

## Editor's Note



**Carolyn Mirabile**

Partner,  
Norristown Office

It's the time of year we've all been waiting for. As the Holiday Season is quickly approaching, we're thrilled to be publishing the 2018 Winter Edition of Weber Gallagher's Family Law Newsletter.

This fall, our "family" in the Norristown office experienced a tremendous loss of our fearless leader, Lynne Z. Gold-Bikin. There is not a day that goes by that we don't question "What Would Lynne Do?" We miss her magnanimous energy, her mentorship, and her ability to lead our practice group.

As much as we miss Lynne's presence, her legacy still lives on day in and day out through each of our attorneys. We are proud to carry on her commitment to her clients, to her practice, and to the firm as we continue to advocate for each of our clients. Though Lynne is irreplaceable, we are ready, willing and capable of continuing on with our current case load, as well as securing potential new clients.

Enclosed in this newsletter you'll find the highlights of our top articles and news, all of which and more can be found on the Family Law Blog at: <https://www.webergallagherfamilylaw.com/blog/>

We hope you enjoy our Winter Newsletter and stay tuned for our Spring 2019 Edition.

## Parent Coordinators Will Once Again Be Able to Aid Custody Issues



**Donna M. Marcus**

Associate,  
Norristown Office

Parent Coordinators had long been used to assist the courts with a variety of custody issues. In 2013, The Pennsylvania Supreme Court issued a Rule that eliminated parent coordination based upon concerns that the coordinators were overstepping their boundaries. Since that time, a number of Judges and attorneys have worked to re-introduce parent coordination in Pennsylvania.

As a result of their efforts, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court recently introduced legislation that reinstates Parent Coordination in custody cases. The new Rule, which will take effect on March 1, 2019, addresses the Supreme Courts' concerns with the prior Rule. The Court wants to avoid parent coordinators from making major custodial decisions and, instead act to assist the parents in normal day to day decisions which affect custody and clog the courts.

The new Rule would permit attorneys to serve as parent coordinators without withdrawing their practice in the same county. The new rule provides guidelines for who can serve as a coordinator and ensures proper training and continuing education for coordinators. The legislation will also permit certain medical professionals and therapists, in addition to eligible attorneys, to perform the parent coordination once they have received the proper training.

In order to have the coordinators trained prior to the Rule being implemented, training for parenting coordinators is currently scheduled in both November, 2018 and February, 2019.



## IN THIS ISSUE

1

Editor's Note

Parent Coordinators Will Once Again Be Able to Aid Custody Issues

2

10 Ways to Prepare Yourself if You Are Contemplating Divorce

The Ins and Outs of Retirement and What You Need To Know

3

Attorney Lynne Z. Gold-Bikin Dies at 80

4

The Legacy of Lynne Z. Gold-Bikin and Her Impact at Weber Gallagher

5 Things To Do In Preparation For Your First Meeting With Your Divorce or Family Law Attorney

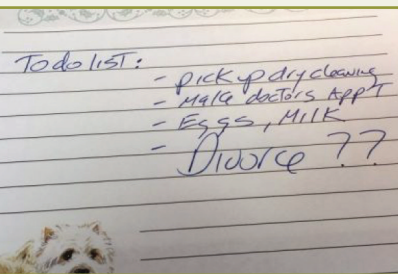
# 10 Ways to Prepare Yourself If You Are Contemplating Divorce

By John A. Zurzola

Partner, Norristown Office

Before filing for a divorce, here are my top 10 tips in order to prepare yourself now for the next steps.

1. Open a separate bank account and keep any documentation in a separate location or on a secure phone;
2. Open a credit card in your name and keep it handy;
3. Be familiar with any bills or accounts in your sole name, ex. car payments, credit accounts, utilities, etc.;
4. Be familiar with any bills or joint accounts and be prepared to obtain your own or remove your name from joint accounts if need be, ex. cell phone, utilities, car insurance, credit cards, etc.;



5. Locate all official documentation and be able to safeguard it if need be, ex. birth certificates, passports, marriage license, etc.;

6. Compile and safeguard all passwords for any online and bill payer accounts and change them if need be;

7. Have a place to go if you anticipate or your situation has become abusive in any manner;
8. If you have consulted with an attorney, have the attorney office contact information readily available to you;
9. Plan a basic budget in the event that you may need to move from your present location; or, if another wage earner in your house moves out and no longer contributes to your expenses; and
10. If you have children, plan on how you will explain the need for separation or divorce to them and be prepared for any reaction, depending on their age.

The foregoing list is only a general guide as to what steps most people contemplating divorce might do and is not specific legal advice.

This checklist does not substitute a consultation with an attorney who specializes in Family Law, Divorce, Child Custody and Support, Alimony and/or Domestic Violence. For more on this topic as well as additionally important Family Law information, visit our website at: <https://www.wglaw.com/Practices/Family-Law/Family-Law>

# The Ins and Outs of Retirement and What You Need To Know



**Carolyn Mirabile**

Partner,  
Norristown Office

Retirement assets are often the main focus of a divorce. In fact, a client will usually come in and say, "I don't care what I have to give to my spouse, but I want to keep my retirement."

Understanding the complexities relating to a retirement account is important in reaching a final resolution in your

divorce. Clients often come in not knowing they have retirement accounts or the value of their retirement account. Without valuable information, clients often make costly mistakes relating to their retirement accounts.

Participants in a deferred compensation plan, such as a 401(k), will often accumulate pretax dollars into a retirement account. While participants in a defined benefit plan, such as a pension, have a retirement benefit based on a formula. Both types of retirement assets are usually divided pursuant to a Court Order but there are some exceptions. If the retirement asset can be divided by a Court Order, this will allow monies to be transferred to the other spouse tax free, without early withdrawal penalties. If the retirement asset cannot be divided by a Court Order, the parties may have to be a little more creative in making sure the nonemployee spouse obtains the retirement benefit post-divorce. Additionally, the parties often have to calculate the marital component of a retirement asset before it is divided between the parties.

Retirement assets can be complicated. The Weber Gallagher Family Law department can help you discuss the particulars of your retirement account and the benefits of how it should be divided.

## Attorney Lynne Z. Gold-Bikin Dies at 80

Courtesy of the Jewish Exponent



Lynne Z. Gold-Bikin

Lynne Z. Gold-Bikin, 80, an attorney noted for her expertise on divorce and family law, died on October 9 of multiple myeloma.

Her knowledge came from firsthand experience. She got a divorce from first husband Roy Gold two months after she graduated from Villanova University Law School in 1976.

While most know her from her legal acumen, she was a devoted mother and grandmother. Gold-Bikin was politically active and a lover of music, community theater and bowling.

“Like other moms, she was really intent on making all of us succeed; she read to us and sang with us when we were little. We grew up watching her perform in community theater musicals, and later she used to throw season-starting parties to help the local summer stock theater,” said Russ Gold, her eldest son.

She was also active in her community, something Gold recalls from childhood.

“There were a lot of accidents on our street in Pottsville, which people attributed to the lack of stop signs. Despite the failure of previous attempts to get the city council to install them, she took up the fight and succeeded,” he said.

When she returned to school, she transitioned from a stay-at-home mother of four to a student, but she always made time for her children.

“When the youngest of us, my brother, started in elementary school fulltime, Mom went back to college, commuting half-an-hour each way, making sure to be home before we were back from school,” Gold said.

Gold-Bikin was a devoted, active grandmother. When Russ Gold’s oldest son showed interest in film production, she found a summer course on that subject and enrolled him in it.

“It allowed him to develop his skills, both as a cameraman and editor. She did similar things for each of her grandchildren, as appropriate,” he said.

Gold-Bikin kept busy, as she traveled, served as patron for museums – among them the Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center – and donated to charities. As an active member of the Democratic Party, she held candidate get-togethers.

She was a long-distance congregant at Congregation Rodeph Shalom and was supportive of the congregation.

During law school, she was active in the student division of the American Bar Association, serving as governor her – a first for a woman. She later helped found the ABA Preserving Marriages Project.

Gold-Bikin was a member of the committee that helped create the no-fault divorce enacted in Pennsylvania on July 1, 1980. She wrote several books on the subject of family law: *Divorce Practice Handbook* (1994), *The Divorce Trial Manual: From Initial Interview to Closing Argument* (2003) and *National Trends in Family Law: An Immediate Look at Economic and Societal Changes Impacting Divorce Law Across the Country*.

She began her career as an attorney with Pechner, Dorfman, Wolfe, Rounick & Cabot. Gold-Bikin was a practicing attorney until her death, serving as a partner and chair of the family law department at Weber Gallagher Simpson Stapleton Fires & Newby, LLP.

Most of all, Gold-Bikin was devoted to her family; it was her main passion.

“At one meeting of a group of lawyers, when each was invited to take about their greatest accomplishments, and each listed awards or legal triumphs, she told the crowd that her greatest achievement was raising four terrific kids. When family members called on her, she even put us ahead of her clients,” Gold said.

She is survived by her husband, Bruce Martin; four children, Russ Gold (Gwen), Sheryl Gold (Marla), Lisa Untracht (David) and Michael Gold (Silvana); 11 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

## The Legacy of Lynne Z. Gold-Bikin and Her Impact at Weber Gallagher



**John A. Zurzola**

Partner,  
Norristown Office

For those of you who do not know me or much about Lynne's legacy, I am a Family Law Attorney at Weber Gallagher and I am Lynne's partner, even though she is no longer with us. I will always consider that I am her partner because the lessons and practical skills that she taught me as an attorney will be with me for my entire career. You see, before Lynne asked me to be her law partner at Weber Gallagher, she and I had battled it out in court on multiple occasions. It was after one particular complex and contentious

hearing involving millions of dollars, when she said to me "Why don't you come work for me?" For whatever reason, still unknown to me, I said "No."

She then had her Associate contact me, with whom I remain personal friends. She suggested that I should come and work with Lynne because, "She wants you here with us." For the second time, I declined her invitation.

When the time was right and circumstances dictated it, I jumped at the chance to work with Lynne. I couldn't figure out for the life of me why I prevented myself from having 10 extra years of her counsel and guidance. In the end I am grateful for the time I was able to spend with Lynne and I made the most of it.

We have all heard the expression about one who "Has forgotten more than you'll ever know." While that's an understatement for Lynne Z. Gold-Bikin, I intend to carry on her legacy with all of the knowledge and experience she taught me.

Lynne didn't teach – she "showed." She showed us how to be tough for our clients. She showed us how to achieve desired results and how to apply these lessons to your future cases. She showed us the benefit of attention to detail and being better prepared than any other attorney. She showed us how to develop relationships with our clients, with the court and with other attorneys. She showed us when you are active in your community, that you grow professionally and personally. She showed us that when you work with someone who is going through divorce, child custody or domestic violence, you need to be their champion, friend, and a shoulder for them to cry on.

Lynne was constantly teaching us her ways to better our professional and personal lives. Lynne remains my partner and she will forever be remembered by her family at Weber Gallagher.

## 5 Things To Do In Preparation For Your First Meeting With Your Divorce or Family Law Attorney

**By John A. Zurzola**

Partner, Norristown Office

Your first meeting with an attorney when contemplating filing for divorce, child custody or support – or just gathering information about your rights is a very important event. The following list is a handy guide that details the information and/or documents that you should try to bring with you to the attorney on your first meeting.

1. Clear your schedule so that you have enough time to cover all issues in the consultation and to allow your attorney to review any relevant documents.
2. Bring copies of any prior relevant legal documents with you to include: pre-nuptial agreements, Custody or Support Orders, or Notices you may have received to appear in court.
3. Have copies (or a general understanding) of the assets and debts that you and/or your spouse have accumulated so that your attorney can begin to evaluate the financial aspects of your matter.
4. If your case presents a need to file an emergency request for relief with the court, have all necessary information available for the attorney like, addresses (or whereabouts), dates or birth, school information, etc. that surrounds your particular issue.
5. Know that your case is not identical to a friend's or family member's case that you may be familiar with.

John Zurzola is a Family Law Attorney and Partner at Weber Gallagher, 610-272-5555, and litigates all aspects of Family Law matters in courts in West Chester, Media, Norristown, Doylestown and Philadelphia.