

# PET TRUSTS

*You may wonder what you would do without your pet, but what would your pet do without you?*

Most American households have pets that are dearly loved and cared for by their families. These animals are regarded as an integral and loving member of the family. Many animals outlive their owners. You can plan for the future of your family member through a Pet Trust.

Under Texas law, your pet is a personal possession, which could be distributed or sold with all of your other things when you die. A way to be sure your wishes are followed is to establish a Pet Trust.

A Pet Trust is established for the care and maintenance of a particular animal or group of animals, can manage your pets and their care, and includes instructions for who you want to handle your pet's needs and how to spend assets left for them after you die or become incapacitated.

Pet Trusts set up rules and guidelines for the care of animals. The Trust is designed to use a portion of your assets to provide your pet with all of the amenities you choose.

When you establish a Pet Trust you are providing for the:

- Health
- Maintenance
- Support
- Housing, and
- any other special instructions necessary for the care of your beloved pet.

One of the most important aspects of a Pet Trust is the peace of mind it provides. This binding trust requires that your animal be cared for in specific ways by a caretaker you assign. If the caretaker is not following your directions, a new caretaker may be appointed. This can prevent the caretaker from using your assets in an inappropriate way or neglecting your pet's needs. The predictability a Pet Trust provides will assure you that your animal is left in good hands.

The funding of your Pet Trust after you die can be in any amount you choose. Upon the death of your pet, any assets remaining in the Pet Trust can be distributed to any person or charity(ies) you choose.

Pet Trusts are a great way to plan for the future of those that have taken care of you. We encourage you to schedule a consultation with our attorneys in order to discuss whether a Pet Trust would be

appropriate for your family.

## *Why not just create a will?*

1. **Time is of the essence.** Pets depend on their owner for daily care. A will must be probated before it becomes effective. The court may not formally recognize and put your plan into action for weeks, assuming there are no legal disputes. The probate court usually takes a few weeks before an executor is appointed to handle the estate.

2. **Protection if you become ill or incapacitated.** A will goes into effect only after you die. A will has no power should you become ill or incapacitated. A trust allows you to set provisions that would empower the Trustee to use the funds that you had set aside for the pet's care even during your lengthy disability.

3. **Peace of Mind.** A trust gives you the peace of mind that someone is caring for your pet according to your instructions. Your trustee and the pet's caretaker are legally bound to follow your wishes.

Remember,

***Planning Adds Predictability!***

**The Greening Law Firm, P.C. is pleased to offer this service for your family. Included in your planning we provide:**

**A Pet Trust plan** arrangement including trustee instructions, all of the estate planning documents and a copy of the estate planning papers to put in a safety deposit box.

**An Alert Card** to carry in your wallet so that emergency contacts can be notified of your pet's needs. This ensures the safety of your beloved pet that may otherwise be forgotten in a time of need.

**Tools and forms** that help you organize your information to make sure the caregiver has copies of your pet's veterinary records and information about the animal's behavioral traits and dietary preferences.

**An emergency Fire Rescue Sticker** to display for firefighters to know who is in the house and needs to be safely evacuated.

Contact us today to schedule a complimentary initial consultation, and decide if a Pet Trust is appropriate for you.

**[www.GreeningLawFirm.com](http://www.GreeningLawFirm.com)**

*Practice Limited to Estate Planning, Estate Administration, Probate, and Elder Law*

The hiring of an attorney is an important decision. The items discussed in this brochure are of a general nature and not intended to provide legal advice. Please consult a qualified estate planning/elder law attorney to determine the best options for your personal circumstances.

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## About the Author



**R**onald Greening, Attorney and Counsellor at Law, is the founder of The Greening Law Firm, P.C. Ron grew up in Houston and after earning a B.S.E.E. from the University of Texas at Austin in 1969, he worked as an electrical engineer for three years. He has practiced law since 1975, starting in Washington, D.C. for six years,

then for two years on Wall Street before returning home to central Texas in 1983. He is a member of the Real Estate, Probate & Trust Law Sections of the State Bar of Texas and the Probate and Estate Planning Law Section of the Austin Bar Association. He is a member and past president of the American Association of Trust Estate and Elder Law Attorneys, a member of the Texas and National Association of Elder Law Attorneys and a member and director of the Estate Planning Council of Central Texas. He is fully licensed by the Texas Supreme Court and various federal courts. His practice is limited to estate planning, estate administration, probate and Medicaid planning.

Ron continues to be active in Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church, [WHPC.org](http://WHPC.org), serves on the Board of Directors and Secretary of the Board of the Georgetown Community Foundation, [GACF.org](http://GACF.org), belongs to the Rotary Club of Austin, [Rotary-Austin.org](http://Rotary-Austin.org), the Texas Longhorn Breeders Association, [TLBAA.org](http://TLBAA.org), serves on the Advisory Board of the Travis County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, [RSVPAustin.org](http://RSVPAustin.org), and other community and professional organizations. Ron lives on Lake Travis and has a Longhorn steer who lives in his backyard.

Mr. Greening is committed to researching and preparing high quality, tax-sensitive estate plans. His mission in law is to help people accomplish their estate planning goals, and to take the mystery out of the estate planning process. His clients have their estate plans explained in straight-forward language that they and their families can understand. Good planning avoids needless court interference, public records, attorney fees, and government interference when an estate is settled.

Ron teaches workshops for the public as well as accredited continuing education seminars for C.P.A.s, nursing home administrators, attorneys, C.F.P.s, and other financial advisors. He provides complimentary initial office consultations for estate planning.

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By

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