of the decisions you make can have a profound effect on your future financial well-being. Take your time completing those tasks, or making

those decisions, that could have extremely negative consequences unless they are time-sensitive. Very few decisions need to be made immediately.

During this time of confusion and grief, you may be tempted to make decisions just so you can check a task off your to-do list. In that emotional state, you might not have the energy to ask all the pertinent questions or to push back when the answers you get just don't seem right.

Maybe you would feel like Jamie, who came to work with Jason shortly after her husband was killed in action in Iraq. In the months before her husband's deployment, Jamie had moved closer to her parents. Because the move necessitated a change of banks, Jamie had inadvertently let a \$250,000 life insurance policy lapse. The couple had received a letter from the insurance company regarding the lapsed policy, and her husband said he would deal with it when he returned on leave, just a few weeks away.

After her husband's death, Jamie called the insurance company to see if any benefits were available and was told no. Feeling that extenuating circumstances were at play, Jason encouraged her to call again and further explain her situation. Initially Jamie hesitated because the process was taking an emotional toll on her, and she just didn't have the energy to push forward. After continued encouragement from Jason, she called back, and the company reconsidered its stance, granting her the entire \$250,000 in death benefits.

Jamie's hesitations are very common. After all, the stream of applications, documentation, and telephone calls can test anyone's patience. But it's okay to ask for help, whether from a friend, a relative, or a wealth manager.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Not naming, or incorrectly naming, beneficiaries
- Adding children as joint owners of financial accounts
- Failing to adjust spending
- Failing to adjust financial plan for sentimental reasons
- Choosing the incorrect payout method on retirement plans
- Incorrect filing status election on tax returns

The Wealth Management Advantage

Well-intended relatives, friends, and other acquaintances will all have many things to say about how you should proceed following your spouse's passing. This advice generally comes from the right place but can be shortsighted and lack an overall understanding of your situation. Sometimes well-meaning advice can even be harmful.

Many people seek out a financial planner called a wealth manager to guide them safely through these confusing times. Wealth managers, who are generally Certified Financial Planners (CFP®), have the skills to understand comprehensively all the financial and legal challenges you face. A wealth manager will help you with things you already know about and with things you are unaware of. This comprehensive and holistic approach is essential in helping you develop integrated solutions that will serve you best going forward.

At Hiley Hunt Wealth Management, our wealth management process is broken down into three parts:

INVESTMENT CONSULTING

- Creating goals and investment objectives
- Defining and understanding risk
- Structuring investment portfolios to achieve stated goals
- Continued monitoring and adjustments of investments

ADVANCED PLANNING

- Turning retirement savings into a lasting income stream
- Saving for college
- Helping to ensure tax efficiency
- Transferring wealth
- Protecting assets

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

- Coordinating with accountants to promote tax efficiency
- Working with attorneys to ensure the implementation of estate plans
- Identifying and delegating risk management needs
- Working with families to achieve common goals





About Hiley Hunt Wealth Management

At Hiley Hunt Wealth Management (HHWM), we understand that the true measure of wealth is not the sum of your financial assets, but the life experiences made possible by those assets. Our clients seek to maximize their resources in order to enjoy their life experiences. Whether you are seeking to grow your assets in anticipation of retirement, utilize your assets during retirement, plan for your children's future, or impact society through your philanthropic gifts, at HHWM we are dedicated to helping you achieve your goals.

ABOUT JASON HILEY, CAP®, CFP®

Jason Hiley is Partner and Co-Founder of Hiley Hunt Wealth Management, a fee-only registered investment advisor. After graduating from the University of Iowa with a BBA in accounting and management information systems, Jason worked as a consultant for Fortune 500 companies, helping them improve their people, processes, and technology. He then spent time working for a large mutual fund company, learning the particulars of the industry. During this time, Jason discovered his passion: Fee-Only financial planning.

As an active member of the financial planning community, Jason has spoken nationally about his work with Women in Transition. His financial planning success has been cited in numerous national publications. Jason passed the Uniform CPA exam in the state of Iowa; he is a practicing Certified Financial Planner™ professional; and is a member

of the preeminent organization for Fee-Only financial planners in the country, the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors (NAPFA).

ABOUT ANDREW HUNT, MBA, CFP®

Andrew Hunt is Partner and Co-Founder of Hiley Hunt Wealth Management, a fee-only registered investment advisor. Andrew previously served in executive leadership at a Nebraska based, Federally Chartered Credit Union and served as the President of a Wealth Management firm he founded.

Andrew regularly consults as a fee-only financial planner with clients of the firm on a range of complex financial planning topics including asset allocation, investment management, estate and trust planning, planned giving, risk management, and tax strategy. An expert on personal financial management and financial well-being, Hunt frequently leads workshops throughout the community on investing, well-being, and behavioral finance (the intersection between investor behavior and investment performance).

Hunt earned a bachelor's degree in accounting and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He received a Certificate in Financial Planning from Boston University and is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNERTM. Hunt was honored by the Midlands Business Journal as a member of the 2012 40 under 40 award winners.



9850 Nicholas Street, Suite #315
Omaha, NE 68114

O: 402-504-9347

F: 888-732-1015

www.hileyhunt.com