

Never too young for elder law

■ Baker and Baker Attorneys at Law call their speciality ‘preparing for your later years’ — so don’t wait too long

For lack of a better term, Brenda and Ed Baker of Baker and Baker Attorneys at Law practice elder law, a specification that belies the fact that age has no real bearing on whether someone needs their services.

“Once anyone acquires property, it’s appropriate at that point to think about who’s going to get it if something happens to you,” Brenda Baker said. “It’s more event specific than age-specific. I call it ‘preparing for your later years.’”

Baker and Baker handles wills, trusts, power of attorney documents, designation of guardians, Medicare



Ed and Brenda Baker of Baker and Baker Attorneys at Law have 37 years’ experience practicing law in Corpus Christi. *Photo by Carrie Robertson Meyer/Third Coast Photo*

eligibility and any other issue that can crop up to plague the golden years.

“Prior planning will save your estate a lot of time, money, aggravation and potential litigation,” Brenda Baker said. “It’s your voice, your final expression of who is important to you and who you want to receive your assets.”

The earlier a person grapples with the issues of estate planning, the easier things will be later on, agreed Ed Baker.

“There are two ways of doing things,” he said. “The hard way and the easy way. Deal with it early on. It’s much easier, less expensive, less aggravating.”

Ed Baker’s speciality encompasses two important areas of growing older: getting Medicare coverage for everything that can happen and providing guardianship for mentally incapacitated individuals. He is one of the few attorneys in the entire state of Texas who is a lawyer AND a state and nationally certified private professional guardian. As such, he can act as a guardian himself as

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ed from Georgetown Law School in Washington, D.C., where they met. Once married, they put some research into where they wanted to live and picked Corpus Christi for its size and lifestyle.

They started their business by providing legal service to anyone who walked through the door. They also taught at Del Mar College and worked for the county.

“Elder law was an evolutionary development for our firm,” Brenda Baker said. “We seemed to have more and more people who needed help in that area. Ed and I really

populace in this way,” Ed Baker said. “There are a lot of excellent firms out there board certified in estate planning. We are not. In fact, Texas has no certification for elder law. It’s not offered.”

With the amount of experience they have, the Bakers could be the ones offering certification for elder law. Their years in the business have made them proficient at providing user-friendly documents that are produced quickly and efficiently, even as they are customized to the individual client.

“We do all the legal work our-

well as help others who have to take on that role for a loved one.

“By going through the process of becoming a certified guardian, I mean that to be a declaration or statement that that area is important to me,” he said. “It’s not enough to say I know how to do that job, but to say I’m someone who is trained to do that job. I’ve gone out of my way to be certified to do that job.”

The Bakers didn’t always specialize in elder law. They hung out their shingle in Corpus Christi 36 years ago after both graduat-

enjoyed it, so gradually, we just expanded the practice and took fewer and fewer of the other kind of cases. It became evident it was our speciality about 10 years ago.”

What Baker and Baker specializes in should not be confused with estate planning, which requires board certification and involves estates of more than \$5 million. Most of the Baker’s clients come to them with estates well under \$1 million.

“We are probably one of just a few firms in town geared to the broad

selves,” Brenda Baker said. “We’re hands-on. We have a staff of eight people who assist us. Everything that goes out the door is custom designed by us.”

They also pride themselves on the fact they are not litigators. They try to solve problems before they end up in court. Litigation, Ed Baker said, never makes people get along better. These two strive to negotiate and be conciliatory, which, ultimately, protects a family’s assets. It’s that part of the practice that gives them the most personal satisfaction.

“We realized that probate law is not the most exciting topic,” Brenda Baker said. “But we think these are fascinating legal areas, where we have a real opportunity to help people. We are trying to solve problems for people before they happen.”

Baker and Baker Attorneys at Law is located at 5350 S. Staples St., Suite 106, in Corpus Christi. Call (361) 371-4133 or visit the website at bakerselderlaw.com for more information.