



It has been many months since our last newsletter and much has happened here at Marshall & Melhorn in the interim. To begin with, our “Trust & Estate Group” has more than doubled in size! Attached to this newsletter, you will find the current bios for each member of our department.

In particular, we would like to welcome to the firm Chad Baker, Steve Lauer, Carol Sobczak, Ken Lather, John Borell and Josh Didion, all of whom have joined our Trust & Estate Planning Group.

Chad comes to us as an Ohio Board Certified Specialist in Estate Planning, Trust and Probate Law who also teaches Estate & Trust Law at the University of Toledo Law School, and is licensed in Ohio, Michigan, Florida and New York.

Steve has joined us after serving as the Estate & Gift Tax Examiner with the Internal Revenue Service for over 30 years. Steve has now given us the gift of being able to “peek behind the curtain” of the inner workings of the IRS to better assist our clients in the preparation and filing of gift, estate and fiduciary income tax returns.

Carol, in turn, has joined us after practicing law for over 25 years in Illinois and California. She is a California Board Certified Estate Planning, Trust, & Probate Law

Specialist, and of course is licensed in California and Illinois, as well as Michigan, and soon will be licensed in Ohio.

Ken heads up our Findlay office where he has practiced law for the last 35 years. Like Chad, Ken is an Ohio Board Certified Specialist in Estate Planning, Trust and Probate Law.

As for John, he has been with Marshall & Melhorn since 2003, but has joined our group to assist in fiduciary litigation matters. John is licensed to practice in both Ohio and Michigan.

Finally, we would like to introduce Josh, who has joined us after several years with another major law firm in the area. Josh is a graduate of Case Western Reserve Law School and who currently sits on the board of the Toledo Estate Planning Council.

As Chad, Steve, Carol, Ken, John and Josh have all joined us we also wanted to take a moment to let all of you know that the senior member of our group, Paul Kraus, recently retired from the practice of law. However, after 55 years of practice, you’re still likely to find Paul here at the office, sharing his knowledge and advice with the rest of our group. Thanks again, Paul, for all of your hard work and dedication to the firm over these past 55 years!

Although sharing with you the great news about the growth of our group here at Marshall & Melhorn is very exciting to us, we also wanted to take a moment to bring you up to date on some estate and trust issues that we have been following in the recent months:

- As of January 1, 2013, the Ohio Estate Tax was completely repealed.
- As of January 1, 2014, the exemption from federal gift & estate tax was increased to \$5,340,000 for each U.S. citizen.
- As of January 1, 2014, the amount any U.S. citizen can gift to any other person (“the Annual Exclusion Gift”) is \$14,000 per donee per year.
- As of January 1, 2013, the federal Capital Gains Tax rate was increased from 15% to 20% for married couples earning over \$450,000, and for single taxpayers earning over \$400,000.
- As of January 1, 2013, the Medicare Surplus Tax and Net Investment Income Tax both became effective for taxpayers earning over \$250,000 if married, and over \$200,000 if single.

With the Ohio estate tax repealed, no estate taxes in the states of Florida and Michigan, and with the federal estate and

gift tax exemption amount increased to \$5,340,000, much of our clients' tax planning issues will shift to income tax planning; that is, maximizing the tax basis of capital assets upon death to reduce income taxes and stretching out payments from IRAs, 401 (k) plans and other qualified retirement plans to defer income taxes for beneficiaries as long as possible.

Also, we now devote increasing time and effort counseling our clients on asset protection matters, both for themselves and their heirs. In many cases we are able to assist our clients in designing a legacy for their heirs that will survive and help them prosper for generations.

If you haven't reviewed your current estate planning documents and/or beneficiary designations on your retirement plans recently, we would encourage you to pull them out, “blow the dust off” and read them. If they are more than a few years old, you will likely find that they need a tune-up. If so, give us a call and we will be happy to set up a meeting with you to perform a comprehensive review of your plan.

**For more information about our firm,
please visit:
www.marshall-melhorn.com**

PS, if you received this letter by e-mail and would prefer to receive letters in the future by “snail mail” will be happy to accommodate you. If you received this letter by snail mail and would like to receive future letters by e-mail, please provide us with your e-mail address.

Meet the Members of the Trusts and Estates Group of Marshall & Melhorn, LLC



A. Thomas Christensen

Mr. Christensen is the head of the Trusts & Estates Group at Marshall & Melhorn, LLC. He practices primarily in the areas of taxation, estate planning, probate, and business law. He is a graduate of Illinois Wesleyan University (BA), University of Toledo (JD) and College of William and Mary (MLT), and is licensed to practice law in Ohio and Michigan. He is an Accredited Estate Planner, a past President of the Toledo Estate Planning Counsel and a current member of both the Estate Planning Council and the Estate Planning/Probate Committee of the Toledo Bar Assn. Mr. Christensen is admitted to practice before the United States District Court of the Northern District of Ohio, the United States Tax Court, all courts in the State of Ohio and in the State of Michigan. He is a member of the American Bar Association, Ohio Bar Association, and Toledo Bar Association. He has been practicing for 35 years and has the highest attorney rating, AV, issued by Martindale-Hubbell.



Chad R. Baker

Mr. Baker works with affluent families and closely held businesses assisting them with the enhancement, preservation and effective transition of family wealth. He also works closely with many public and private tax exempt organizations advising on tax exempt structures, operations and planned giving. He is an adjunct professor of Law at the University of Toledo College of Law teaching courses on Trusts & Estates, Tax Exempt Organizations and Estate Planning. He is a Board Certified Specialist in Estate Planning, Probate and Trust Law as certified by the Ohio State Bar Association, listed in Best Lawyers in America® for both Estate Planning and Taxation, an Ohio Rising Star as listed in Super Lawyers Magazine and AV Rated as a Preeminent Lawyer by Martindale Hubbell.



Kenneth L. Lather

Mr. Lather joined the firm as the head of the Findlay office in 2014 after managing his own practice in Findlay for 35 years. His practice concentrates on counseling affluent clients in the areas of family wealth preservation, charitable planning, and business and agricultural succession planning, with an emphasis on a values based approach. Since 2006, Mr. Lather has been a member of Wealth Counsel, LLC, a national organization of estate and business planning attorneys which facilitates the sharing of cutting-edge planning techniques and philosophies among its 1000+ members. Mr. Lather is admitted to practice before all courts in Ohio, and the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio. Since 2002, Mr. Lather has maintained his designation as a Board Certified Specialist in Estate Planning, Trust and Probate Law, as awarded by the OSBA. Mr. Lather resides in Findlay, is a member and past president of the Findlay Rotary Club, and is very active in community organizations and charitable causes.



Vaughn A. Hoblet

Mr. Hoblet has a broad business practice dealing with strategic alliances, commercial and Chapter 11 bankruptcy law, asset protection, wealth preservation, estate planning, probate law, trust administration, and federal, state and local taxation. He joined Marshall & Melhorn in 2000, after practicing with another law firm for 25 years. He attended Ohio State University (BS), The University of Toledo (JD), and New York University (LLM). Mr. Hoblet is admitted to practice in Ohio and Michigan and before the United States Tax Court, the United States District Courts in the Northern Division of Ohio and the Eastern Division of Michigan.



Thomas P. Killam

Mr. Killam is the Chair of the Business Department at Marshall & Melhorn. His practice is concentrated in the representation of closely-held businesses and their owners. Mr. Killam has also participated extensively in the coordination and planning of estates, ranging from multi-million dollar estates to more moderately-sized estates. Many of his business clients have sought his participation in family succession and business transition planning.



Bridgett J. Root

Ms. Root works primarily in the areas of estate planning, elder law, and trust and probate administration. She works with many families with special needs children and assists in the administration of special needs trusts. She also advises families regarding long term care planning including Medicaid qualification and is accredited by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Ms. Root also practices in the areas of federal, state and local taxation. Ms. Root is admitted to practice in Ohio and Michigan and before the US Tax Court. She is also a Certified Public Accountant and worked for a large public accounting firm prior to joining Marshall & Melhorn. Ms. Root is a member of the Toledo Bar Association (Finance and Probate Committees), Toledo Women's Bar Association, Ohio Women's Bar Association, Ohio State Bar Association, and the Ohio Society of Certified Public Accountants. She is the past President of the Toledo Estate Planning Council and is currently President of the Lucas County Board of the American Cancer Society.



John A. Borell, Jr.

Mr. Borell has sixteen years of experience representing all manner of businesses, estates, and individuals in highly specialized fiduciary litigation involving complex trust, estate, guardianship and similar matters at both the trial and appellate levels in jurisdictions across Ohio and Michigan. He has a background in accounting and has served in both public office, as a member of the Sylvania City Council, and in leadership positions on the boards of various local non-profit organizations, including Harbor, where he served as President. He is admitted to practice law in both Ohio and Michigan, and before various federal courts.



Joshua D. Didion

Mr. Didion's principal area of practice involves estate, business, real estate, and tax planning for individuals, families, professionals, developers, and owners of closely held businesses. He also advises clients regarding business, tax, and succession planning relating to privately held business and real estate concerns. His background in business, tax, and real estate provides the foundation from which he advises the entrepreneurs and business owners he works with on various tax and operational matters. By working closely with his clients, he has become a trusted advisor to families, entrepreneurs and closely held businesses, delivering value by not only helping each to overcome immediate challenges, but also by identifying short and long-term planning opportunities.



Steve K. Lauer

Steven Lauer is Of Counsel at the law firm of Marshall & Melhorn LLC. He is licensed to practice law in the State of Ohio. His practice is concentrated in the areas of estate taxation, gift taxation, fiduciary income taxation, estate planning, trust development and analysis, and probate law. Steve previously had a 33 year career with the Internal Revenue Service in Toledo, Ohio as an Estate & Gift Tax Attorney. This position involved the examination of estate, gift and fiduciary income tax returns filed in northwestern Ohio, along with providing numerous presentations to attorneys, CPAs and Enrolled Agents on estate & gift tax law. Prior to becoming an attorney Steve served for two years on active duty with the United States Army. He served as President of the Lucas County Bar Association in 1997.



Carol A. Sobczak

Ms. Sobczak became Of Counsel to Marshall & Melhorn, LLC in 2013. She is licensed to practice law in both Illinois and California, and worked from 1988 through 1997 in Chicago, Illinois. She is admitted to all courts in the State of California. Ms. Sobczak is certified by the state Bar of California Board of Legal Specialization as a Certified Specialist in Estate Planning, Trust and Probate Law.



Christina M. Adam

Chrissy joined the Trust & Estates department in January, 2014. Chrissy received her Paralegal Certificate, approved by the American Bar Association, in 2009 from Capital University Law School in Columbus, Ohio. Chrissy's paralegal experience includes Probate Administration, Trust & Estate Planning, Real Estate, Corporate Governance, and Transactional Contracts. Chrissy is a Michigan Notary Public and has over 15 years working in the legal industry in various capacities.



Beth L. Kimmel

Mrs. Kimmel joined the Findlay office in January 2012, as a legal assistant working with the administration of trusts and probate estates. Beth received an accounting degree from Northwestern Business College in Lima. Beth's previous work experience includes working for 11 years as a Licensed Personal Banker for a local bank.