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Legal knowledge, human wisdom: Helping you plan today, so you can sleep better tonight.

Planning Beyond the Ring: What George Foreman's Legacy Teaches Us About Estate Planning

George Foreman wasn't just a boxing legend—he was a dad to 12 kids, a pastor, a business mogul, and the man behind one of the most beloved kitchen gadgets in American homes. He passed away on March 21, 2025, with an estate reportedly worth around $300 million—not from championship belts, but from his iconic George Foreman Grill.

But beyond the fortune and fame, George's life reminds us that estate planning isn't just for the wealthy. It's for anyone with family, property, or something meaningful to pass on. And as you'll see, many of the issues Foreman likely had to navigate—blended families, name confusion, business legacy—are challenges my clients bring to the table every day.

Five Marriages, One Long Love

George was married five times, but his final marriage to Mary Joan Martelly lasted nearly 40 years. His earlier marriages, however, still could have left behind paperwork, promises, or loose ends.

If you've been married more than once, here's something to keep in mind: old divorce decrees, support orders, or beneficiary forms can come back to haunt your estate if they're not reviewed and updated. Even life insurance policies meant to cover old obligations could accidentally be lapsed or misdirected.

The lesson? Go back and look. Make sure your current plan reflects your current life—and that everything you once promised is either fulfilled or still covered.

A Father of Twelve—And No "Ex-Children"

Foreman had twelve children—five sons and seven daughters, including two adopted daughters. He often said that his kids were his greatest pride, once noting, *"You can have an ex-wife, but never an ex-child."* That devotion likely showed up in his estate plan.

And it raises an important point: fair doesn't always mean equal. One child may need more support than another. One might be involved in the family business, while another might have different dreams. Estate plans can (and often should) reflect those unique needs.

When you're making your plan, think about what fairness means for your family—not just dollar signs, but what feels right based on relationships, responsibilities, and the future.

Too Many Georges? Not If You Plan Right

All five of Foreman’s sons were named… George. Yep. George Jr., George III (“Monk”), George IV (“Big Wheel”), George V (“Red”), and George VI (“Little Joey”). Foreman said he did this to unify his family—so they’d always be connected.

While heartwarming, having five kids with the same name can create *big* legal headaches. Think of beneficiary forms, bank accounts, or even a will that says “everything to George.” Which one?

That’s why it's critical—especially if names repeat in your family—to be specific. Include middle names, birthdays, or even nicknames. Your attorney can help ensure everyone’s clearly identified, so no one ends up fighting over who was meant to get what.

From Knockouts to Knockout Sales: The Business Side

Believe it or not, Foreman made far more money selling grills than he ever did boxing. Over 100 million grills have been sold, and at one point, he was earning up to $8 million a month. That’s a serious business—and a serious legacy.

If you own a business, earn royalties, or have valuable intellectual property (like writing, music, designs, or a personal brand), it’s important to think beyond “Who gets the money?” You need to plan for who manages the business, who controls the brand, and how decisions will be made in the future.

Trusts, LLCs, or clearly written agreements can protect the legacy you’ve built—whether that’s a product, a local business, or something as personal as a blog or course you created online.

Creating a Plan That Can Go the Distance

George Foreman was a fighter in the ring and a soft-hearted giant outside of it. He loved his family, reinvented himself time and again, and left a legacy that extended far beyond boxing.

The truth is, most of us aren’t all that different. We may not have endorsement deals, but we have people we love, property we care about, and stories worth preserving. We may not have a household name, but we have homes filled with laughter, family photos, and dreams worth protecting.

When it’s time to create or revisit your estate plan, we’re here to help you do it with clarity, compassion, and yes—even a few grilled cheese sandwiches if needed.

Because planning your legacy doesn’t have to feel like stepping into the ring.