



CAL FUTURES

Legacy Giving for Lasting Impact

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Wills vs. Trusts: Which Fits Your Legacy Goals Best?

At this stage of life, you may be thinking more seriously about how to protect your family, organize your affairs, and leave a meaningful legacy. Two of the most common tools, wills and trusts, can work together or separately to accomplish your goals. Understanding the differences can help you decide what's best for you and your loved ones.

What a Will Does:

- Names who receives your assets after you pass
- Allows you to appoint guardians for minor dependents
- Names an executor to oversee your estate

Wills must go through probate, which is a court-supervised process.

Probate can take time, may involve legal fees, and becomes a matter of public record. If you have a simple estate or have already named beneficiaries for most of your assets (like retirement accounts), a will might be enough.

What a Revocable Living Trust Can Do:

- Helps avoid probate, saving your family time and money
- Keeps your estate and finances private
- Allows you to manage your affairs in case of illness or incapacity
- Provides detailed instructions for how and when assets are distributed

Trusts can be especially helpful if:

- You own property in multiple states
- You want to make inheritance easier for heirs
- You want to continue supporting charitable causes after your lifetime

Planning with Purpose Now is a great time to revisit or create your estate plan — especially as life, laws, and priorities change. Whether you choose a will, a trust, or both, thoughtful planning can reduce burdens on your loved ones and ensure your legacy reflects what matters most to you.

Keep in mind Including a charitable bequest in your will or trust is one of the simplest ways to create a lasting impact. A small percentage can make a big difference. ■

DID YOU KNOW?

October Is Estate Planning Awareness Month: Review, Refresh, Reaffirm

October is a great time to check in on your estate plan. If you're over 60, your priorities may have shifted, including grandchildren, retirement, healthcare, or charitable goals.

Ask yourself:

- Is your **will or trust** up to date?
- Do your **beneficiary designations** still reflect your wishes?
- Have you included a **charitable gift** that reflects your values?

A thoughtful, current estate plan brings peace of mind and ensures your legacy reflects who you are — and what you care about most.

This month, take the time to review and refresh. Your legacy deserves it. ■

Have you considered

making a gift to Berkeley now that allows you to maintain control of your assets?

Join fellow Bears in downloading our "Your Estate Plan" guide at planyourlegacy.berkeley.edu/resources. There you will find clear steps on making a designated or unrestricted gift to Berkeley via your will or living trust.



Stuart Gardiner

Investing in the Future Through Berkeley's Excellence

PHOTO COURTESY OF STUART GARDINER

When **Stuart Gardiner J.D. '73** first visited Berkeley in spring 1969 as part of a college singing group tour, the campus made an immediate impression. Though

“While I was there, both as a student and working as an administrator, Berkeley made a profound impression on me.”

Stuart's tour occurred during a time of frequent campus unrest, because his visit took place during spring break, the area was unusually peaceful. “What a lovely place to spend three years,” he thought, envisioning law school on the West Coast. What he couldn't have anticipated was that those three years would stretch into a six-decade relationship with the university — first as a

student, then an administrator, and now as a philanthropist committed to addressing one of humanity's greatest challenges.

Growing up near Philadelphia and attending college in New England, Gardiner had never ventured west prior to his campus tour. After graduating from Berkeley Law in 1973, he joined the Chancellor's office as a budget analyst, drawn by his interest in university administration that had developed through his involvement in student government and community service projects. In 1975, Dean Sanford Kadish chose him as assistant dean of the law school, and Gardiner found his calling in higher education leadership.

“While I was there, both as a student and working as an administrator, Berkeley made a profound impression on me,” Gardiner reflects. “You put a lot of highly motivated, very smart people who are passionate about inquiry in one place, and you get a lot of cross-fertilization and communication. Berkeley is one of the best places I can think of for that.”

After seven years as assistant dean, Gardiner transitioned to Pacific Gas and Electric Company, where he specialized in federal regulation of wholesale electricity. His work

in energy law during the 1980s and 1990s coincided with growing awareness of climate change. “By the mid-'90s, I was one of the folks who had gotten seriously concerned about what was going to happen to the planet,” he says. His insider's perspective on energy production and distribution deepened his understanding of both the challenges and potential solutions around decarbonization.

This concern has shaped Gardiner's philanthropic philosophy. “As a result of having a lot of good opportunities and taking advantage of them, I've been able to accumulate some money that won't be needed after I'm gone,” he explains. **Gardiner and his wife, Mary Burns, view their wealth as an opportunity to support humanity's long-term flourishing.** “It's more a question of seeing our species as having the foresight to continue in ways that help us thrive better — and a huge part of that is care for our planet.”

Universities like Berkeley play a unique role in addressing global challenges, Gardiner believes, because their mission of teaching, research, and public service is



PHOTO COURTESY OF STUART GARDINER

inherently oriented toward the future. He's particularly hopeful about Berkeley's interdisciplinary approach to climate solutions, spanning engineering, public policy, business, natural resources, and law. “Climate change is one of the great opportunities to avoid compartmentalization,” he notes, praising the campus administration's encouragement of cross-fertilization between disciplines.

Gardiner also points to Berkeley's influential position in California, a global leader in climate policy. The Center for Law, Energy & the Environment (CLEE) exemplifies this impact through its connections with state government and beyond, working on both reducing the likelihood of catastrophic climate change and mitigating its effects.

For Gardiner, **planned giving represents “an opportunity to have a larger impact** than I feel I can have during the rest of my life.” His estate plans reflect his conviction that significant residual wealth should be directed toward creating meaningful change. “It's a way of creating a significant opportunity that takes advantage of what Berkeley can offer in any number of given fields,” he explains.

“What comes immediately to mind is the gratitude that I feel for having the opportunity to invest in the future by taking advantage of Berkeley's excellence,” Gardiner says. For someone who first came to Berkeley simply seeking a beautiful place to study law, his journey illustrates how transformative experiences can evolve into lifelong commitments — and how individual philanthropy can amplify an institution's capacity to address humanity's most pressing challenges. ■

PLAN YOUR IMPACT

Writing an Ethical Will: Passing on More Than Money

When we think of estate planning, we often focus on the financial side: wills, trusts, and assets. But there's another type of gift you can leave behind: one that shares your **values, memories, life lessons, and love**.

It's called an **ethical will** (sometimes known as a legacy letter). Unlike legal documents, an ethical will isn't about dividing up your estate — it's about sharing what has shaped you. It might include:

- The beliefs and principles that guided your life
- Stories from your childhood or career
- Hopes and blessings for your children and grandchildren
- Reasons behind any charitable gifts or legacy choices

An ethical will doesn't need to be formal. It can be a letter, a collection of short reflections, or even a video. What matters most is the **heart** behind it.

Creating an ethical will can be a powerful way to reflect on what's most important and ensure your loved ones understand the deeper “why” behind your decisions. It's a way of saying: *“This is who I am, what I believe, and what I hope you carry forward.”*

Tip: If you've included a charitable bequest in your estate plan, an ethical will is a meaningful place to explain why that cause matters to you — and how you hope it continues to touch lives. ■



PHOTO BY KEEGAN HOUSER

The Benjamin Ide Wheeler Society

On July 29, over 200 members of the Benjamin Ide Wheeler Society and their guests gathered on campus for the 38th Annual Lecture and Luncheon. This luncheon celebrates those who have included Berkeley in their estate plans or established a life income gift to benefit Berkeley. John A. Powell, director of the Othering & Belonging Institute, the Robert D. Haas Chancellor's Chair in Equity & Inclusion, and professor of law, African American studies, and ethnic studies, shared a powerful lecture on "Building a Future of Belonging Without Othering." Chancellor Lyons provided updates on athletics from NCAA championships to fully endowed programs; the exciting new buildings on campus and the establishment of the College of Computing, Data Science, and Society, Berkeley's first new college in 50 years; and the range of changes happening in higher education. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to hear from these distinguished speakers and honor the members of the Wheeler Society.

If you have included Berkeley in your estate plans and have not been welcomed into the Benjamin Ide Wheeler Society, please contact the Office of Gift Planning: ogp@berkeley.edu or 510.642.6300.

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES IMPACT

Silas Kanady: A Student's Story

Among the many inspiring stories we've had the privilege of reading and sharing, Silas Kanady's stands out as a powerful example of resilience and hope. Silas is a social welfare major in the Class of 2025 and a recipient of the James Van Natta Endowed Scholarship. This scholarship was established to support students who are parents with a preference for veterans, aligning perfectly with Silas' background and the donor's intent.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SILAS KANADY

Overcoming a tumultuous childhood and homelessness, Silas earned his GED at 19 and served in the Army, serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. After returning home, he struggled with addiction and was eventually incarcerated. During his incarceration, Silas earned four associate degrees, rediscovering his passion for learning and belief in his own potential.

"For my entire life, I had been told that I was dumb and that I was going to end up in prison. Although I did, in fact, go to prison, I learned during my incarceration that I was not dumb and that my incarceration had nothing to do with my worth as a human being," Silas shared.

While still incarcerated, Silas applied to multiple universities and was accepted to UC Berkeley, becoming just the second person to transfer from prison to Berkeley. Now, as a 2024–25 Haas Scholar, he is conducting important research into California's Medication-

Assisted Treatment (MAT) program in carceral settings, advocating for policy changes to protect vulnerable populations. Additionally, as a coach with the Success Stories Program, he mentors youth and incarcerated individuals, empowering them to challenge toxic masculinity and build healthier relationships and lifestyles.

Balancing school, part-time jobs, and a family of five, Silas acknowledges the vital role scholarships play in his success, allowing him to focus on studies and family time. "This scholarship has had a positive impact on me and my family," he said. "It gives me the freedom to work less, allowing me to focus on my studies and spend cherished quality time with my partner and children." ■

This newsletter offers only general gift planning information. We urge you to seek the advice of an attorney in developing your personal estate plan, as the Office of Gift Planning may not render tax or legal advice to friends and alumni of the university. If you would like more information concerning charitable giving as a component of estate planning, we would be happy to provide you with more specific ideas. © 2025 by The Regents of the University of California.

ogp@berkeley.edu | planyourlegacy.berkeley.edu | 510.642.6300

Office of Gift Planning, University of California, Berkeley

Have you considered making a gift to Berkeley in your will or living trust?

Discover the benefits that await you when you help ensure Cal's future.

Visit gobears.me/CFinfo to request more information.