LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Marcie L.H. Merz, JD, Executive Director & Associate General Counsel

Though it can be an easy task to postpone, everyone should have an estate plan. Planning your estate is not just for the wealthy. An estate plan will ensure that your wishes are carried out and your estate is handled as you intended. With good estate planning, you can minimize the costs and expenses, including taxes, which often occur with the distribution of an estate. However there are many non-tax reasons to plan your estate. Some important things to consider:

- Decide who your beneficiaries will be and how much each will receive—especially if you want to designate non-family members or charitable organizations.
- Consider a trust to help manage assets and control the amount and timing of distributions.
- Select an individual who will be empowered to act on your behalf.
- Designate an individual who can make health care decisions if you are unable to manage your affairs, and can express your wishes on the use of life prolonging measures.
- Choose a guardian for minor children.

The first step in planning is to speak with a qualified professional, one with experience in estate planning. Once your will or trust is completed, plan to review it on occasions such as the birth of a child, divorce, relocation to another state, or the passing of a spouse.

As the situation currently stands, in 2013 taxpayers will face a very different tax landscape from that of 2012. Among other reasons, this is because:

- The Bush-era tax cuts are scheduled to expire
- The so-called “tax extenders” have not been renewed
- The 2010 healthcare law adds surtaxes and limits medical expense deductions

These changes, slated to take effect at the beginning of 2013, will affect nearly all taxpayers, and particularly those at the higher end of the income spectrum. For example, the amount that a taxpayer may leave to non-charitable beneficiaries free of estate tax will be reduced from $5.12 million to $1 million, and the top rate will increase from 35% to 55%. Of course, it is quite possible that Congress might postpone some or all of the expected increases—legislators have historically acted on short notice and under pressure on these matters. Both presidential candidates have generally described proposed changes to the tax code. For now, we are all put in the position of working with the limited information we have and then adopting a posture of “wait and see.”
GIFT PLANNING AND THE MAKING HISTORY CAMPAIGN

For the University’s alumni, parents and friends, Making History: The Campaign for Penn provides many exciting opportunities for engagement. One such opportunity is through planned gifts that will benefit Penn both now and in the future. Planned gifts not only establish a lasting legacy but also help to enable the University’s ongoing success. If you are considering a new planned gift, or adding to an existing planned gift, now is a wonderful time to create your legacy and be counted among our most distinguished supporters within Making History: The Campaign for Penn.

If you are currently a Harrison Society member, we thank you—if you are not, please contact us to learn the many mutually beneficial ways to qualify.

DOROTHY DELLA REZZA

“I wanted to do something that would carry on the Della Rezza name,” commented Dorothy Della Rezza, wife of Penn Alumnus Anthony Della Rezza, ED’37, GED’38. A dedicated language teacher in the Lower Merion School District, Mr. Della Rezza had a rich history of language, teaching Italian, French and Spanish for over 35 years. “He loved language,” recalls Dorothy. “He taught his students that language was not dead…It was a living thing.” Having traveled all over the world and to just about every corner of the United States, Mr. Della Rezza had many opportunities to perfect his language skills. “We had a wonderful life together and I know he would be happy knowing that I made a gift in his name to Penn.”

Anthony Della Rezza thought the world of Penn and now his wife Dorothy has made it possible for future generations of Penn students to think the world of him. Dorothy chose to honor her husband’s memory with a permanently endowed scholarship. The Anthony Della Rezza Scholarship will support students at Penn’s Graduate School of Education. Dorothy funded the scholarship with a gift from her estate.

We at Penn think the world of Dorothy, not only for the meaningful tribute she has given her husband, but for making such a difference in the future of Penn and its students. We are happy to welcome her into the Harrison Society.

Dorothy likewise plans on including the Morris Arboretum and the New Bolton Center of Penn Veterinary Medicine as part of her total bequest.