

By most measures, Larry Hillblom was a smart guy, but he lost his senses when he decided to draft his own will.

Mr. Hillblom was the "H" in DHL Corp., the air-courier giant. His interest was valued at \$600 million before he died in 1995. He graduated from Boalt Hall School of Law at Berkeley and argued high-profile international cases before the Ninth Circuit. He was a special judge in his adopted country, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

But when Mr. Hillblom decided to draft his own will, he exhibited little intelligence. In the will, he left most of his \$600 million to university medical centers for research. But, alas, the will lacked one detail: a simple, one-sentence disinheritance clause.

Mr. Hillblom's drafting failure was unfortunate, because over the years he had fathered several children with young women throughout the South Pacific. Mr. Hillblom perhaps deemed a disinheritance clause unnecessary, since he had never acknowledged his offspring.

The mother of Hillblom's oldest known child named him "Junior Larry Hillblom." When Junior was ten, an attorney represented him and three other offspring and sued Hillblom's estate, claiming inheritance rights.

The estate, DHL, and the various medical research universities hired over 100 buttoned-down attorneys to fight the paternity claims. After more than four years of litigation, the case was resolved.

The four children won.

The 100 attorneys charged more than \$40 million in fees. Estate and other taxes cost more than \$150 million. The four children received \$50 million—each, after taxes. It adds up to a total of \$390 million.

All because Mr. Hillblom was not going to spend a few thousand dollars retaining an expert to do what he could darn well do on his own.

What about Junior? Fifteen-year-old Junior recently had a desire to see a New York Knicks basketball game, so he flew there from Guam, with a bunch of new-found friends. He lives in a large, beautiful ranch house above a crystal-green bay. Living with him are "a growing collection of distant cousins."

Like Dad, Junior is fascinated with young women. He ponders going to the Bahamas. "Nice girls there, I hear." Normal male teenager preoccupation, except Junior has \$50 million in his bank account. Around girls, Junior's attorney advises, "be careful."

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