The Di Rocco Keenan Wealth Advisory Group

JULY 2025

When we think about estate planning, we often focus on ensuring our precious assets get passed down to the most precious people in our lives. But how do our furry friends fit into the picture? Within common law jurisdictions in Canada, pets are still legally considered property, not family members – despite the plethora of Instagram accounts and posts suggesting otherwise. So why and how do you incorporate pets into the estate planning picture?

- Without a proper plan for your pet, family members might argue who *doesn't* want to take them. This is hard to believe, but when a pet is scaly/slimy/slithering vs. fluffy, you can see this happening. Consider meeting with your family or close friends to decide on who would be the best fit for a pet guardian.

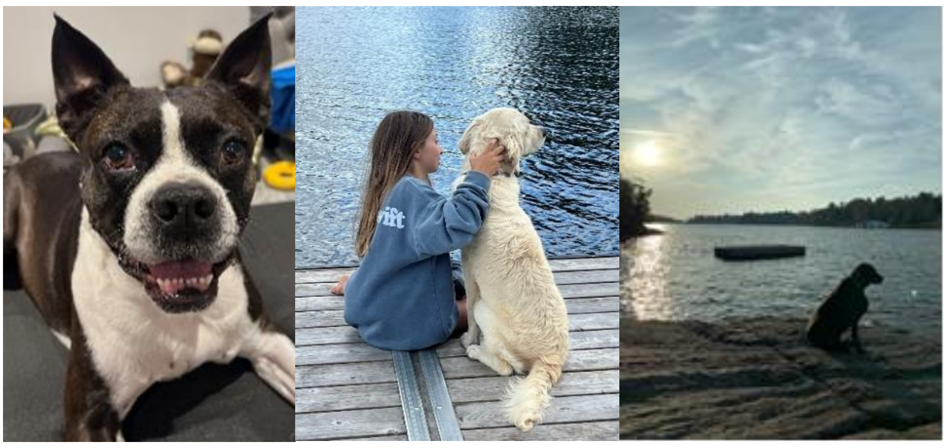
- In Canada you can name a pet caregiver/guardian in your Will. While gifting funds directly to a pet is prohibited, you can gift money to a beneficiary to care for your pet. When considering a guardian, be upfront about expectations as not everyone is up for the day-to-day responsibilities and financial commitment of taking care of an animal.

- Create a pet trust. Yes, this is an option! You can set aside money specifically for your pet and a trustee can make sure it is spent on their needs. By using a trust, you can include instructions for the care of the pet and the ongoing use of funds that are placed within the trust. The laws for trusts for pets vary by province and it's important to seek independent legal advice to ensure the trust satisfies specific criteria.

With pet ownership linked to helping reduce stress, encourage physical activity, and even contributing to a longer life, ensuring your companions are taken care of is the best way to return the favour.

Let us know if you have any questions (or want to share cute dog/cat/snake pictures 😉).

Lianne and Jamie



**Pictured above (left to right): Mack, Bailey's 10-year-old pup, & Jamie's daughter, Georgia, with 1-year-old pup, Juniper.*

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