Rhonda L. Griswold

SENIOR COUNSEL

For over 30 years, Rhonda has concentrated her practice in estate and trust planning, including the preparation of wills and trusts, using a variety of planning devices to reduce estate and gift taxes, and to make sure that her clients' assets pass seamlessly and efficiently to their beneficiaries.

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Overview

For over 30 years, Rhonda has concentrated her practice in estate and trust planning, including the preparation of wills and trusts, using a variety of planning devices to reduce estate and gift taxes, and to make sure that her clients' assets pass seamlessly and efficiently to their beneficiaries.

Rhonda's practice encompasses advising clients as to all areas of estate planning, from basic wills and trusts to more sophisticated planning such as generation-skipping dynasty trusts, sales to irrevocable trusts, qualified domestic trusts, charitable gifts, and family limited partnership planning.

Her practice integrates the personal and estate tax planning concerns of individuals with tax and business planning for their closely-held businesses, and other legacy properties. Rhonda works closely with her clients and other advisors to create and implement personally tailored strategies to preserve assets and transmit wealth while minimizing transfer taxes. She advises clients on all aspects of high-net-worth trust administration, including valuation issues, allocation of assets, and funding trusts. She is often sought after to counsel on the appropriate use of trusts, partnerships, LLCs, and other vehicles to achieve planning goals.

Her significant reputation as a preeminent litigator is based on 30 years of extensive experience in all aspects of estate litigation, including: probate, trust, and guardianship litigation and appeals, will and trust contests, and cases involving capacity, undue influence, determination of beneficiaries, spousal elective share, estate claims, and breach of fiduciary duty, and claims.

Rhonda also advises fiduciaries and financial institutions in connection with their fiduciary duties, including probate proceedings, state and federal gift tax return preparation and audits, and trust and estate accounting proceedings.

A Fellow in the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel, Rhonda is also a court-appointed member on the State of Hawai'i Committee on Uniform Probate Code and Probate Court Practices. She is ranked in Band 1 for Private Wealth Law in the *Chambers & Partners*, High Net Worth Guide. She was selected by her peers to be included in *Best Lawyers in America*® since 2003. Rhonda has been listed in *Honolulu Magazine*'s "Best Lawyers in Hawai'i" for the same

Practices & Industries

Coronavirus Response

period. She has a *Martindale-Hubbell's Peer Review* rating of AV (highest level of professional excellence for attorneys admitted to the bar for 10 years or more), and has been identified as one of Hawai'i's *Super Lawyers*®.

Rhonda is former President of the Hawaii State Bar Association, a member of the American Bar Association, the Hawaii State Bar Association, Gift and Estate Tax Section (former Chair), former President and current Director of Hawai'i Women's Legal Foundation, Secretary and Director of the Hawaii Justice Foundation, Director of the Hawai'i State Bar Foundation and Michael J Marks Foundation, and Treasurer and Director of the Cades Foundation.

Noteworthy

Experience

- *In re Elizabeth J. K. L. Lucas Charitable Gift*, 125 Haw. 351 (2011) (clarifying cy pres doctrine in Hawai'i)
- *In re Robinson Trust*, 110 Haw. 181 (2006) (trust interpretation case)
- *In re Medeiros Testamentary Trust & Life Insurance Trust*, 105 Haw. 284 (2004) (trust interpretation case)
- *In re Estate of Ferdinand Marcos*, 88 Haw. 148 (1998) (finding no Hawai'i domicile in probate proceeding).

Awards

- *Best Lawyers*® Lawyer of the Year, Trusts and Estates, Honolulu, 2024
- Outstanding Woman Lawyer, Hawaii Women Lawyers, 2023
- Spirit of Justice Award, Hawaii Justice Foundation, 2021
- Professional Advisor in Philanthropy, Hawaii Community Foundation, 2018
- Public Service Award, University of Hawaii's William S. Richardson School of Law Alumni Association, 2017
- Listed in *Chambers & Partners*, High Net Worth Guide, since 2017
- Listed in *Best Lawyers*®, since 2003
- *Best Lawyers*® Lawyer of the Year, Trusts and Estates, Honolulu 2017
- *Best Lawyers*® Lawyer of the Year, Litigation – Trusts and Estates, Honolulu 2016
- *Martindale-Hubbell AV Preeminent*® Peer Review Rated since 1999
- *Super Lawyers*®, 2008-2020

Podcast

- What's the Law: Estate Planning – What happens if I die without a Will, Part 1
- What's the Law: Estate Planning – What happens if I die without a Will, Part 2

Credentials

Education

- J.D. (1984), William S. Richardson School of Law, University of Hawai‘i
- B.A., California State University at Chico

Admissions

- Hawai‘i State Bar (1984)
- United States District Court for the District of Hawai‘i

Membership

- Hawaii State Bar Association, Past President (2024)
- Hawaii State Bar Association (Estate and Probate Section; Elder Law Section; Tax Section)
- American Bar Association (Tax Section; Probate and Trust Section)
- American College of Trust and Estate Counsel, Fellow (1999-2024)
- Uniform Probate Code and Probate Court Practices Committee, Court Appointed Member
- Hawai‘i Women’s Legal Foundation, Director
- Hawaii Justice Foundation, Secretary/Director
- Cades Foundation, Treasurer/Director
- Hawai‘i State Bar Foundation, Director
- Michael J Marks Foundation, Director

Publications

- “Hawai‘i Adopts New Uniform Trust Code: What is it and What Does it Mean for You?” *ke kumu* (Fall/Winter 2021) (Co-Author)
- “10 Steps to Being a Trustworthy Trustee: An “Honor” with Heavy Responsibilities,” *ke kumu* (Winter 2018) (Co-Author)
- “Encyclopedia of Estate Planning,” Hawai‘i State Bar Association (2007 Ed.) (Editor-in-Chief)
- “Hawai‘i Conservatorship and Guardianship Manual,” (2005 and 2010 Ed.) (Contributing Author)
- “Estate Planning Forms Manual,” (2000) (Contributing Author)
- “You and the Law in Hawai‘i, Estate Planning and Probate,” Kapi‘olani Community College Television Series (Panelist)
- “Hawai‘i Probate Sourcebook,” (1992 and 1996 Ed.)

Speaking Engagements

- Rhonda has given numerous seminars and speeches in a wide variety of estate planning and trust administration issues.